



Substandard housing in Guatemala

In this lesson students learn about poverty housing in Guatemala. They then research links between substandard housing and other economic factors and present this information (using internet technology) to their peers.

Objectives:

Students will...

- Read about poverty in Latin America (e.g., poverty in Guatemala).
- Research the interrelationship between housing, health, education and other economic factors.
- Utilize technology to share their research and opinions (by creating a multimedia slideshow). They will also respond to and critique other students' presentations (by participating in the slideshows of peers). (Optional)

Content standards:

Geography

- Places and Regions
 - Analyze the physical and human characteristics of places.
 - Discover how people create regions to interpret earth's complexity.
- Human systems
 - Learn how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of earth's surface.

Language arts

- Read a wide range of texts to build an understanding of the cultures of the world.
- Conduct research on issues and interests. Gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Use a variety of technological and informational resources to gather information, such as voice thread, to create and communicate knowledge.
- Participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Materials:

- "Interview with Gloria Garcia"
- "Creating your voice thread"
- "Grading rubric for voice thread"
- "The impact of poverty housing" (Fact sheets Nos. 1-7)

Preparation:

You have the option of having your students create voice threads about poverty housing. This activity can also be done through Power Point or a poster presentation.

*Although this lesson encourages subscription to the voice thread service, HFHI does not endorse or take responsibility for the performance of this product.

- A voice thread is a platform for people to make presentations using written text, audio commentary, and visuals. Others in the class review the voice thread and share their comments with the author and the rest of the class.
- If you choose to have your students create voice threads, you will need to register for a voice thread account at <http://voicethread.com/pricing/k12/>. You should register for a class account (approximately \$10 per month). This provides a secure network where you control who has access to view the voice threads that your students create.
- You should give your students at least one week to build their voice threads. This gives them time to get familiar with the technology platform.

The day before teaching this lesson, distribute "Interview with Gloria Garcia" for students to read as homework.

Explain that the interview is about what it is like to live in poverty and in substandard housing conditions in Latin America. Briefly introduce the term "substandard housing" before the students read the article (see Step 1 in the Procedure).

Procedure:

1. **Discuss what it is like to live in poverty in Latin America.** Review the meaning of substandard housing (poverty housing) with your students.

What is substandard housing?

Substandard housing means housing that is inadequate at sheltering people from bad weather, pests and other dangers. The housing may also be unsanitary and harmful to people's health. There are people all over the world who live in substandard housing. Substandard homes are often made of cardboard, scraps of metal, and have no floors. The people usually don't even own the land, so the owners can kick them off the land at any time. Living in substandard housing is a major facet of living in poverty.

Discuss your students' reactions to the "Interview with Gloria Garcia." Use the discussion questions at the end of the article to introduce how housing affects people's health, education and income. The students will explore this in further detail as they prepare their multimedia slideshows.

2. Show a sample voice thread.

Explain to the class that they will be researching more about Guatemala and presenting their information to the class in the form of a multimedia slideshow. Show the students a sample voice thread. You can either create your own multimedia slideshow or you can use the sample voice thread on "Alleviating poverty housing in Guatemala" at www.voicethread.com/share/303797.

3. Living below the poverty line.

Tell students that they will be creating slideshow presentations on what it is like to live in poverty in contemporary Guatemala. Their presentation should highlight how health, housing and education are interrelated. You can choose to have the students work independently or in pairs.

Suggested Topics for Slideshows

- The Impact of Poverty Housing: Poverty in Guatemala
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: A Strong Roof
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: Plumbing and Electricity
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: A Solid Floor
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: Overcrowding
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: Health and Poverty
- The Impact of Poverty Housing: Education and Poverty

Review and assign the topics. Distribute the appropriate fact sheet to each student (or student pair) based on the topic you have assigned them. Encourage the students to use the information on their fact sheet and present it using written text, audio commentary and visuals that make sense to them. *You may allow the students to build their voice thread based on the information in the fact sheet alone, or require them to do additional research on the topic.*

4. Provide instructions on creating their presentation.

If you choose to use the voice thread technology: Distribute the handout "Creating your voice thread." Review the template for creating a voice thread. Tell the students they should fill in this template while designing their voice thread. Also distribute the grading rubric to show students what they should include in their voice thread.

