

# Sueños

## Annual Report 2020





## Students and families at Sueños

Sueños works with mostly indigenous children and their families, many who have migrated to urban Antigua from rural Guatemala in hopes of better economic opportunity. Many Sueños students are dedicated to sustaining the family economically through working when they are not in school.

Our students' families struggle to send their children to school because of the significant costs it adds to the household. Even when students make it to school they face discrimination based on their language, culture and socioeconomic status, and experience significant difficulties learning in Spanish, their second language.

Though most students at Sueños speak Ki'che as a first language, there is no school in Antigua or the surrounding area that provides classes in Ki'che or teachers that speak the language. Because of this severe language barrier, students are often unsuccessful in their first years of school. **Of students entering grade 2-5 at Sueños in 2021, 100% have failed and had to repeat at least one grade.** Repeating grades and falling behind makes it more likely for students to drop out before finishing primary school. Only 13.6% of mothers, and a third (33.3%) of fathers have finished primary school.

Guatemala also has one of the lowest literacy rates in Central America, especially for rural indigenous communities. All of these challenges mean that Sueños students need extra support to be successful in school.





Sueños' approach of community-centered learning allows students to learn and become literate in both Kiche and Spanish, while exploring topics that are important to their community. Their teachers are members of their community, creating trust and respect between families and the school. Parents are invited into the learning process through monthly workshops, parent-teacher conferences, monthly visits to the center where they help in the kitchen or classroom, and through opportunities of adult education.

Success for Sueños' students is envisioned as finishing primary school, and acquiring jobs that will provide them with economic stability, either through secondary education, various trades, or entrepreneurship.

## The Community We Serve

The families we serve are street vendors living in Antigua Guatemala. Families participate in various economic activities including shining shoes, selling candies and gum, selling fruit, selling traditional textiles and accessories, and selling lottery numbers, among others. 97% of the families registered in 2020 identify themselves as indigenous people or practice a Mayan language.

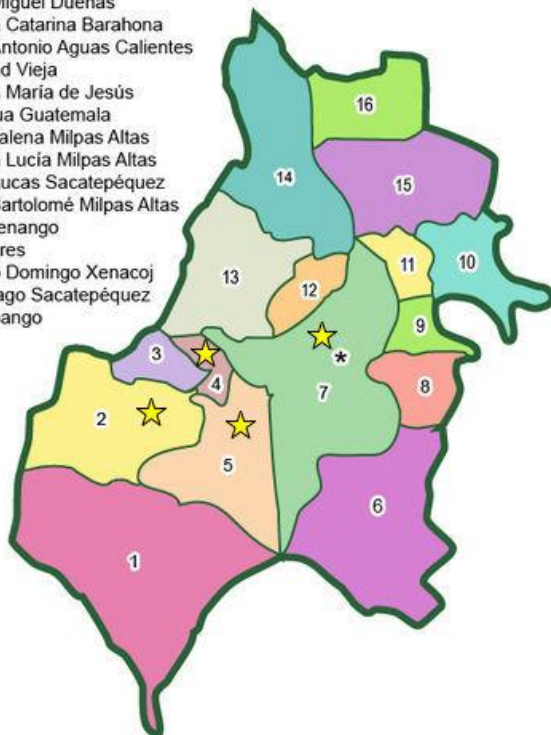
The families that participate in Sueños come from four departments:

-  Quiché
-  Totonicapán
-  Sololá
-  Sacatepequez



In 2020 the families participating in Sueños lived in a variety of municipalities and towns in Sacatepéquez, including:

1. Alotenango
2. San Miguel Dueñas
3. Santa Catarina Barahona
4. San Antonio Aguas Calientes
5. Ciudad Vieja
6. Santa María de Jesús
7. Antigua Guatemala
8. Magdalena Milpas Altas
9. Santa Lucía Milpas Altas
10. San Lucas Sacatepéquez
11. San Bartolomé Milpas Altas
12. Jocotenango
13. Pastores
14. Santo Domingo Xenacoj
15. Santiago Sacatepéquez
16. Sumpango

