
Guatemala

**Total area:**

108,889 km²

Population:

16,176,133 (2014)

Literacy:

56%

Official languages:

Spanish

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$8,132 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

71 years

Religions:

55% Catholic, 40% Protestant, 3% Atheist or Agnostic, 1% indigenous Mayan beliefs, 1% other religions

Prayer points

Churches in Guatemala

Pray that local Guatemalan churches would recognise their responsibility and calling to share a holistic gospel with those in their own communities, and that they may find new, creative ways to do so. For unity, reconciliation and forgiveness between the different political, ethnic and religious groups, and for justice and equal access to services for those most at risk. For God's protection over the Guatemala team members, as they live, work and travel in a country with a high incidence of violence and for their health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. That God would raise up many more Guatemalans to serve cross-culturally within Guatemala, as well as in other countries, and that churches would be willing to support them long term. (Latin Link - June 2021)

Devastation caused by hurricanes

Please pray for the people of Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala following November 2020's devastation caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Over three million people were affected. Pray for all the NGOs who worked to bring in food, medicine, doctors, counsellors and sanitation experts as part of their emergency response. Keep them safe from COVID-19 in their work. Pray for all those who remain without a home to go back to, that the Lord covers them with His indescribable peace in this time. (Mission Aviation Fellowship UK - February 2021)

Promoting healthy relationships

According to the Guatemalan National Institute of Social Forensics, the number of reports of abuse has significantly increased due in part to the lockdown brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 1,486 cases of sexual abuse of teenagers and girls reported during the months of March to July.

Please pray for WorldShare's ministry partner, Potter's House, as they seek to educate parents and children on their God-given roles within their families and promote healthy relationships. Pray that their online workshops and their follow-up meetings would build up people's self-esteem, develop their emotional intelligence and improve family dynamics. (WorldShare - December 2020)

Lockdown is a death sentence

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed inequalities and inequity in Central America. Lockdown is a death sentence for many people because they are unable to go out every day to look for food or work in informal trade activities. In Guatemala, where Viva has a partner network, we see heart-breaking situations for children each day. For example, more than 20 boys and girls sleep in cemetery graves as they have nowhere to live. Pray that local churches working together, supported by Viva's partner network, would be able to make a difference in Guatemala and across the region with practical help such as food relief and a phone mentoring programme to keep children safe. (Viva - October 2020)

Mental health

Pray for the mental health of vulnerable children affected by the extended lockdown in Guatemala. Many children in the slums of Guatemala City have been trapped in small tin shacks in temperatures around 30 degrees, 24/7 with nothing to do. Our local partners report a deterioration in the mental health of many children, despite their best efforts to support them in creative ways. Please pray for a restoration of joy for these children, and the ability to get out, move around, and access education. (Global Care - October 2020)

The impact of the virus on the vulnerable

As all of WorldShare's ministry partners face restrictions due to COVID-19, please pray that God would help them to make wise decisions to ensure that their beneficiaries are safely cared for. Please ask God to protect the vulnerable in Guatemala. Due to a general quarantine, Potter's House have had to close their doors, meaning many will be without food and support. (WorldShare - May 2020)

Street Kids Direct working with Guatemala's street children

Pray for street children in Guatemala benefiting from a pioneering mentoring scheme by Global Care's local partners, Street Kids Direct. Pray for strength and wisdom for the children to turn away from the temptations of crime, drugs and gang culture, to pursue education and to make better life choices, despite very challenging family circumstances for many. Pray for an end to multi-generational cycles of poverty and traumatic experiences, and for the light of Christ to penetrate their darkness. @GlobalCare (Global Care - February 2020)

Potter's House expansion

After 30 years of successful ministry transforming lives among the poor in Guatemala, Worldshare's Potter's House decided to expand its reach. At the end of 2016, Potter's House developed a new ministry centre in the city of Chiquimula, 120 miles northeast of Guatemala City. This replicates the Guatemala City model by running holistic programmes to develop the communities and empower them to become self-sufficient. Since this expansion commenced, God has been moving in amazing ways and lives have been changed in Chiquimula. Reaching over 3,000 beneficiaries, the team has renovated classrooms, run children's bible schools and supplied essentials to some of the most vulnerable families. Please pray that, with God's guidance, the Potter's House team can continue to serve many people in Chiquimula. (WorldShare - August 2019)