Review the instructions on commenting on someone else's voice thread. Tell students you will be grading them not only on their own voice thread, but on their participation in other people's voice threads.

There are photos on www.habitatyouthprograms.org that students can use to create their voice threads. You may also have students find photos or graphics through other sources. Other Habitat Web sites that may have useful information or photos include www.habitat.org/intl/lac/86.aspx and www.habitatguate.org.

5. Review some student slideshows in class.

Give the students at least a week to complete the assignment so they have time to play with the technology. If your students have access to a computer and the internet at home, they can create their slideshows outside of class time. If they do not have access to the internet outside of school, you will have to allot class time for them to create the slideshows.

When they have completed their slideshows, review some of the more interesting ones in class and have a follow up discussion on the issues raised.

Be sure to emphasize how health, housing, education and other factors are interrelated. The fact sheets provide information on these interrelationships so that students will be able to highlight these interrelationship in their slideshows.

Invite parents to view students' voice threads, providing them with directions on how they can access the secure network.

Interview with Gloria Garcia



CAROLINE STARBIRD

Gloria Garcia

How many bathrooms do you have at home? Can you imagine having to share one bathroom with 15 people? That's what Gloria Garcia and her family had to do.

Gloria Garcia lives in Esperanza, a small town in Guatemala. Gloria Garcia, her husband, and their three children lived in a one-room house for eight years. There was no indoor bathroom, just a hole in the ground outside that they shared with neighbors.

Gloria Garcia and her family were not comfortable in their one-room house. The floor was made out of dirt. They didn't have any windows. They had no actual doors to the outside because they could not afford to buy any. Instead, the house was always open to the outside. They had to do all their activities in their one room – cook, work, study, eat, and sleep. “We were very squeezed in that house,” said Gloria Garcia. “It was so hard for our family of five to live in just one room.”

The town of Esperanza is in the mountainous highlands of Guatemala. There are two seasons – the rainy season and the dry season. During the rainy season it rains almost every day. At night it can get very cold (about 8 degrees celcius or 45 degrees fahrenheit), although not cold enough to snow.

“Living there was very uncomfortable,” said Gloria Garcia. “During the rainy season the rain would soak into the dirt floor. The floor would stay damp for six months. It would get so cold that my feet would hurt to stand on it. The cold made it hard to get my work done. It was stressful because I needed to complete my work in order to earn money. Also with the cold my children would often get sick.”

Now Gloria Garcia and her family have a new house. They were able to build this house with a loan from Habitat for Humanity in Guatemala. It is a small house with just four rooms. Each room has a window and can only fit a few pieces of furniture. It is a very simple house, but “It is a huge improvement from before,” said Gloria Garcia.

Now, instead of a dirt floor, they have a floor made of concrete. This means that during the rainy season, the floor stays dry. “This helps us stay healthy. Before, when we had a dirt floor, the children would get sick a lot. They would get colds and bad coughs and sore throats - especially my oldest son. He would get sick at least once a month and have to miss school. It wasn't good for him to miss so much school. Now

*Names of family members have been changed



CAROLINE STARBIRD

This is Gloria Garcia's old house. The walls are not sturdy and allow in cold air and pests, and the dirt floor can stay wet for the entire six months of the rainy season.



CAROLINE STARBIRD

The steep road to Gloria Garcia's house in Esperanza.

that we live in this new house, there's a big difference in his health . . . a huge difference. Now he hardly ever gets sick."

Gloria Garcia also likes that it is easy to wash her concrete floor. "This is important, especially for my youngest son who sometimes plays on the floor. Now that I can wash the floor, I can wash away germs so that he doesn't get them on his hands and into his mouth."

"Having our own bathroom is great," added Gloria Garcia. "Before, there was always a bad smell and it was dirty. I did not like cooking so close to such bad smells and unsanitary conditions. We are a lot healthier now that we have a bathroom," she said.

Other improvements include solid walls, windows and doors, and a strong roof. Having solid walls helps to keep out stray animals or pests like rats, snakes, and bugs. Having windows and a door to the outside means the family can open them for fresh air or close them to keep out the cold. And a solid roof means the rain does not leak into the house. Having a warm, dry place to live is a simple thing, yet has made such a big difference to this family.

