

Maya Traditions Foundation

IMPACT REPORT
2015



Letter from our **DIRECTOR**

DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

2015 was an incredible year for Maya Traditions and I am excited to share with you our first ever Impact Report. This report details our performance and the changes we've seen in the rural Guatemalan communities in which we work, after partnering with indigenous female artisans and their families for over twenty years.

Over the years, we have adapted to and grown with our artisan partners, ensuring that the organization is best meeting their needs and offering the necessary tools to provide a path to economic opportunity and personal growth and development. As we look back on our efforts in 2015, we see not only the successful implementation of various activities and trainings, but also the impact of quality programming and strong partnerships on our artisan partners and their families.

Our community of donors, retail and design partners, and friends around the world have been integral to the impact we've had in our focus areas of Fair Trade and social programming. Each one of you is key to our success and impact, providing critical resources, strengthening existing programs and activities, and supporting indigenous female artisans as they work to reach economic stability.

As we embark upon new initiatives and a course for future growth and impact, we would love you to join us. Please donate today to support our work.

On behalf of our talented artisan partners, we thank you for your continued partnership. We look forward to what we will accomplish in 2016.

With gratitude,



Erin Kokdil

Director

Artisan Cooperatives



Los Pinos of Patantic



Qato Q'ib of Chirijox



Flor Juanera of San Juan La Laguna



Chuwila of Quiejel



Artesana Nawal Ja' of Nahualá



Flor Clarensense of Santa Clara La Laguna



Waqxaqi' Kan of Chuacruz



La Voz de los Tz'tujiles of San Juan

artisan information



NUMBER OF ARTISANS IN EACH COOPERATIVE

Los Pinos of Patantic	6 Artisans
Qato Q'ib of Chirijox	16 Artisans
Flor Juanera of San Juan	14 Artisans
Chuwila of Quiejel	10 Artisans
Artesana Nawal Ja' of Nahualá	8 Artisans
Flor Clareense of Santa Clara	8 Artisans
Waqxaqi' Kan of Chuacruz	14 Artisans
La Voz de los Tz'tujiles of San Juan	18 Artisans

our artisan partner **AT A GLANCE**

Since the late 1980s, Maya Traditions has been partnering with cooperatives of indigenous female artisans. These deep-rooted relationships support generations of women refine their art, ensure payment of a fair price for their work, and foster the growth of strong communities. Today, Maya Traditions partners with over 90 skilled female artisans who practice 4 different artisan techniques.

AVERAGE AGE

42.3

Artisans' ages range from 21-75

THE MAJORITY OF OUR ARTISANS ARE

Married

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN

4.4

Number of children range from 0-12

AVERAGE AGE STARTED WEAVING

12

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

2.8

Maya Traditions respects cultural work patterns and the multiple roles that many indigenous women fulfill in their daily lives, such as mother, household manager, and provider for their families. Our artisan partners work from the comforts of their own home which allows them to have a flexible schedule and attend to their many responsibilities.

ARTISAN DEVELOPMENT *program*

Our Artisan Development Program was launched in 2009 to further support our artisans in their personal and professional growth. Today, the Program offers capacity building support, promoting the well-being of the artisan and her family.



On average our artisan partners participate in
5
personal and professional development trainings per year.

98% of our artisan partners contribute to their overall household income.

36% of our artisan partners work for additional organizations.

This data is compiled and analyzed from all 8 of our partnering artisan cooperatives.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: *literacy program*

This year, nearly a third of our artisan partners participated in the Education & Empowerment Literacy Workshop Series. The artisans met weekly for ten weeks in Panajachel to focus on improving their reading and writing skills through dynamic activities such as storytelling and singing. This is the third year Maya Traditions was able to offer these trainings, thanks in part to our partnership with A Heart for Guatemala.



1996- Maya Traditions Foundation is founded to help skilled indigenous female artisans improve their quality of life while preserving their culture through facilitating access to a Fair Trade global marketplace.

Catarina's STORY



One day 35 years ago, Catarina Flaviana Tambriz and a couple of other women from the Qato Q'ib weaving cooperative in Chirijox went to Quetzaltenango to sell their weavings. Like many women who practice the traditional art of backstrap weaving, Catarina learned the trade from her mother when she was 13 years old. As the oldest of eight children in her family, she had to stay home to take care of her siblings and never had the opportunity to attend school. As fate would have it, that day while in Xela, the women of the cooperative became acquainted with Jane Mintz, the founder of a new organization, Maya Traditions Foundation.

Shortly after meeting Jane, the women of the Qato Q'ib cooperative began working with Maya Traditions. As artisan partners, they were able to participate in the many Artisan Development Program workshops that are regularly available to members of the cooperatives. The Program includes literacy, business development, and reproductive health among several other classes and workshops.

