

# Breast-feeding in Guatemala

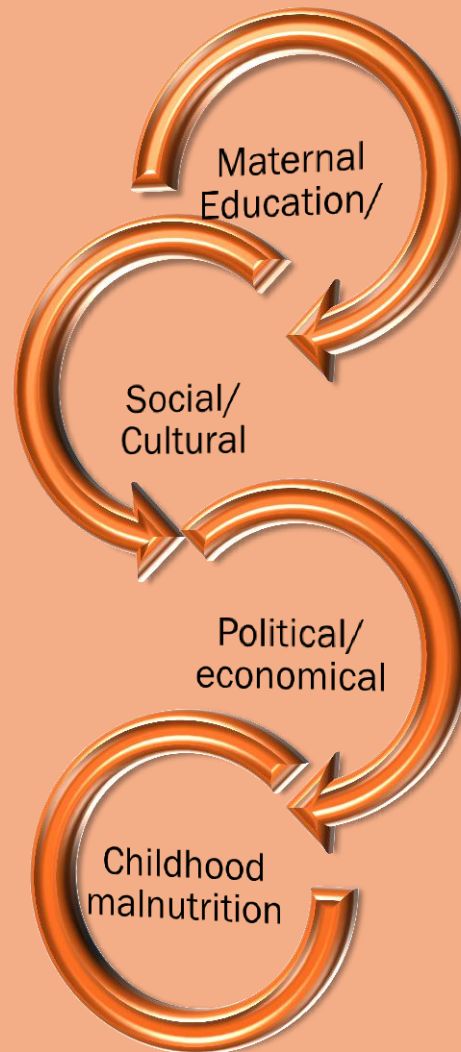
Project Proposal

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# Introduction



# Guatemala

- Highest rates of childhood malnutrition LTAM (Dearden, 2002)
  - 42% children <3 years old
- Low percentage of exclusively breastfed infants <5 months
- Unknown cultural practices ~~→~~ breastfeeding
- Unknown disconnect between breastfeeding promotional programs and infant feeding behaviors



# Background: Advantages of Breastfeeding

## Infant Feeding

- Nutritionally superior to any alternative.
- Contains immunoglobulins and maternal antibodies, including macrophages, lymphocytes, B-cells, T-cells, and secretory IgA.
- Bacteriologically safe, always fresh, and requires no preparation.
- Least allergenic of any infant food.
- Lower rates of diarrhea and other infections, including otitis media.
- Promotes G.I. tract maturation.
- Promotes jaw and tooth development.
- Babies are less likely to be overfed.
- May decrease a woman's risk for breast cancer.
- Less expensive than formula.
- Promotes infant-maternal bonding.
- Although postpartum weight loss occurs at a similar rate, breastfeeding women lose proportionally more body fat mass than do non-breastfeeding women.
- Infants appear to have advanced intellectual performance at age 5 years.

Source: Pediatric Nutrition Handbook, Feldhausen et al, 1996

- La Leche League
- UNICEF
- CONAPLAM
  - Law of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
  - Breastfeeding-Friendly Hospital Initiative
  - Milk Banks in hospitals

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## OBJECTIVE

- Analyze and identify cultural views on infant feeding practices by observing focus group discussions of Guatemalan mothers from multiple regions throughout the country.

