

## Indigenous School for Integrated Rural Development in La Libertad Petén

Global Grant providing equipment and training for boarding facility and vocational high school.

Justification: The Petén region in Northern Guatemala is famous for its multiple Mayan archeological sites and the lush tropical rainforest of the Mayan Biosphere Reserve. Next to this tremendous cultural and biological wealth the Petén region is also home to some of the poorest communities in the country. Rural Q'eqchi' Mayan communities have shockingly high rates of maternal-infant mortality, malnutrition and pregnant girls under the age of 14. Due to a lack of opportunities adolescent boys are often faced with the choice of being involved in the illegal extraction of tropical hardwoods, poaching, raiding archeological sites, working with the drug trade or attempting illegal migration to the United States. Girls face forced marriages, early childbirth, high risks for domestic violence, incest and HIV-AIDS.

The Indigenous School for Integrated Rural Development located in La Libertad Petén opened in 2019 with 100 boarding students with the goal of reaching 200 boarding students by 2020. The school specializes in identifying at-risk out of school youth and incorporating them into an appropriate learning environment. At the school poor rural indigenous girls and boys learn the skills they need to get good jobs related to conservation, sustainable community development, disaster risk reduction, sustainable agriculture and municipal management. Students are also taught small business skills through courses in entrepreneurial studies, small business regulation and financial management. The motto of the students is “yo me quedo” or “I’m staying” in English, as a response to the trend for many of their friends to attempt illegal migration to the US to find work. Students proudly wear t-shirts with the saying #YOMEQUEDO, I’m the future of Guatemala and Guatemala is my future.

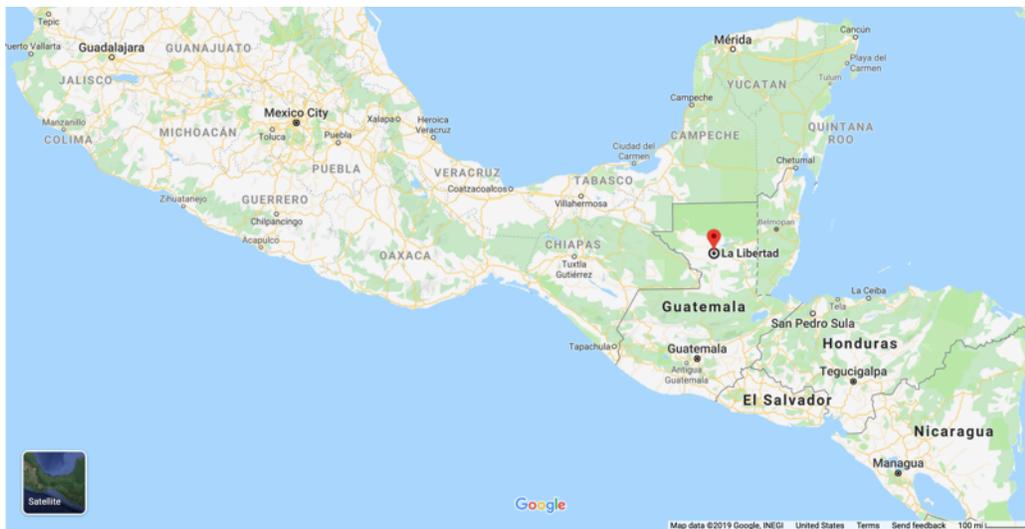
The school is co-administered by Association Ak' Tenamit, a Guatemalan indigenous owned and operated organization that has 30 years experience providing vocational education for at-risk youth. Ak' Tenamit's highly successful work-based training methodology has achieved the highest employment rate of any vocational school in the country, 10 times the national average.

This Global Grant will help equip this growing school with bunkbeds, school desks and furniture, kitchen equipment, recreational equipment, vocational training equipment and a computer lab.

At least one Rotary work team from District #5790 will travel to Guatemala to help build school beds, desks and other furniture, paint classrooms and help students practice their English and other skills.

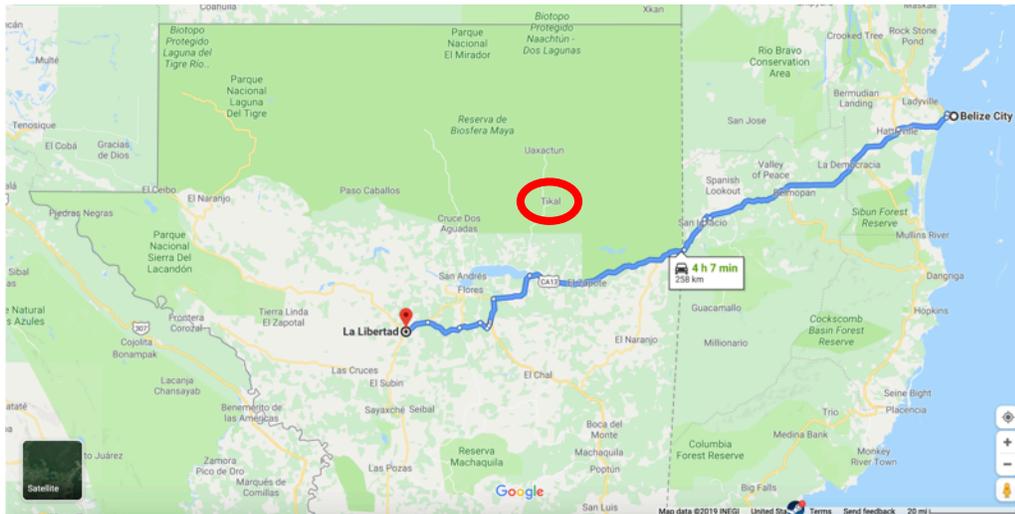


## REGION:



La Libertad is located in the Petén district in northern Guatemala.

## SERVICE TRIP:



1 week in Spring 2020.

Est. trip cost: \$500/pp + airfare.

Direct flights from DFW to Belize City start at \$700.

Travel by van from Belize City to La Libertad is about 4.5 hrs.

## VISIT TO TIKAL



Guided tour of archaeological sites after service trip. Tikal is about 1.5 hrs from La Libertad.