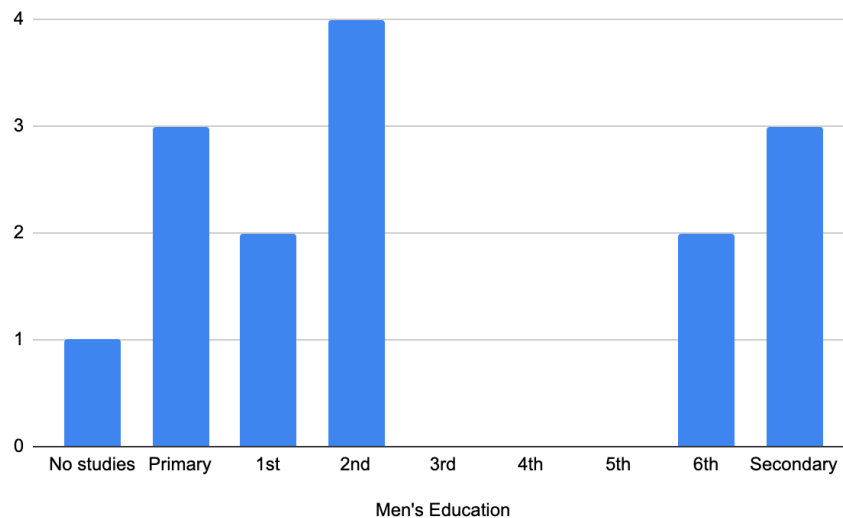
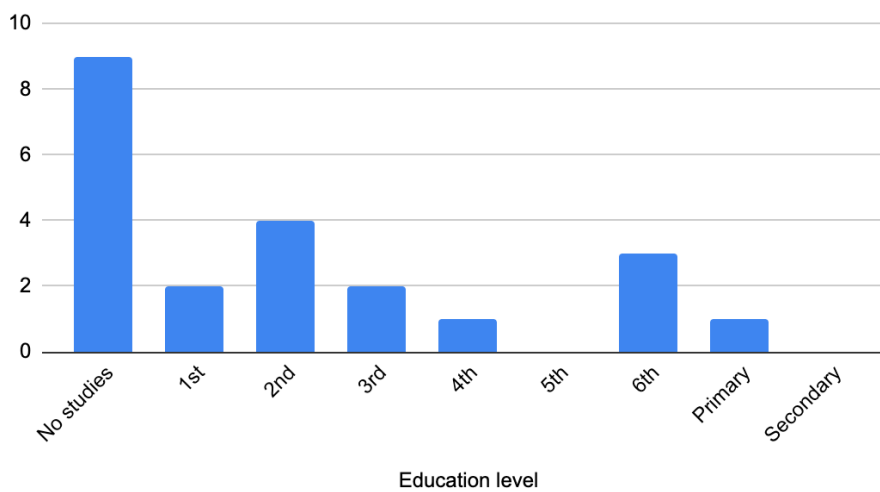


- Antigua Guatemala
- Santa Ana
- San Miguel
- San Miguel Dueñas
- San Antonio Aguas Calientes

Based on the 2020 enrollment data, parents have the following levels of education:

- 60% of fathers studied more years than their wives or female partners according to families that reported education data for both mother and father
- 20% of the fathers studied at least one year of secondary school, while 0% of the mothers did
- Only 13.6% of mothers finished primary school (6th grade), while a third (33.3%) of fathers finished primary school
- 40% of mothers never went to school, compared to only 6.7% of fathers

### Women's education



### Men's Education

## Our Team

The Sueños team is made up of two full-time Educational Facilitators, three part-time Community Facilitators, and an Executive Director fulfilling both an administrative and programmatic role. Additionally, we employ a part-time Community Outreach Coordinator.

Karla and Andrea, our Educational Facilitators, have degrees in teaching and studies at the university level. They plan and implement our main educational programs.

Silvia, Sandra and Belmo are Community Facilitators. They are community members who have previously participated in programs at Sueños. They are the principal connection between Sueños and the community. They lead communication with parents, co-teach in the classroom, manage the nutrition program, and allow Sueños to function bilingually in Spanish and Ki'che in all interactions.