After taking a Maya Traditions sponsored workshop to learn how to make salves to treat issues such as parasites, Catarina began to treat her own children. Word quickly spread throughout her community of how well the treatments worked, so she began treating children of other women in the community. While other traditional healers in nearby communities charged 15 to 25 Quetzales per treatment, Catarina would only charge 5 Quetzales and those who could not afford to pay would not have to. Since she learned



how to make the treatments by hand from the workshop and did not have to purchase medicine at a pharmacy, she could afford to offer a reduced cost to her neighbors.

At first, she and some of the other women thought the workshops would

be a waste of time better spent at home, but as Catarina shares, “now I see it’s not a waste, sometimes it’s better than money, to receive a workshop, a talk, to better organize your family and to give your child an education. For that reason, I think Maya Traditions has been a great support.”

The Artisan Development Program workshops help Catarina and her weaving partners strengthen their skills, increase the quality of their products, learn technical skills such as sample making, and gain access to larger markets. Today, six of eight of Catarina’s children are working professionals with the other two soon to graduate from high school. Due in part to her participation in the Artisan Development Program workshops, **Catarina is a leader within her cooperative and has significantly contributed to the education and health of her family and community.**

COMMUNITY HEALTH *program*

The Community Health Program, which initially launched in 1997 to support artisans with mobile clinics focusing on preventative healthcare, has shifted focus to center on the preservation and promotion of traditional Maya medicine and knowledge. Through our partnerships with the Atitlan Ajq'omanela Association—an association of Maya healers—we strive to revitalize traditional Maya knowledge and the use of medicinal plants for preventative and curative health. We collaborate with the Association to implement programs such as workshops in schools for youth about medicinal plants and Maya cosmovision, day clinics for traditional healers in community healthcare centers, distribution of free medicinal plants and plant-based products, and educational tours of our medicinal plant garden for artisans and students.



Program Highlight: Partnership with WINGS

In August, we held a two-day workshop for fourteen local midwives with our partner organization WINGS. The main aim of the workshop was to strengthen and enhance the midwives' education in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights. This includes learning about sexual infections and the different methods of family planning. "The workshop was extremely helpful for us. We learned about different methods of birth control that we didn't know before. Family planning is a big taboo in my community. Working with women in my community, I understand the high need of family planning and now am able to provide strong advice on different methods" (Elena, midwife in San Pedro La Laguna).



1997- Community Health Program launched, initially to support artisans with mobile clinics on preventative healthcare. Over the years, the Program shifted to focus on the preservation and promotion of traditional Maya medicine and knowledge, and the use of medicinal plants to treat common illnesses.



JUAN'S STORY

Juan Pacach was nineteen years old when he found a piece of bone on a construction site in Santiago Atitlán. Without thinking much about it, he put it in his pocket and continued working. Days passed, and that small piece of bone kept appearing in his dreams. Once he even recalled the dresser, where it was stored, making a loud noise, only to find the bone, undisturbed. Weeks passed, and Juan finally decided to seek the meaning of all that was happening. He went to a local spiritual guide, and there he learned of his destiny: to become a bonesetter.

The Maya people believe the Ajq'omanela', or Maya healers, have

been granted a “don,” or gift to heal. This gift—passed on by ancestors or known intuitively—comes with a sense of commitment to the community to carry out the duties of a healer. Juan has been a bonesetter for over 15 years and remembers his grandmother and other relatives in his house practicing traditional Maya medicine when he was a child. Juan does not charge people who seek his help, as it is an obligation to fulfill his destiny as a healer for his community.

Juan works with Maya Traditions Foundation to provide traditional treatments in rural communities. One rainy day in August, Juan and

other Maya healers held a health clinic in Chuacruz—one of the communities where Maya Traditions Foundation has a cooperative of fourteen artisan partners. Using herbs grown in Maya Tradition's Organic Medicinal Herb Garden, the healers served more than sixty community members who had a variety of illnesses. In his own words, Juan shares, “Maya Traditions Foundation prioritizes the importance of preserving our culture—we grow medicinal plants in the Organic Medicinal Herb Garden and we distribute tinctures, salves, teas, and herbs to rural communities. We work to preserve the wisdom of our ancestors.”

