



Taylor Matherly

M.Ed./M.P.H. Candidate, Global Health Track
taylor.e.matherly@vanderbilt.edu

Practicum Site:
Primeros Pasos
Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Practicum Site Supervisor:
Elena Siepman van den Berg

Nutrition Education to Address Chronic Malnutrition in the Guatemalan Highlands

Primeros Pasos is a non-profit, independent organization located in the rural Western Highlands of Guatemala, an area comprised of a majority indigenous population. The mission of this organization, which has its roots as a revitalized medical clinic, is to: "improve the quality of life of the rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala through integrated health education projects and access to medical, dental, and nutritional services."

In 2002, Primeros Pasos began offering free medical services and health education within its brick and mortar clinic and has since expanded by reaching further into the Valley to provide services to more communities, establishing a dental clinic, and outreach programming with a focus on maternal-child nutrition.

Given my background in both education and public health, I accepted the responsibility of working alongside the clinic's Nutrition Outreach Coordinator to re-design the Education Outreach Program. During my time with Primeros Pasos, I hoped to improve my understanding of the role that early childhood nutrition interventions play in the prevention of stunting and associated health issues as well as to gain further experience in curriculum design and program evaluation.

Mothers of children under six years of age, school-aged children, and pregnant women were the outreach programs' target population. Program participants were recruited via word of mouth and handouts sent home with students in four communities within the

clinic's catchment area. These communities were selected based on need.

Changes in the dietary diversity, amongst other process outcomes, are measured by a survey administered to program participants at program meetings, with responses recorded in REDCap. These results are utilized by Primeros Pasos to inform the every-evolving structure and content of their outreach programs.