Bringing hope to victims of sexual abuse

The work with young Guatemalan girls who are the victims of sexual abuse is hard, unpredictable, costly work. Thank God for the dedicated Christian staff who walk the long journey of healing traumatised minds until the girls are ready to live with a safe and loving family. Pray for those staff who dare to challenge evil and bring justice through the prosecution of the abuse perpetrators. Please pray that God will provide all the practical and spiritual resources needed to bring protection, healing,

justice and his love to young lives. Please pray for the influence that is bringing massive changes in Guatemala's child protection system to continue so that a whole nation will be blessed and be a light for other countries in the region where such abuse is endemic. (Hope for Kids International - June 2019)

Courageous students in Latin America

Without a doubt, the greatest strength of students in Latin America is their initiative to be involved in mission. In many of the movements there are only one or two workers, who support students in various universities and even in cities. Students are the main protagonists of the university mission! Poverty, corruption and violence are huge challenges for students in Latin America. However, perhaps the greatest challenge is for students to not be ashamed of their faith, but instead to share and connect with the academic and social world. Please pray for courageous communities of students who know and live in God's word, who share their love for Jesus, who are serving the needs of the vulnerable, and who enter the academic and ideological discussions of the university from the perspective of a mature and complete faith. (IFES - December 2018)

Mission Aviation Fellowship in Guatemala

Working in partnership with hundreds of other Christian and relief organisations, Mission Aviation Fellowship enables practical help, physical healing, and spiritual hope to be delivered to many of the most remote and inaccessible communities on the planet. In Guatemala, please pray those attending training programmes for pastors in remote areas will be equipped and encouraged for ministry. Pray also for engineers and support staff who maintain the Cessna 206 aircraft. Give thanks for their skills, experience and Christian witness. (Mission Aviation Fellowship UK - December 2018)

Volcan de Fuego

In early June, the Volcan de Fuego - one of Guatemala's active volcanos - erupted spitting ash, volcanic sand, and rock into several surrounding communities. Hundreds were evacuated and authorities advised precaution. Later, another large explosion spewed lava, toxic gas, rocks and smoke into the State of Escuintla. Ninety-nine people have been confirmed dead, 12,000 people have been evacuated, and only 3,000 of those have been placed in temporary shelters. More than 1.7 million people have been affected. There is an urgent need for shelters, food, and clothing. Please pray that the Lord will use his people to provide aid in this disaster and love to those who are hurting in the aftermath. (WorldShare - July 2018)

Poor Communities in Guatemala City

Potters House has been changing the lives of those in the poor communities of Guatemala City for 30 years. It has recently expanded its ministry to the city of Chiquimula to the east of Guatemala City. Here they are reaching new communities with the gospel and bringing lasting change through community development. Over 3,000 people in Chiquimula have benefited from the distribution of water filters and cookers as well as classroom renovations and bible school sessions. Pray for the Chiquimula communities, that they can find a new hope for a better quality of life and a brighter future. Pray that through learning about the gospel, they will accept Jesus and experience His light in their lives. (WorldShare - January 2018)

Care Home Fire

In March, 41 teenage girls died and 15 others were seriously injured by a huge fire at large children's care home on the outskirts of Guatemala City. Hundreds of vulnerable people were made homeless by the blaze. Viva Guatemala was invited to respond to help children left homeless by the fire, in partnership with UNICEF Guatemala. Our partner network of churches has provided emergency food and clothes, and rented two homes for 24 children with disabilities to move in to. It plans to provide psychological and educational support for children and to work closely with government shelters to ensure better care for children. Pray that the children affected by this tragedy would get the holistic care they need, and that Viva Guatemala would remain Christ-centred for the work ahead, and find

the people and resources needed. Pray for wise leadership from government officials. (Viva - July 2017)

Living near a Landfill Site

Over 13,000 people live next to the biggest landfill site in Guatemala with more than half of these being children. Thousands resort to scavenging on the dump hoping they will find something of value to sell, to support their families. Medical supplies, including used syringes, toxins emitted from discarded gas tanks, and the other biohazardous materials all contribute to the dangers of the landfill and add to the already poor sanitation conditions for the communities living next to it. The Potters House ministry is addressing the local needs through education, community development and health and nutrition, with the aim of breaking the cycle of poverty within this community. Please pray for this community in Guatemala, for protection, health and lasting change. (WorldShare - May 2017)