These are the totals of the medicinal plant products used during the health clinics attended by **249** community members, which were held this year in San Juan, Quijel, Chrijox, Chuacruz, and San Lucas:

205

1-oz bottles of tinctures



223

1/2-oz containers of salves



1200

bunches of fresh plants
[approximately ten leaves per bunch]



531

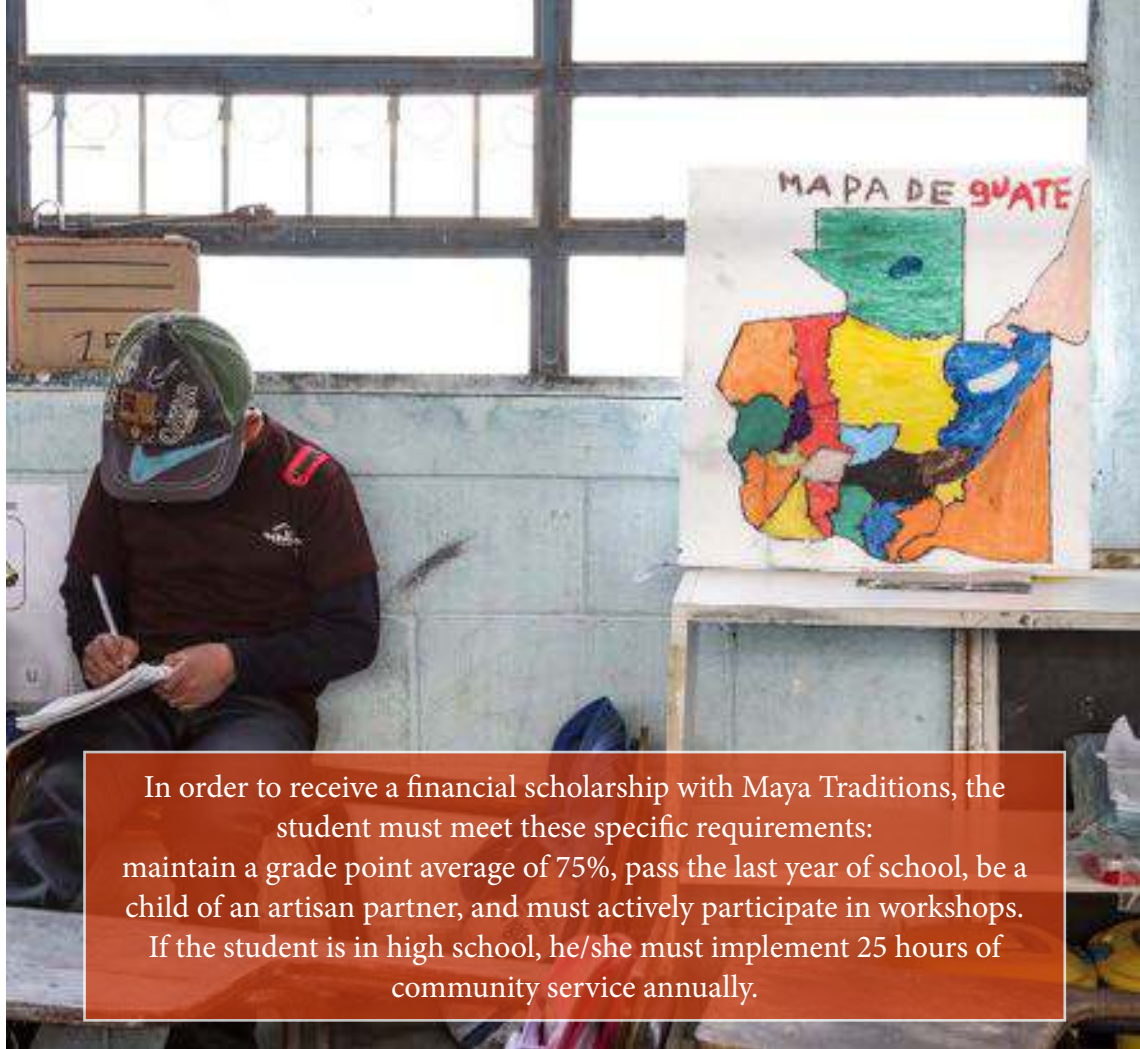
1-oz bags of tea



1997- Maya Traditions Foundation Organic Medicinal Plant Garden was established by founder Jane Mintz and doctor and herbalist Anabella Perez