Gloria Garcia is also happy to have a little more space. "Now my sons have a quiet place to do their homework. I can see that they are improving in school."

Gloria Garcia hopes to save money to make even more improvements to her house. "I'd like to install wood ceilings in all the rooms. This will provide insulation to keep them even warmer during cold weather. I'd also like to save money to buy more furniture."

"I love my house," said Gloria Garcia with a smile. "My family feels safe and healthy here. I'm so thankful for Habitat for Humanity," she continued, "There's nothing like having your own home."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did having a sturdy house affect the health of Gloria Garcia's family?
2. How did having a sturdy house affect the education of Gloria Garcia's family?
3. How did having a sturdy house affect Gloria Garcia's income?
4. How would you feel sharing a bathroom with 15 people?



CAROLINE STARBRID

Gloria Garcia's new house is simple but sturdy.



CAROLINE STARBRID

Gloria Garcia uses the kitchen as a place for her boys to do their homework.



CAROLINE STARBRID

Gloria Garcia, her husband, and two of her sons stand outside their home.

Creating a Voice Thread

You will be creating a voice thread about Guatemala. Use the template to plan the design of your voice thread. Refer to the grading rubric to see what is important to include in your voice thread.

What is a voice thread?

A voice thread is an online presentation that combines photos, voice, and text. A voice thread provides you with an electronic platform to make a presentation on a topic and allows everyone else in class the opportunity to view it and share their comments with you and the rest of the class.

How do I design my voice thread?

Use the template on the next page to decide what photos and text you will put on your slides, and what order your slides will go in. Use the last column to plan out what things you need to mention when adding in your audio commentary. Make sure the order of the slides make sense. Also be sure to plan how you will be asking your audience to participate in your voice thread – for example, will you ask them questions about the photos, or ask for their opinions on a specific issue that you raise in a slide?

How do I comment on someone else's voice thread, and how do other people comment on mine?

A voice thread is like throwing a rock into a pond – your presentation is the rock hitting the water, and that causes viewers to respond or think of related ideas and experiences, like ripples spreading around the rock. Viewers then add their comments or questions to your voice thread.

To get a good audience response, be sure to include detailed information in your presentation. A vague statement like “People in Guatemala are very poor” is not as interesting as specific information like “It would take a year for an average Guatemalan to earn what an average American earns in a week.” You could also point out some interesting details in a photo that you have included on a slide. Asking the audience directly for their opinion on a specific subject you have brought up is another way to get responses.

If you are viewing another person's voice thread, be sure to add comments when the slide makes you think of something interesting. For example, you might say that you agree or disagree strongly with what the slide says, or that it reminds you of an experience you once had, and then explain that experience. It's always interesting to see or hear other people's reactions to the presentation.

Design template for voice thread

Slide #	Purpose of this Slide	Photo	Text	Audio Commentary
1 Introduction				
2 Topic One				
3 Topic One				
4 Topic Two				
5 Topic Two				
6 Topic Three				
7 Topic Three				
8 Conclusion				

Grading rubric for voice thread

An excellent product will include:

Introduction	A clear introduction to the overall subject on the first slide.
First Topic: (two slides per topic) _____ _____ _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos or other visual displays that show effective images of the topic. • Clear or provocative headings that get the audience thinking about the visual displays. • Audio commentary that provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — An explanation of why you chose this visual image – how it relates to the topic, and details about the image that we might not notice at first glance — Interesting statistics, data, or other information you found while researching the topic — A statement of your opinion on the information you learned about this topic. — At least one question you are posing to the audience about this topic.
Second Topic: (two slides per topic) _____ _____ _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos or other visual displays that show effective images of the topic. • Clear or provocative headings that get the audience thinking about the visual displays. • Audio commentary that provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — An explanation of why you chose this visual image – how it relates to the topic, and details about the image that we might not notice at first glance — Interesting statistics, data, or other information you found while researching the topic — A statement of your opinion on the information you learned about this topic. — At least one question you are posing to the audience about this topic.
Third Topic: (two slides per topic) _____ _____ _____ _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos or other visual displays that show effective images of the topic. • Clear or provocative headings that get the audience thinking about the visual displays. • Audio commentary that provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — An explanation of why you chose this visual image – how it relates to the topic, and details about the image that we might not notice at first glance — Interesting statistics, data, or other information you found while researching the topic — A statement of your opinion on the information you learned about this topic. — At least one question you are posing to the audience about this topic.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statement of your opinion or thoughts on the overall subject. • Ideas for further thinking or action that you or your audience might take.
Audience Participation	An excellent voice thread will elicit responses from the audience. The audience should respond to something specific in each slide, including the audio commentary.

