

Our Languages, Our Voices, Our Future

A Collaborative
Project for Language
Preservation and
Creative Learning





Original art by project board member and Q'anjob'al speaker, Gaspar Tomas

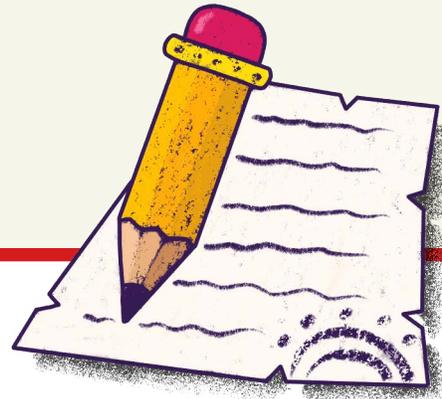
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Yadira Lemus Milián



CTB
Elementary
Student

AGE
10 years old



We would like to introduce you to our collaborative learning project with our community partner, Centro Tecnológico Bilingüe, a school located in Tukurú, Guatemala.

Among the bright and creative students of CTB is a budding young author we would like to highlight named Yadira Lemus Milián. Yadira's imagination and enthusiasm have shown through in the poems, stories, and drawings she creates for this project and are an amazing expression of herself and her connection to her Native Q'eqchi' language and culture.

POEM AND ILLUSTRATION

The Word Doctor

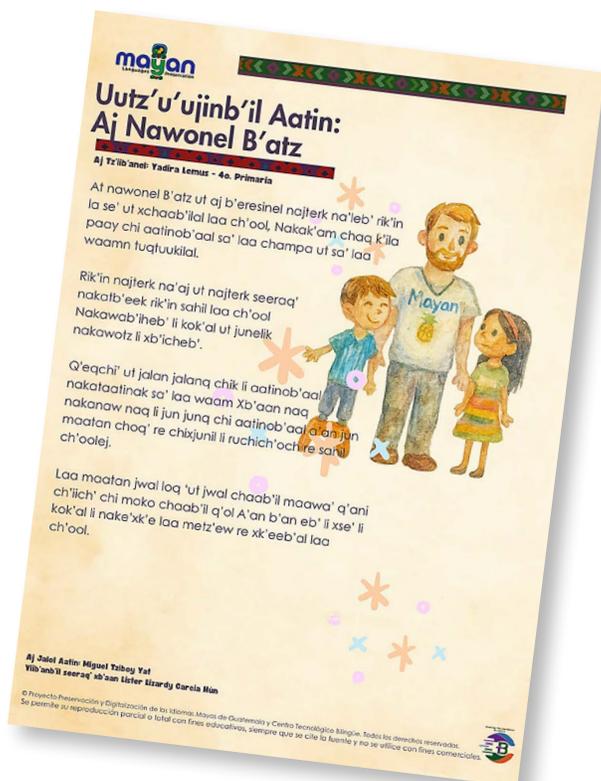
Along with many of the students at CTB Yadira has shared her talent in writing and illustrating many stories and poems for the project. Her favorite one is called “The Word Doctor” which is about a kind traveler who teaches the beauty of languages and encourages children to dream boldly.



DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

To be a Veterinarian and make a rescue for animals

She hopes to become a veterinarian one day and create a shelter for rescued animals. She says the project has inspired her to dream big by helping her find her voice, learn to express herself, and value her native Q'eqchi' language and she thanks Ms. Mila, Dr. Scott, and the project for supporting her and her community with this opportunity to show others what it means to be Maya.





Across our classrooms, students are discovering the power of storytelling. These students are not only immersed in learning about their cultures and languages, they are creating and dreaming in their own voices. The excitement and creativity for learning is transforming the classroom by inspiring confidence, affirming identity, and deepening cultural connection within each student.

Interactive Learning and Story Workbooks

CREATING OUR FUTURE

Students and staff use new technologies

At the Centro Tecnológico Bilingüe, students are proudly bringing the Q'eqchi' language to life through interactive learning and story workbooks initiative. These students have been hard at work creating original poems, stories, and fables celebrating their families, traditions, and the beauty of the land around them. Every page reflects creativity, confidence, and love for their language.



