

Areas for future growth

Investment in community radios: Community radios are a lifeline for indigenous people. They provide a platform for developing literacy skills, enacting cultural preservation, gathering information and conducting advocacy. Community radios are some of the few media that broadcast in both Spanish and local Mayan languages. To create a rich and diverse informational and media infrastructure, community radios need to be safeguarded. Organizations should work with and amplify indigenous voices to petition the Guatemalan government to legalize community radios. Organizations can work towards improving telecommunications infrastructure to reduce the costs of purchasing licenses to operate community radios. Finally, if indigenous communities have expressed the need and interest, organizations can provide funds for the communities to buy licenses to operate the radios.

Building capacity for innovation: Guatemala has one of the lowest rates of innovation of media and telecommunications infrastructure in Latin America. High quality access to telecommunication and media is primarily restricted to urban areas, which explains the low internet penetration. Organizations can partner with indigenous communities to enhance the telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas. Should indigenous communities indicate interest, organizations can support initiatives such as digitalization of community radio programming, development of mobile applications to access and share news, and enhancement of literacy and educational skills. If the communities have expressed an interest in developing or enhancing their capacity for creating programming, organizations can provide individuals with the equipment and skills to develop and disseminate media. If indigenous communities desire, organizations can also provide information technology skills training, such as coding and application development.

Enhancing media training and education: Guatemala has 5 accredited institutions for studying journalism: Universidad San Carlos, Universidad Rafael Landívar, Universidad del Istmo, Universidad Galileo and Universidad Mariano Gálvez. These universities face a lack of investment, which means that journalism students often do not have the required up-to-date equipment. As with all educational opportunities in Guatemala, the best opportunities for journalists and journalism students to enhance their skills lie in the capital city. Journalism training outside Guatemala City is often of low quality. Organizations can invest in developing the educational potential of communications and journalism courses in Guatemala.

They can provide students and professionals not just with equipment, but also opportunities for honing their skills by working alongside indigenous journalists (with the permission of the latter). Organizations can provide funds and institutional support for journalists to leave the capital city and engage with indigenous issues and people at the grassroots level. They can also imbue media literacy skills into the courses so that journalists can report indigenous issues with a decolonized, respectful, sensitive and representative approach.

Amplifying indigenous voices: Indigenous people have always been depicted through a colonial/neocolonial lens. Governments, media and other organizations alike have appropriated their culture to advance their own interests. This means that to truly achieve inclusion in the mainstream media infrastructure, indigenous people should get to represent and speak for themselves, rather than be represented or spoken for by non-indigenous stakeholders. Thus, organizations should refrain from producing content for indigenous people, unless asked by the respective community. Instead, organizations should partner with indigenous communities for building capacity and content. Preferably, organizations should conduct activities that enable the creation of content by indigenous communities. Organizations should be mindful of indigenous needs and not assume that their needs and priorities align with those of indigenous communities. Instead, organizations should carefully listen to the communities and develop strategies that meet the needs and priorities of all stakeholders.

Reframing migration: Instead of focusing on the act of migration, organizations should focus on causes of migration for Guatemalan indigenous people. Past and ongoing discrimination, violence, marginalization, underrepresentation and repression of indigenous people have manifested in poor educational, health, economic, political, developmental and social outcomes. These factors drive migration. By focusing on migration as a problem, organizations lose sight of the complexity of the Guatemalan political context and are thus unable to enact real change. By focusing on migration as a result of a series of systemic, historical and developmental problems, organizations can help indigenous people shape an inclusive Guatemala that provides the opportunities and resources they need.

This document is part of *The Guatemalan Indigenous Inclusion in Media Toolkit* prepared by Halea Kerr-Layton, Saiansha Panangipalli, and Alex Yandell