# Programs

## Pre-Pandemic

### Soñadores

Soñadores was an academic enrichment program for primary school-aged students, from 7 to 14 years old. Soñadores operated 5 days a week in the afternoons from 1pm-5pm and Saturday mornings, 9am-1pm.

The Soñadores curriculum is project based, and students are challenged to use research, interpretation and analysis to solve real world problems that affect their communities. Students learn abilities related to reading, writing and critical thinking. Another integral element of the curriculum is an exploration of students' identity, beginning with learning about themselves, moving to their interaction with others, and finally focusing on their relation to the community. The last step is for students to form a "Lifetime Project" in which they use short and long-term goal setting to plan for their future.



#### Goals:

- Increase literacy to grade level
- Achieve higher measures of self esteem
- Achieve higher measures of critical thinking
- Achieve personal goals

Goal class size: 20 students

<b>Student data</b>	
Total participants in program Soñadores:	16
Participants with a minimum attendance of 80%:	7
Percentage of participants with a minimum attendance of 80%:	44%

<b>Family data</b>	

Number of families:	We began the year with the participation of 9 families.
Percentage of families that identify as indigenous:	88%
Percentage of families that speak a Mayan language.	88%; 6 families speak K'iche, two families speak Kaqchikel
Average income:	The average income at the beginning of the year has been Q1,000 (\$130), but the pandemic reduced the demand for street vendors in the park and the Antigua market. Most families had to send their children to work after confinement that lasted almost 6 months, in order to pay for their rooms and food.
Percentage of families that have migrated from outside of Sacatepequez:	56% of families have migrated from Quiché, Sololá and Totonicapán departments
Places where they currently reside:	6 of the families reside in El Chajón in La Antigua; two families are in San Antonio Aguas Calientes, one family in Ciudad Vieja

## Pequeños Soñadores

Pequeños Soñadores is an academic enrichment program for preschool age students. Students ages 3-6 attend Sueños 5 days a week in the afternoons, from 1-5pm, and Saturdays from 9am-1pm.

The Pequeños Soñadores curriculum is focused on developing early literacy skills as well as developing social skills, self esteem, and critical thinking. The program hosts monthly events for parents to learn more about helping their children with their school work and encouraging their development.

### Goals:

- Prepare students to be successful in primary school through early literacy (students' success in first grade statistically determines whether they will finish primary school)
- Achieve higher rates of preschool enrollment (in 2019 there were only 3 students enrolled in preschool in Sueños programs)
- Create a habit of attending Sueños academic enrichment program early on, before they even reach primary school



- Teach parents strategies for attending to their children's academic, social and emotional needs

Goal class size: 10 students

<b>Student data</b>	
Total number of participants:	17 children
Number of participants with a minimum attendance of 80%:	10 students
Percentage of students who achieved a minimum of 80% attendance:	58%

<b>Family data</b>	
Number of families:	15 families
Percentage of families that identify as indigenous:	93% of families identify themselves as indigenous
Percentage of families that speak a Mayan language.	73.26% of the families speak a Mayan language: 11 of the families speak K'iche.
Average income:	The income of the families was approximately Q1,200.00 (\$160) per month, obtained from informal work such as sales of candy, Mayan fabrics, handicrafts.
Percentage of families that have migrated from outside of Sacatepequez:	66.6% of the families come from other departments.
Places of origin:	Totonicapán, Sololá, and Quiché.
Places where they currently reside:	Antigua Guatemala, San Antonio Aguas Calientes and Ciudad Vieja.



## Estrellitas

Estrellitas is a daycare program for children from ages 18 months to 3 years. This pilot program provided daycare two mornings a week.