Mobile Clinics

Western medical elective students join Guatemalan doctors, and then drive to rural villages and set up mobile clinics. As Latin Link Strider Emily Thiede found out: 'The doctors do their best to diagnose and counsel without the luxury of further tests, then send the patients to our little pharmacy, which consists of a range of basic medication. The volunteers all fundraised at home, which means that our patients can get their medication for free - a real luxury for Guatemalans!' Pray that the doctors will diagnose correctly despite the limitations, for funds to pay for the medications, and for safety for the medical teams as they travel around one of the most dangerous countries in South and Central America. (Latin Link - September 2016)

Community clinic

A group of North American students and three Guatemalan doctors set off bright and early every morning in a bus to one of the villages (up to one-and-a-half hours away) and set up their mobile clinic. The doctors will do their best to diagnose and counsel without the luxury of further tests, then send the patients to a little pharmacy, which consists of a range of basic medication. The volunteers all fundraised at home which means that the patients can get their medication for free; a real luxury for Guatemalans! Pray that this medical care will have a continued impact on the community, bringing healing to many and sharing Gods love with them. (Latin Link - May 2016)

Sexually abused

Sexual abuse is a huge problem across Latin America. One place trying to provide some solutions is the Oasis Centre in Guatemala. It's a ministry for girls who've been sexually abused. The girls are mainly teenagers, can be as young as 12, and are often pregnant when they arrive. Oasis provides a safe home, long-term psychological support, access to healthcare and education, and legal and spiritual support. Latin Link works closely with Oasis, sending workers such as Kate to help the girls. Pray for the Oasis girls as they step out of the shadows they have lived in, and for the workers as they seek justice, healing and reconciliation for the girls. (Latin Link - March 2016)

Killed by family members

Domestic abuse and violence against children and young people is prevalent in Central America with thousands killed by family members each year or forced onto the streets. It's so commonplace that most people turn a blind eye to what's going on behind closed doors. Viva's partner networks in six capital cities across the region, including Guatemala City, are now collaborating on a new programme which aims to lower the rate of violence against children and young people through the active participation of faith communities as agents of transformation. Pray that, through this initiative in Guatemala and beyond, parents will become positive role models, families will be strengthened and whole cities will be transformed. (Viva - November 2015)

Answering God's call

Latin Link Guatemala have held their first commissioning service. Three Guatemalan missionaries,

Pamela, Emily and Elisa, have all answered God's call on their lives and have taken the scary step of using their skills, interests and professions to serve God in another country and culture. They are preparing to serve God in the UK and in Ecuador. They have already overcome a number of obstacles to get this far. Pray for them as they discover more of what God has for them. (Latin Link - November 2014)

La Linea

La Linea (The Line) is in Zone One of Guatemala City where a railway line used to be. Now it is abandoned, along with all the trains, and filled with dirt and just some metal in the road. The purpose of *La Linea* is no longer trains, but prostitution. It is estimated that at least 300 women 'work' there. In other parts of Zone One groups of men live in very poor conditions spending most of their time drinking and fighting. Teams of Christians are working with both groups of people - pray that those living in such difficult situations would experience the love of Christ. (YWAM England - September 2013)

Responding to disasters

In November 2012 Guatemala was hit by its most powerful earthquake in more than 30 years, claiming the lives of over 130 people and destroying thousands of homes. In the aftermath of the quake, AMI San Lucas worked quickly to provide vital aid, distributing food and hygiene supplies, as well as helping the communities affected to construct new homes. Praise God for every individual and family who received food, water and shelter, and pray for them as they continue to rebuild their lives. Please pray for protection for the people of Guatemala and Central America, and for the organisations working to help them to reduce their vulnerability to disasters. (Tearfund - July 2013)

Without legal identity

An alarming 600,000 children in Guatemala are without any legal identity. Although registration itself is free of charge, many families still have to pay to travel long distances to registration centres. For poor rural families this is, unsurprisingly, low on the list of priorities. Not only does having no legal identity mean that children struggle to get access to education or healthcare, it also puts them at increased risk of being targeted for child prostitution, forced labour and involvement in drug cartels. Pray for the churches and childcare projects that are seeking to serve the country's 'invisible' children in this way. Pray too that those responsible for the registration process would seek to make it as easy as possible. (Viva - November 2011)

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