



Why choose Pop Wuj? What makes us different?

The spirit of community is quite evident from the moment one ascends the stairs into our lobby. It is a beehive of activity that embraces students, highland villagers in native dress, and teachers. A community has arisen from our host families, scholarship families, daycare families, teachers, and students.

The quality of education and our unity with both the community and our students have meant that many Pop Wuj language students return again and again. Our biggest source of enrollment is endorsements from former students.

For further information, please visit our website
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CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS DE ESPAÑOL POP WUJ
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Spanish Immersion Program
Asociación
Pop Wuj



Centro de Estudios de Español Pop Wuj

Asociación Centro de Estudios de Español Pop Wuj (pronounced "pope-woo"), located in Quetzaltenango (Xela Ju) in highland Guatemala, is a collectively owned and operated Spanish language school. The school has been serving an international gathering of students since its immersion program began in 1992. Through a mix of intensive language study and social service projects, students come to a better understanding of the political, social, and cultural realities of Guatemala. The name Pop Wuj derives from The Book of Time, the great epic saga of the Maya-Quiché people.

Cooperatively owned by the teaching staff, Pop Wuj dedicates a large portion of its income to financing rural development projects, a small health clinic, and educational activities. Studying with us means that the money you spend will do more than teach you Spanish. You are welcome to join us directly on the projects, working side by side with the beneficiaries of your financial assistance and efforts.

The school is accredited with the Ministry of Education in Guatemala, and with prior arrangement, coursework can be used to secure college or continuing education credit.



Our Programs

We offer four distinct programs: a Spanish language immersion study, an excursion program that incorporates language study with cultural fieldtrips,

and two programs geared for students and professionals in the fields of Medicine/Healthcare and Social Work/Community Development.

All programs feature volunteer work projects. The Medical/Healthcare and Social Work/Community Development programs provide students with field placement and supervision in their professional practices.



Our Teachers

Our teachers are university educated and have had extensive training and experience in teaching Spanish as a second language. Many have

participated in conferences at universities and high schools in the United States and Europe on topics such as "The Mayan Cosmo Vision," "The Pop Wuj," and "Literature of Latin America."

Our teachers are familiar with and sympathetic to the needs of the beginning student, but are equally adept at teaching intermediate and advanced students. Many instructors are professionals in other disciplines such as law, agronomy, and anthropology.



Classes

Our teaching style is one-on-one with an educated native speaker of the language. The formal classes in Spanish are given four and a half hours a day, five

days a week. During the rest of the day and in the evening, the school offers a variety of activities that are designed to teach you something about Guatemalan and Latin American culture and history. We provide instruction in formal grammar, but the emphasis is always on the spoken

language. For intermediate and advanced students, we offer classes on Latin American and Maya-Quiché literature. When students complete their coursework, they receive a diploma in recognition of their studies and for their participation in community projects.

Classes run Monday through Friday, with morning or afternoon sessions. We recommend a minimum of three weeks for maximum benefit. Nonetheless, one to two weeks can certainly be enough time to dust off high-school or college Spanish, improve grammar and vocabulary, and learn about a fascinating country and culture.

The school has coordinated placements with nine organizations and collaborates with six NGOs, one public hospital, two government health centers, one private rural midwifery clinic, and the Pop Wuj clinic.



Home Stay

The majority of our students opt to live with a Guatemalan family in the city of Xela. The principal advantage of a family home stay is the invaluable

practice one receives by the continuous use of Spanish.

Our host families provide students with three meals a day, safe drinking water, a private room, and a hot shower. Most importantly, they offer good company, a sample of the legendary Guatemalan hospitality, and some lasting friendships. The living conditions of an average host family are equivalent to a working-class U.S. family.

Should you choose not to stay with a host family, Xela offers residential hotels, rooms, and apartments for rent.

Activities



Throughout the day and into the evening, Pop Wuj offers a variety of activities designed to teach you something about Guatemalan and Latin American culture, history, and politics. These include films or

videos, lectures, and round-table discussions. At least once a week we take a trip to a local area of interest such as the indigenous market at San Francisco El Alto, the Fuentes Georginas in the mountains above Zunil, or the archeological park of Abaj Takalik. Every Friday night we have a fiesta and dinner to celebrate the graduations of our departing students.



Projects at Pop Wuj

The heart and soul of Pop Wuj are its projects. We support Guatemalan students with scholarships to complete their primary, secondary, and college

educations. Sources of these funds include money donated from the school's profits, donations from former students, and a grant made by the Isabel Allende Foundation.

Hands-on service projects involve building latrines and fuel conserving wood stoves. These projects are vital in combating intestinal problems and respiratory ailments—two of the most common causes of death in the Guatemalan highlands. Projects are a joint effort: villagers contribute in-kind materials and work alongside the students. Our Daycare Center at Llanos de Pinal serves 35 pre-school and school age children. Pop Wuj students come weekly to play with the children, help with homework, and organize outings.