### Goals:

- Measure interest from families and need for a new, low-cost, daycare program in the center of Antigua
- Achieve fine and gross motor skills, autonomy, critical thinking, social skills, and problem solving skills through stimulation
- Create a habit of attending Sueños
- Create a positive link between parents and Sueños
- Create a higher demand for Sueños' programming

Goal class size: 6 students



Total number of participants:	4 children participated from January to mid-March.
Number of participants with a minimum attendance of 80%:	2
Percentage of students who achieved a minimum of 80% attendance:	50%

## CONALFA

CONALFA is a Guatemalan government program for teens and adults ages 15 and up who were unable to attend or finish primary school as children. In this program, students work in small groups to acquire literacy skills and complete the national curriculum in 3 years instead of the usual 6. The program is designed to last 10 hours a week and offer flexibility for working students. Students receive accreditation for each year of the program, equivalent to 1st grade (year 1); 2nd and 3rd grades (year 2), and 4th, 5th and 6th grades (year 3). CONALFA provides all training and materials for their program and pays facilitators directly. Sueños was responsible for recruiting the facilitators and students from the Sueños community.

### Goals:

- Strengthen students' support system by increasing parents stakes in their child's education and giving them the tools to be able to support them with school work at home
- Increase the literacy level of the community in general
- Provide a pathway to secondary school, job training, or formal jobs through primary education

Goal class size: 12 students

See the results of the CONALFA program under the “Pandemic Programs” section.

## Pandemic Programs

Covid-19 impacted education in Guatemala greatly, and therefore changed Sueños ability to support students' access to and quality of education. During 2020 **only 5% of students had regular contact with their teacher**. The overwhelming majority of students received weekly worksheets from school, but were provided with zero time virtually, in-person, or over the phone with a teacher. This meant that students were left to their own devices to learn any content from school from March to the end of the year (the Guatemala school year begins in January and ends in October). Since the majority of Sueños parents are illiterate it was simply impossible for many students to learn or complete school work in 2020 without the help of Sueños. Sueños provided in person tutoring for 3 families, and over the phone tutoring for the remaining primary level students from 6 families. In addition to tutoring, Sueños provided an emergency childcare center, food deliveries, consistent contact with families through weekly phone calls, opportunities for professional development for staff, and the CONALFA adult education program throughout the pandemic.

Number of families participating in pandemic programs (March-December 2020)	18 families were benefited with food deliveries or attended the Emergency childcare center.
Number of children participating in pandemic programs (March-December 2020)	36 children participated in pandemic programs at Sueños

## Emergency Childcare Center

The Emergency Childcare Center (ECC) was created in response to a rapidly rising number of sexual and domestic abuse cases in the Sueños community during the first months of the pandemic, with the goal of creating a safe space for children to be and learn despite schools and most public spaces being closed. The ECC opened two days a week, Mondays and Thursdays, giving Sueños staff the chance to see children and parents regularly.

Sueños chose 15 children from 7 families, all of whom had been involved in abuse cases, to participate in the program.

### New location

The new location allowed families from El Chajón neighborhood (Northern Antigua) to easily access



the ECC during the pandemic as it was located only 1-2 blocks from their homes. This allowed children to attend more regularly and for parents to pick up and drop off their children which was virtually impossible for parents in our previous locations where Sueños was responsible for picking up and dropping off children at the central park.

## Parent participation

One parent from each family was asked to participate in the ECC each month, either in the kitchen or classroom. A parent from each family successfully completed this requirement and we observed positive impacts on both parents and children from their participation: parents began speaking to their children differently, modeling after facilitators, after spending time in the ECC.



## K'iche Language

The ECC received only students whose first language was Kiche. **With the help of the Community Facilitators, in 2020 Sueños was able to teach in the first language of 100% of students at the ECC, compared to 0% of these same students receiving education in their first language in prior years at Sueños.** The Community Facilitators and their use of the K'iche

language has had an incredible impact on the ability of students to communicate effectively with their teachers, as well as on the ability of Sueños to communicate effectively with parents.

A facilitator's experience: "Fernando is a four-year-old boy. On Thursdays in the [ECC], the help that Silvia, the Sueños Community Facilitator, gave him was very noticeable; when Fernando had difficult moments, she managed to communicate with him in their first language and that helped him a lot."