Fact sheet #1

Poverty in Guatemala

Almost two-thirds of Guatemalans live in extreme poverty¹. More than six in ten Guatemalans live on less than two dollars a day. Guatemalans also have the lowest life expectancy in Latin America, and some of the lowest education levels. The indigenous population suffers disproportionately from poverty.

Indicators of Poverty:

There are many ways to spot poverty. Three major indicators of poverty are:

- High rates of infant mortality
 - Malnutrition
 - Substandard housing.
- **What does infant mortality mean?**
Infant mortality means the number of babies out of every 1000 that die before they reach the age of one year.
 - **Why is the infant mortality rate an indicator of poverty?**
When the rate of infant mortality is high, it is a strong indicator of poverty. Guatemala has a high infant mortality rate. In 2006, the infant mortality rate was 31. This means 31 out of every 1,000 infants under age of one died. (The infant mortality rate in the United States is six) The major causes of infant deaths were treatable diseases, including:
 - Diarrhea
 - Pneumonia
 - Cholera
 - Tuberculosis

Infants from wealthier families rarely die from these diseases for two reasons. First, they are less likely to be

exposed to conditions where they would get the diseases (for example, unsanitary homes, bad ventilation systems, or overcrowding). Second, if a baby did get one of these diseases, the wealthier families would be able to find and pay for a doctor or nurse and for medicine to treat the baby.

- **What is malnutrition?**
Malnutrition is when people do not eat enough nutrients to keep their bodies healthy. Generally, malnutrition occurs when people do not get enough food to eat.
- **Why is malnutrition an indicator of poverty?**
Malnutrition does not occur among wealthy people because they can pay for an adequate supply of nutritious food for their families. Malnutrition is one of the major causes of death among children in Guatemala. According to the World Bank, “Malnutrition rates among Guatemalan children are abysmally high—among the worst in the world.”²
- **What is substandard housing?**
Substandard housing (poverty housing) is housing that is inadequate at sheltering people from bad weather, pests, and other dangers.
- **How many people live in substandard housing?**
 - Over 1 billion people worldwide live in substandard housing.
 - 40 percent of people in Guatemala live in substandard housing.
 - 75 percent of Guatemala’s rural population lives in substandard housing. Most of the rural population is of indigenous descent.
 - 80 percent of indigenous children in Guatemala live in substandard housing.

1 “Poverty in Guatemala,” 2006 by Inter-American Development Bank.

2 “Guatemalan Poverty Assessment,” by World Bank.

Fact sheet #2

A strong roof

Why is a roof important?

Would you enjoy getting rained on every night? In the Guatemalan highlands it rains almost every evening during the rainy season (May–October). You can imagine how wet things can get in a home that does not have a solid roof. In addition to keeping out rain and other natural elements (wind, sun, cold), a solid roof keeps out animals and provides people with a clean place to live.

What are advantages of a good roof in Guatemala?

Habitat for Humanity builds homes in Guatemala with roofs made of sheet metal (corrugated sheets of tin). These types of roofs have many advantages. First, they are sturdy and stand up well against years of rain. Second, they are easy to maintain and fix. Third, the material is inexpensive to buy. Thus, poor Guatemalan families can afford to put a tin roof on their house. Fourth, they are easy to put onto a house. Thus, sheet metal roofs are sturdy, simple and affordable.

How does a good roof affect a family's health?

A good roof protects you from cold, wind, rain and sun. In the Guatemalan Highlands, people have to worry most about rain and cold. When rain leaks into a house, the house can remain damp for the entire rainy season, which lasts up to six months! Some roofs in Guatemala are made from baked

clay. Baked clay can soak up water and remain damp for months, too. The dampness can make the house extremely cold as well. The dampness and the cold make people less likely to be able to fight off infections. If they can keep out the damp and cold, people are less likely to get sick.