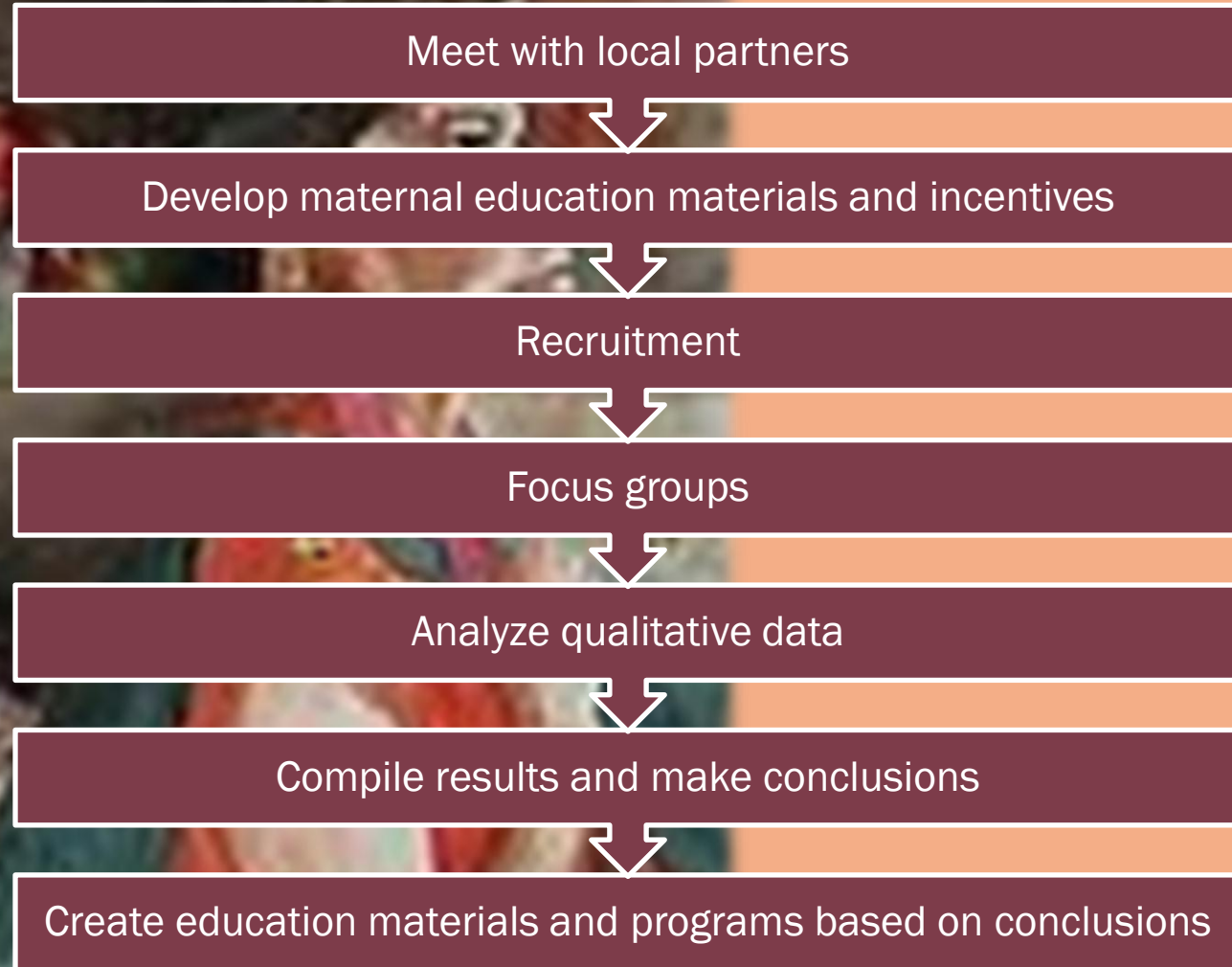
## Goal

- La Leche League, UNICEF and other local health groups will create educational materials that are better fitting to regional disparities regarding infant feeding practices through findings of the focus groups.



# METHODS

## Timeline flow chart



- Recruitment:
  - Fliers, door to door, local health organizations
- Focus Groups
  - 2 groups per region → 10 groups total
  - 10 mothers with at least one child <10 years per group
  - Group members randomly assigned to one of the two groups
  - Facilitators will be trained anthropologist. One per region

- Focus group regions:

- Huehuetenango

- Izabal

- Guatemala

- Esquintla

- Jutiapa



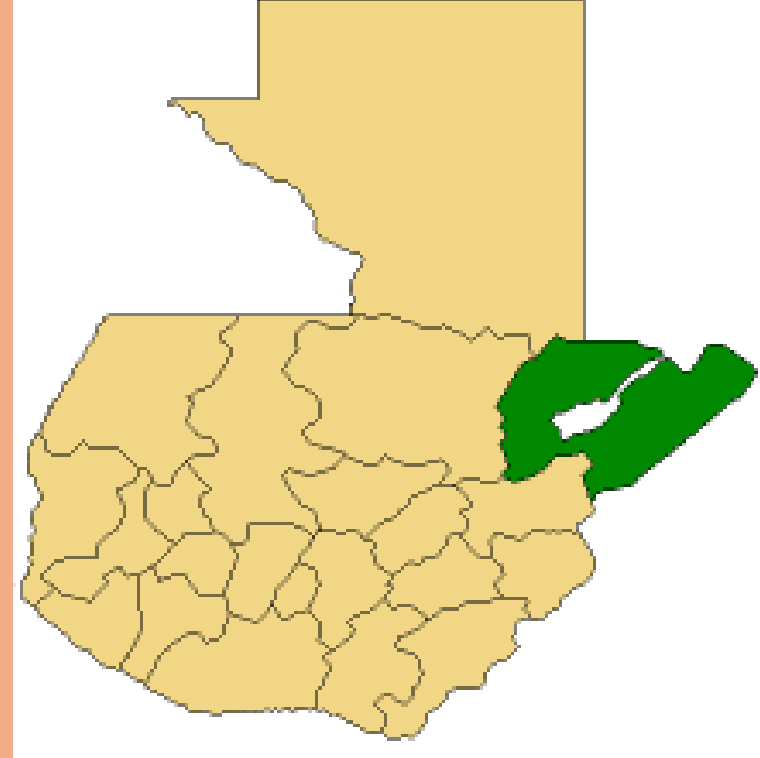
# Huehuetenango

- Demographic
  - Maya, Ladino
- Economy
  - Agriculture, artisanry
- Geography
  - Bisected by Sierra de Los Cuchamatanes (highest in Central America, 4,000M)
- History
  - Rebellion, political activism



# Izabal

- Economy
  - Trade/ commerce/ shipping
- Geography
  - Caribbean Seacoast
- History
  - Contains all seaports linking Europe to Guatemala



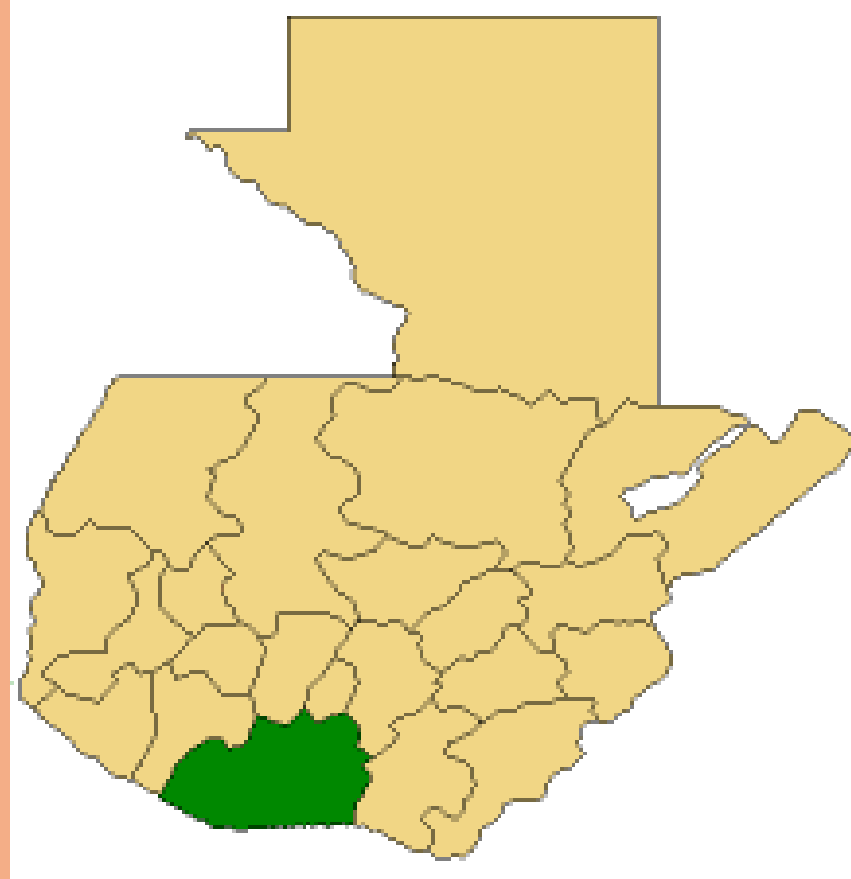
# Guatemala

- Economy
  - Agriculture, artisanry
- Geography
  - Bisected by Sierra de Los Cuchamatanes (highest in Central America, 4,000M)