## Psychology

In November of 2020 Ligia Galindo started volunteering as a psychologist, and was later hired in January 2021. During her time as a volunteer in 2020, 15 students received weekly group therapy about important topics such as sex education and sexual abuse prevention. Ligia also provided therapeutic counseling for a student who experienced sexual abuse and had been separated from her family during the legal process, as well as her parent.

## Strategic Goals: Literacy, Critical Thinking, Self-Esteem

Sueños has chosen three strategic focuses for all of its programs for 2020-2022. Below are some success stories about literacy, critical thinking and self-esteem at Sueños in 2020:

### Literacy

At the ECC, teachers conducted 35 literacy-focused lessons with all students.

“Aura, age 9, got over her frustration with reading and read 15 words by herself!”

“Yeni, age 4, showed a new interest in reading books accompanied by an adult. Prior to attending Sueños she didn’t have access to books.”

- Karla Xinic, Educational Facilitator



### Critical Thinking

Students explored projects about important issues going on in their community and discussed conflicts and potential solutions happening in their own classroom.

“Aura managed to reflect on the rights of children that must be respected by public entities such as the PGN (Child Services), the PNC (National Police) in circle time.”

“Yennifer began to help her friends in making decisions”

- Karla Xinic, Educational Facilitator

### Self Esteem

Sueños explores self-esteem from a culturally sustaining perspective. Children are given frequent opportunities to identify and share important elements of their culture such as language, customs and beliefs.

In addition, emotional intelligence is one of the key elements of the Sueños methodology; children are given daily opportunities to name and express their feelings in a safe environment.



A story from Andrea, educational facilitator:

“At first Yeni was very shy and had trouble integrating or interacting with other children. In the ECC space, Yeni had the opportunity to have a lot of personal attention from each of the [staff] team members that positively influenced her. She now communicates verbally and likes to play with other children. At Sueños children are given the freedom to express their emotions and not limit what they feel or how they react, which has also been very surprising, not only for Yeni, but also for many of the children.”

## CONALFA

The CONALFA program was able to continue throughout COVID, however it became much less accessible for students and many were unable to complete their coursework because of limited transportation or access to technology.

In the data you'll see that almost 70% of students were promoted, however only 38% of students finished their course work. CONALFA promoted students even though they had not finished their coursework against the facilitators and Sueños' recommendations. Due to this disagreement, Sueños decided not to continue working with CONALFA in 2021 and to wait until in-person classes were available again. Though Sueños is no longer a site for CONALFA, some students and Sueños staff continued the CONALFA program virtually in 2021.

Student data	Quantity	Percentage
Number of students who started the school year enrolled in CONALFA:	13	--
Students who plan to study in 2021:	3	23%
Promoted students:	9	69%
Students who finished the school year and were not promoted:	0	0%
Students who finished the school year:	5	39%
Number of students who finished primary school (6th grade):	5	--

## School Support

Public schools were closed from the beginning of the pandemic and remain closed presently (June, 2021). In some locations this meant that students began learning online, however for the families attending Sueños who don't have access to the internet and sometimes don't even have cell phones, learning was close to impossible. Families would pick up homework packets

at the schools every two weeks and were expected to complete the work on their own at home. Since the majority of parents, especially mothers who were most likely to be helping children with their homework, in the Sueños community are illiterate, the only support available for students to learn was through Sueños which we achieved with tutoring over the phone or with students in-person at the ECC.

<b><u>School impact</u></b>	
Number of children who attended tutoring (calls + ECC):	10 children were given tutoring from the month of September to the month of November through video calls on WhatsApp and through normal calls, and 4 students were provided tutoring at the ECC.
Number of students who started the school year in a school:	21: 17 elementary, 4 preschool students
Students planning to study the following year:	There are 28 students who will study at Sueños in 2021, and 8 who are going to continue studying in a public school, for a total of 36 students (Sueños received additional students during the pandemic explaining why there were more children studying at the end of 2020 compared to the beginning).
Students who finished the school year or promoted:	We did not receive data from students who did not decide to study at Sueños in 2021. Of the 9 primary and 4 preschool students who began 2020 in school and began studying at Sueños in 2021, 100% were promoted to the following grade, regardless of whether they finished the school year.
Grade Point Average	67%, Sueños students at the primary level had an average D grade, coinciding with not having received instruction for the majority of 2020. Preschool students do not receive numerical grades.