How does a good roof affect a family's education?

Health affects income. If you are sick, it is much harder to study, to further your education or to work. When Habitat for Humanity partner families move into a home with a solid roof, they find themselves getting sick far less often and are better able to work.

How does a good roof affect a family's income?

People can do more work in the home when, they are healthy and now are protected by a good roof. For example, weaving is a traditional art among Mayan people. Many indigenous people in Guatemala make a living by weaving traditional cloth that can be used to make different types of clothing or decorations. The weaving loom is approximately 4 feet by 10 feet, and must be kept indoors safe and dry. A good roof allows indigenous Guatemalans to keep a weaving loom, and materials to dye and spin the wool, inside their homes. Other types of work can also be done in a home as long as it is protected from the outside elements.

Fact sheet #3

Plumbing and electricity

What is it like to not have indoor plumbing?

If you don't have plumbing in your house, then you don't have a place at home to wash your hands. You don't have a convenient kitchen sink to wash your food or clean your dishes. You don't have water to cook with. You don't have water to drink. And you don't have a toilet to use in the house. You also don't have a place to wash yourself inside the house. Instead, you would have to go somewhere to do all of these activities. How would your life be different if you didn't have indoor plumbing?

Indoor plumbing makes everyday life easier. When water comes to your house, you don't have to spend time and effort going somewhere else to gather it. In some parts of the world, people have to walk for an hour or more to get water every day.

How can indoor plumbing improve health?

The most important thing indoor plumbing can do is improve your health. With easy access to water, people have more opportunity to wash their hands, wash dishes, and wash anything. Easy access to water, especially being able to access water in your home, lets you wash away germs that can cause illnesses. With this improvement in basic sanitation, people's illnesses decrease and their overall health improves.

How can electricity affect education and income?

Without electricity in your house, you have to stop doing whatever you're doing that requires your sight when the sun goes down. That means no reading, using a computer, cleaning your room, cooking, etc. There would be a great number of activities you wouldn't be able to do after dark.

In Guatemalan homes without electricity, when the sun sets, people have to stop many of their activities. Children can't study or work and adults can't cook, clean, or do other work. When the people get electricity in their home, things change dramatically. Children can do homework and read in the evening. This means that when they come home from school in the afternoons, they can do the tasks that take up daylight hours and still be able to do their schoolwork later in the day.

With electricity, adults can continue to do their work at night. For example, many indigenous Guatemalans weave "cortas" or sell "quipiles". Cortas are traditional skirts made from about 8 feet of woven cloth. Quipiles are blouses for women embroidered with traditional designs. With electric light, adults can continue to weave or sew even after the sun sets. They can increase the number of cortas or quipiles that they make each month and have more to sell at the market. This extra income can help a family significantly. Adults can also use the light to read or study. This helps adults further their own education. And when someone gets more education, they can sometimes find a better paying job to increase their income.

Fact sheet #4

A solid floor

What are the problems with a dirt floor?

In Guatemala there are two seasons—a wet (rainy) season and a dry season. During the rainy season (May–October), if the floor gets wet (for example, if there’s a leak in the roof), you can’t just wipe the floor dry. Instead, the floor stays damp for a long time. Often a wet dirt floor will stay damp for the entire six months of the rainy season. The dampness also makes it uncomfortably cold inside the house.

A dirt floor can present big problems during the dry season, too. The dirt can get so dry that it makes the air in the room constantly dusty. Gloria Garcia had this problem during the dry season and said that it made it difficult to breathe because “dust would get into the familie’s lungs.” She also noted that, “the dust would also get in our food. Having a concrete floor keeps the air much cleaner during the dry season.”

Another significant problem with dirt floors is that you cannot wash them. In Guatemala, rivers are likely to be polluted. In rural areas the rivers often flood during the rainy season, spreading parasites throughout the ground. Damian Lopez, the principal of a village school in the Guatemalan highlands, estimates that 200-300 people in the area around his village die each year from illnesses they get from parasites. “Most of the people who die are young children,” he says. “When someone walks into a house, their shoes might transport parasites onto the floor. It is easy for little children

playing on the floor to get exposed to these parasites.” He thinks that concrete floors are better because, “it is easy to wash a concrete floor and keep it clean. You can’t do the same with a dirt floor.”