With the support of the Q'eqchi' Mayan keyboards developed by the Mayan Language Preservation and Digitization Project, students can accurately type their language's unique orthography, including special characters and diacritics often excluded from standard digital tools. This technology not only improves writing skills and digital fluency but also reinforces the importance of preserving linguistic identity in modern spaces.

Glyph description: Writing tool

LOOKING AHEAD

The Future of Our Collaboration



We are truly inspired by our partnership with the Centro Tecnológico Bilingüe. The creativity and passion these students bring to their Q'eqchi' stories and workbooks show the incredible possibilities ahead, not only for the school, but for all Indigenous language schools.



As this collaboration grows, we're excited to stand alongside the teachers and students, cheering them on as they explore new ideas, new technologies, and new ways to share their voices with the world. Together, we're helping build opportunities where Q'eqchi' culture and innovation lead the way. We can't wait to see all the amazing places this journey will take them.

Glyph description: Mountain





Every new word typed, spoken, or read is a step toward preserving our languages. Together with CTB we are building spaces where students and teachers work together to preserve their languages through hands-on interactive learning models.

HERE IS WHAT OUR TEACHERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE PROJECT



As a teacher, how do you think the project is improving student success?

“This project has helped the children a lot. They have come to value their native language, Q’eqchi’, and their second language, Spanish, which has helped them pronounce and write it well”.

How are students responding to seeing their languages and cultures represented in this work?

It’s helping the children become motivated and more imaginative. And it helps them want to write more stories.



Why do you think initiatives like this are important for cultural preservation and education?

It is important because we are able to support our community families in school to foster the value of our students’ native Q’eqchi’ language.

Mayan Languages Preservation and Digitization Project



L launched in May 2023 and aligned with the goals of the UNESCO International Decade of Indigenous Languages, the Mayan Languages Preservation and Digitization Project is a collaborative effort dedicated to preserving and promoting the linguistic and cultural heritage of more than seven million Mayan speakers in Guatemala. This open-source initiative, designed by and for Mayan language professionals across Guatemala, North America, and Central America, focuses on safeguarding 20 Mayan languages. It provides a digital space with glossaries, tools, and educational resources curated by native speakers to help address barriers such as limited digital infrastructure, low literacy, and the high costs of language digitization.

The project operates through a decentralized, community-driven model. A steering committee composed of Mayan language experts, partner representatives, and sponsor organizations including MasterWord Services, Inc. guides overall strategy. Day-to-day operations are carried out by the project team, with support from community moderators and language professionals who collect, verify, and digitize linguistic data. The

project administrator is Winston K. Scott, Ph.D., a cultural anthropologist with over 28 years of engagement in Mayan communities. Advisors include Baldomero Cuma, Kaqchikel author, teacher, philosopher, and Maya spiritual guide, and Misael Itzep, community elder and trilingual language professional.

Collaboration extends to community partners in Guatemala, such as language institutes, bilingual schools, indigenous media, and organizations including the Center for Technological Bilingualism, with ongoing partnerships expanding across multiple linguistic communities.

The project is grounded in ethical governance, prioritizing transparency, responsible data management, and respect for cultural and intellectual property rights. By digitizing and increasing access to Mayan languages, the initiative strengthens cultural identity, empowers community participation, and supports equitable access to education, economic resources, and broader opportunities.

Glyph description: Dream

LONG TERM GOALS

- Language preservation and digital access for speakers of Mayan languages.
- Creation of educational materials and textbooks in Mayan languages for Maya communities.
- Full maya community participation in the local and global economy.
- Equitable access to education, jobs, and socio-economic mobility for current and future generations.
- Opportunity for Mayan speakers to express themselves, explore, create literature and art, and to collectively determine their futures through linguistic and cultural models that they determine.





Mayan Languages Preservation and Digitization Project



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