## Nutrition & Food Security

The beginning of the pandemic was difficult for families who were confined to staying home and could not do their work as street vendors. Due to the need observed for food security, Sueños was able to deliver food to families for four months. After this period, the families the most critical need were received in the ECC where students were given two meals a day.



Nutrition & Food Security Data	
- Food packages delivered to families	49 deliveries over 4 months
- Families who received food	17 families
- Approximate total number of people who benefitted from food deliveries	102
- Number of meals served at the ECC	900 in total, 60 per student

## Communication

It became a priority to maintain contact with families through phone calls and whatsapp groups since we were unable to see each other at first. For the first four months of the pandemic we operated a whatsapp group where we sent out weekly activities for parents to complete with their children. It was an opportunity to involve parents with their children's learning while the whole family was home.







After this period, Sueños opened the ECC and maintained weekly phone calls with all of the families, regardless of their participation in the ECC. These calls helped to inform us of students academic progress and general needs of the family during the pandemic, and eventually helped to inform decisions about enrollment 2021, which was determined based on:

- The economic need of the family
- Whether or not children had contact with a teacher in 2020
- Location close to our new center (important because public transportation didn't run for many months of the pandemic)

Communication throughout the pandemic allowed Sueños to help two families file sexual abuse reports, protecting their children. Sueños accompanied the families through the preparation and reporting process and supplied translators.

In addition, Sueños helped families to acquire access to healthcare by contacting the health center and emergency services for families experiencing health crises or COVID symptoms.

Communication Data	
Phone calls	155 calls to 17 families during 20 weeks from april to november 2020

## Professional Development

The change in activities due to COVID provided new opportunities for professional development. Our team members attended the following workshops and trainings throughout 2020:

- Mindfulness, Mindful Guatemala, January-February 2020
- Literacy Training, EJE Guatemala, March 2020
- Workshop on Emotional Regulation in early childhood, Division Educativa, November 2020
- Comprehensive Planning Course, Division Educativa, November 2020
- Trauma Informed Engagement, Life Adventures for All, October 2020
- Early Childhood Ed: Comprehensive educational proposals for children between 0 and 3 years of age, Division Educativa, May 2020
- Course Five Lessons Learned: The realities that COVID-19 uncovered in education, Division Educativa, May 2020
- Natural Physiological Development Diploma Course: the Pikler Approach, Division Educativa, June 2020 - March 2021

We also started a new habit of holding weekly meetings from home that gave us a chance to check-in, discuss issues in the Sueños community, and to hold internal workshops for professional development. During 2020 we held 39 of these meetings.

## Facilitating Teachers2Teachers Math Workshop

In 2020 the Sueños team presented their first math workshop online to a group of international



teachers for Teachers2Teachers Global Annual Math Conference. The topic of the workshop was using students' context to teach math during COVID. "It was a great challenge because it is something that has not been done as a team, we were very nervous, but it was a very positive experience for the whole team." - Karla Xinic, facilitator