How does a solid floor improve health?

In addition to allowing people to wash parasites off of the floor, a concrete floor can improve health in other ways, too. Respiratory (lung) diseases are a common health problem among the poor in Latin America. A concrete floor solves these problems by eliminating dirt floors that are either damp or too dusty.

How does a solid floor improve education and income?

Gloria Garcia credits her concrete floor for improving her children’s education. According to Gloria Garcia, when they had a dirt floor her children often got sick during the rainy season. Her oldest son, especially, would get sick at least every month, and as a result would miss up to a week of school each time he got sick. Now that they have a concrete floor, she notices that he does not get sick so often, and thus does not miss as much school. The floor keeps her children healthy enough so that they can attend school consistently. Likewise, a concrete floor can keep Gloria Garcia and her husband healthy so that they can work consistently and have a chance at earning a steady income.

Fact sheet #5

Windows and doors

How do doors and windows improve a house?

The great and simple thing about doors and windows is that you can open or close them. When they are shut, you can shut out strangers, keep out wild or stray animals, and keep you, your family, and your belongings safe. Doors and windows should not be taken for granted.

Many substandard homes in Guatemala do not have doors. Pests like mice, frogs and insects can enter the homes at any time, carrying in dangerous germs. Without being able to keep out pests, stray animals, and strangers, a family cannot often feel safe in their home.

Are different types of windows used for different purposes?

In Guatemala, Habitat for Humanity International builds different models of simple homes, depending in part on the location of the land. The types of windows used in the home also depends on the location. In the tropical regions near the coasts, Habitat for Humanity International installs short but wide windows near the top of the walls. When the windows are opened, the hot air that has gathered inside the house rises up and escapes through the windows. Thus, these windows help to naturally cool down a hot home. In the mountainous highlands, however, where there is no need to

cool the homes, Habitat for Humanity International installs windows at the midpoint of the walls. These windows can swing open wide to let in fresh air or close completely to shut out the cold weather.

How do windows and doors affect health?

Having windows and doors can significantly improve the health of the people living in the home. First, being able to shut out pests keeps the home more sanitary. Second, doors that close can keep out bad weather that makes people more susceptible to illnesses. Third, windows that can open or shut are useful for letting in fresh air even while keeping the home safe. The fresh air can help prevent people from developing respiratory health problems (problems with their lungs).

How do windows and doors affect education and income?

Health always affects education and income. If you are sick, it is harder to work and learn. You might miss school or you might not be able to go to the market to sell your goods. A basic level of health is a foundation for getting a good education, being productive at your work, and in turn, being able to earn more income.

Fact sheet #6

Overcrowding

Is overcrowding a common problem?

Overcrowding in a home is very common in rural Guatemala. Because indigenous people have had trouble claiming ownership of land, sometimes they don't have much space to build a house on. Also, they often cannot afford to build a home, so the extended family lives together.

Gloria Garcia's brother, Jorge, lives just down the hill from his sister, along a very steep, dirt road. He also has a home built by Habitat for Humanity. His home is small and simple, but a huge improvement from where his family was living before. Jorge has a wife and three children. His family of five used to live in one house with his parents, his brothers, and their families. "There were 15 people living in a tiny, two room house," he said. "It was terribly crowded."

How does adequate space affect health and education?

When there are too many people living in one small space, sanitation becomes a problem. It is hard to keep things clean. In many rural Guatemalan homes, family members sleep in every room in the house. Even the living room and kitchen double as places for people to sleep. It's hard to keep a kitchen clean when multiple people are using it as a bedroom. Also, when many people are crowded together in a small living space, it is much easier for someone to pass bacteria and viruses on to the others.

When there are too many people sharing one small space, it is also hard to concentrate and study. What would it be like for you to try to study with 14 other people in a tiny house?

How does having adequate space effect income?