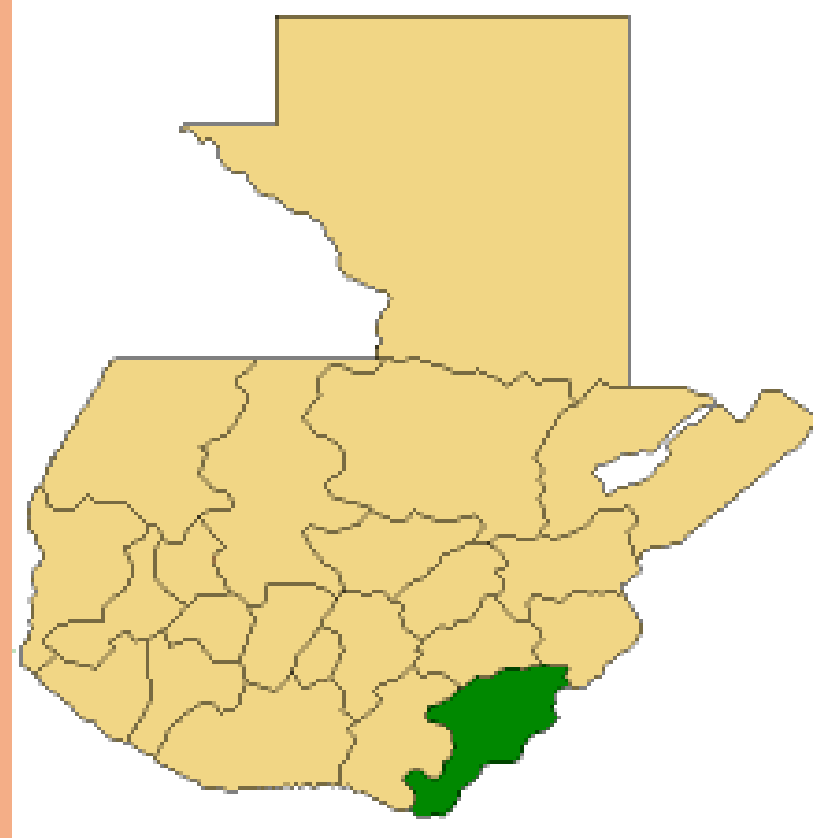
# Esquintla

- Geography
  - Mountains, forest, tropical lowland, Active volcanos, seaports
- Economy
  - Variety of industries
  - Agriculture: livestock, coffee, cardamom, sugarcane (main)
  - Tourism



# Jutiapa

- Geography
  - Mountains, beaches, volcanos
- Demographic
  - Ladino/mestizo
  - Spanish, Maya, African decent
- Economy
  - Agriculture, cattle ranching
  - Tourism





## Focus group topics

- *Breastfeeding knowledge*
  - What is your view on the importance of breastfeeding?
  - How long do you think is the appropriate duration to breastfeed?
  - Do you think that breast milk is enough to feed and nourish an infant?
  - At what age do you think that foods or drinks should be added to the infant diet
  - Does your community have a program that educates women about breastfeeding?



## Focus group topics

- *Maternal confidence*
  - How much control do you think you have over the overall improvement of your child's health
  - How long did you breastfeed your children? At what age did you introduce other drinks
  - Have you ever spoken to a health educator or professional about infant feeding? If so, who was it and how did you feel about the information received? How did you hear about them? Did you follow the suggestions given? Would you recommend other mothers to go to them?



## Focus group topics

- *Opinion*
  - What barriers do you see between healthcare providers and the public?
  - What could the programs in your community do to Increase health promotion outreach?
  - Do you want to see more involvement in programs such as UNICEF and La Leche League in your community? If so, do you have any suggestions that you think would help these programs improve?
  - What are the problems with the way the health education system is set up in your community?

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## Knowledge:

- La Leche League, UNICEF, and local health groups will create education materials
- Change in attitudes and beliefs toward breastfeeding
- Improved methods in regional breastfeeding education
- Improved cultural and situational awareness for local groups



Juanita - Guatemalan Mother

## Conditions:

- Health promotion materials and programs created which will focus on:
  - Child wellness and nutrition status
  - Improved growth and mental function
  - Reduced childhood morbidity
- Improved quality of life for mothers and children through self empowerment of nutrition knowledge

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

## Actions:

- La Leche League, UNICEF and other local health groups will create educational materials that are better fitting to regional disparities regarding infant feeding practices
- Application of breastfeeding knowledge
- Increased duration of breastfeeding
- Maternal confidence to improve health of their children
- Youth empowered with knowledge to make healthy decisions for their future children
- Increase health promotion outreach to more rural communities

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

- Coded using principles of grounded theory
- Software:
  - Nvivo9
  - Qualitative analysis software
- Transcription
- Translation
  - Spanish → English



# RESULT DISSEMINATION

- Debriefing held with Stakeholders
- UNICEF, La Leche League and other local programs to receive results to:
  - Improve current educational materials and tactics
  - Create new programs
  - Strengthen regional and cultural awareness

# POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS

- Study Design
  - Focus groups
- Structure of group discussion
- Language and cultural barriers
- Time limit

# PROJECT FOLLOW-UP PROPOSAL

- Analysis of education materials formed from qualitative data compiled from focus groups

# References

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