## Fundraising

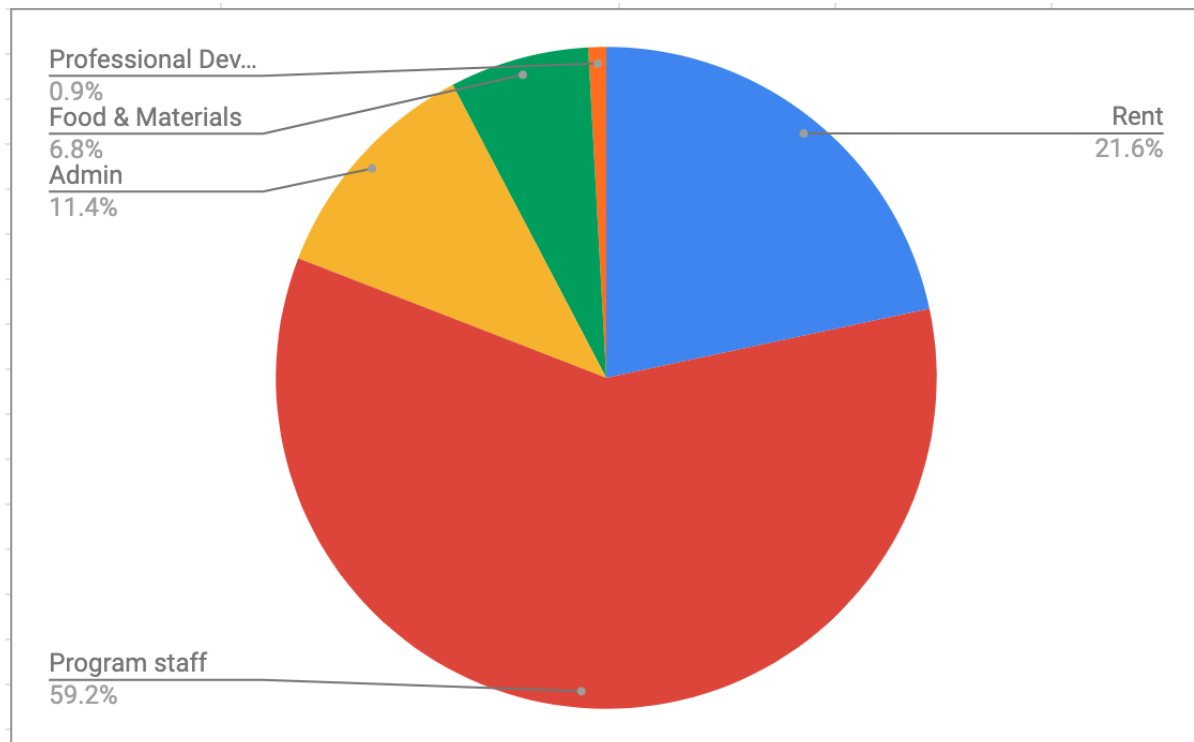
Total raised: **\$63,781.41 (January-December 2020)**

Large scale, private, annual donation	\$19,900
Gift Renewals/ Individual donors	\$35,474.27
Businesses	\$5,533.50
Local events	\$917.94
Volunteers	\$300
Trips	\$1,955.70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,781.41</b>

## Spending

Total Spending: \$66,619.09

The chart below shows how funds were spent in 2020. Over half of funds were spent on program staff, followed by rent, administrative staff, food and materials for programs, and lastly, professional development.



## Takeaways and Plans for 2021

Despite the fact that most primary school students were able to complete their course work with our help, and all students who finished their course work were promoted, we are certain that their learning was negatively impacted by Covid 19. There is no evidence that students acquired any meaningful learning this year from schools.

Based on our observations of learning, our conversations with families, and a repeated interest from multiple parents, in 2021 Sueños will provide education directly to families, taking over the role of the school, through two programs:

- **Preschool education:** Preschool education will be provided for students ages 4-6 with a continued focus on early literacy skills, critical thinking, and self esteem, as per our strategic goals (2020-2022). The program will be based on the Planting Seeds methodology, an early childhood program accredited in Guatemala. The program will accept 10-15 students who have demonstrated commitment to Sueños programs and a need for education.
- **Primary school education:** Primary school education will be provided by ISEA, a local homeschool program that will allow Sueños teachers to implement the curriculum and



will provide certification to students who complete the coursework.

This program costs approximately \$175 per student, a cost that will be absorbed by Sueños. Sueños will accept 10-15 students between the ages of 7-12 in grade 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Parents will save on the costs of public school education such as enrollment fees, uniforms, school supplies and books, and in turn will be required to participate in monthly activities and workshops.

## Thank you!

Thank you for your support of Sueños in 2020! We look forward to sharing more about the impact of our programs in 2021. You can continue supporting Sueños by [donating here](#).