With more space, families like Gloria Garcia's sometimes open a small store in their house. They often sell small items like snacks, school supplies, or things like shampoo and soap. This helps families earn a little more income. With this extra money, some parents go back to school and eventually get promotions at work. Increased income also makes it more likely that the parents can afford to send their kids to high school.

Adequate space also gives a family room to work in the home. For example, many indigenous Guatemalan families need a room for their traditional weaving loom (approximately 4 feet by 10 feet). They can't leave the loom outside because the rain and wind will ruin it. They use the loom to weave traditional cloth to sell at local markets. With too many people crowded into a tiny house, there is certainly no space for a loom this large. Not having extended families crowded together in one home clears up space for people to work productively inside the home.

Fact sheet #7

Health and poverty

- Major health problems and poverty often go hand in hand. Generally, the poor are more likely to get infected with diseases and are less likely to be cured of them.
- In Guatemala, the major causes of death among children are treatable diseases. These include:
 - Diarrhea (caused by parasites in the intestines)
 - Pneumonia
 - Cholera
 - Tuberculosis
- Another common disease among people living in poverty is Chagas disease. This is a disease that you get from being bitten by insects carrying certain parasites. Chagas disease causes serious heart problems. It is widespread in tropical parts of Latin America, and occurs most commonly among people living in substandard housing conditions.
- Another cause of health problems is malnutrition. According to UNICEF, almost 70 percent of indigenous children in Guatemala suffer from chronic malnutrition. This means they do not eat the amount of nutritious food that their body needs to be healthy. In addition to making them unhealthy, it also makes them less able to fight off infections.
- People living in poverty often lack the knowledge of how to fight diseases. This means they have not been taught basic ways to prevent diseases, such as keeping their hands clean to prevent the spreading of germs. Educating people about basic hygiene measures can help improve health significantly by decreasing the transmission of parasites that spread infections.
- People living in poverty usually cannot afford to pay for medical care. They do not have spare income to pay a doctor or to buy medicine.
- It can be difficult for people living in rural areas to get to a medical clinic or to otherwise find medical care. This is called “access to healthcare.” People who live in poor, rural villages usually do not live close to any medical clinics or health care workers.
- The risk of getting infected by parasites is greatly increased by:
 - Living in unsanitary housing conditions
 - Living in housing where insects, mice and other pests can enter freely
- The risk of getting respiratory problems that can result in pneumonia and other lung problems is greatly increased by living in a home with bad ventilation (flow of fresh air).
- The risk of catching a disease from other people is greatly increased by living in overcrowded conditions.

Fact sheet #8

Education and poverty

- When people are living in poverty, they face great difficulties in providing their children with an education. There are several reasons for this:
 - People cannot afford to pay school fees (even if very low amounts), buy school supplies, or pay for transportation to schools.
 - Families need children to help with work in order to earn money to feed the family.
 - They live in areas that are far away from schools and it is hard for the children to get to the schools.
- Of children in Guatemala who start first grade, only 60 percent complete sixth grade³. Many children in Guatemala never even start first grade.
- Of the children who start first grade, only 39 percent complete it in six years. This is because many children miss school due to illness or have to stay out for long periods of time to work.
- 23 percent of Guatemalan children between the ages of 7 and 16 work. Many of these children do not have time outside of their work to attend school.
- 30 percent of the people in Guatemala are illiterate. This means they cannot read or write by the time they are age 15. This is because they have not been able to attend school for some reason, and the percentage of illiteracy among indigenous people is dramatically higher.
- People who have not gotten much education have difficulty getting jobs, especially higher paying jobs. As a result, their incomes are very low.
- Because their incomes are low, people who do not have much education usually end up living in poverty.
- If parents can earn more income (by getting better paying jobs, increasing the amount of work they can do, or creating other streams of income), they are more able to afford to send their children to school. Living in better housing conditions can help parents increase their income in multiple ways:
 - Better housing means better health. This means parents miss less work, and families spend less money on medicines and other health care costs.
 - Better housing usually includes electricity. With electricity, parents can continue indoor work after the sun sets and thus increase their income. (For example, parents can sew clothes to sell by using electrical lighting after dark.)
 - Better housing means more space to do other types of work in the house, and thus add a new stream of income. For example, families can open up a small store to sell paper supplies and increase the money they earn.