YOUTH EDUCATION *program*

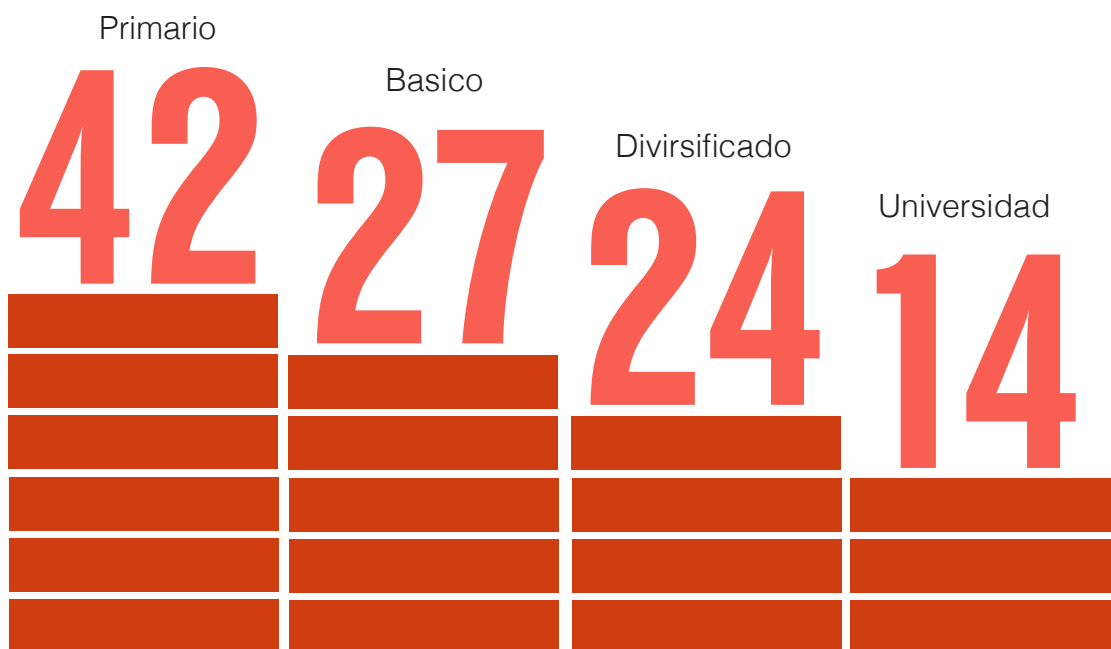
Our Youth Education Program was launched in 1997. Due to high poverty levels and cost of education in Guatemala, many indigenous families must send their children to work in order to contribute to the family's income. Our founder Jane recognized a need to support the artisans and their families beyond a fair payment for their work. Today, we partner with Maya Educational Foundation and individual donors to offer financial scholarships and personal & professional development trainings year-round.



In order to receive a financial scholarship with Maya Traditions, the student must meet these specific requirements: maintain a grade point average of 75%, pass the last year of school, be a child of an artisan partner, and must actively participate in workshops. If the student is in high school, he/she must implement 25 hours of community service annually.

Total number of scholarships by grade

Primario is through 6th grade, básico is through 9th grade, and diversificado is through 12th grade.



1998- Began the Doll Project—creating indigenous female dolls representing the four groups of women weavers we work with, and providing artisans with a source of pride and steady work.

“...only with education can one develop in their life, enter professional spaces, and **help those who have the most need.**”

DOMINGO VASQUEZ

Domingo Vasquez is a college graduate, the head of productivity and development of a Guatemalan foundation, and the father of three children—ten year old Astrid and nine year old twins Maydelin and Estuardo. He is also the fifth of nine living children born to Elena Mendoza Panzay, one of the founding members of the Flor Juane-ra Cooperative in San Juan La Laguna. Domingo is the first of Elena’s children that she could afford to send to school, and she counts him graduating from high school with top grades and completing college as some of the events she is most proud of in her life.

It is by no means a stretch to say that Domingo was lucky in having the opportunity to go to school. In fact, it was only because he was born when he was that Elena could send him to school. Elena married at 18 and had her first child at 19. She grew up very poor and like so many born into and living in poverty, her parents did not send her to school. As a young family, Elena and her husband dreamed of sending all of their children to school, unfortunately her husband’s income as a day laborer was inadequate to do so. As a result, the first four of their children did not attend school. However, Domingo, being the fifth child born and the first to receive a scholarship from Maya Traditions Foundation, was able to attend school.



By the time Domingo was school age, Elena was working as a weaver with the Flor Juanera Cooperative, which came together in 1992. The co-op was formed to increase the income of its members through suitable employment, allowing them to provide a better life for the children in the community and to preserve the Maya Tz’utujil culture. The founding members of the cooperative, including Elena, worked closely with Maya Traditions Foundation founder Jane Mintz to learn the ins and outs of making high quality products. With her extra income and the scholarships Maya Traditions Foundation provides to all the children of the artisan partners, Elena was able to send Domingo and the rest of her children—Nicolasa, Elena, Jose, and Carlos to school.

Despite the circumstances in which Elena and her children were born, the significance of education has permeated throughout the generations. Elena can see the impact education has had on Domingo’s life and believes they are a happier family because of that. Domingo views education as a fundamental part of communities, and like his mother,

wants all of his children to finish high school and college so they can have more opportunities in life and the chance at a better future for themselves and their communities. In his own words, “only with education can one develop in their life, enter professional spaces, and help those who have the most need.”

1999- Maya Traditions Foundation launches its first website

2000- Maya Traditions Foundation moves into our office in Barrio Jucanya, our headquarters to this day

COMMUNITY *tourism*

The Community Tourism Program provides artisans and healers with additional income-generating opportunities and supports them as they share their rich cultures with local and foreign visitors. Currently, we offer tours to visit the cooperatives in their villages, a Maya medicine tour, and weaving classes.

The Community Tourism Program educates people about Fair Trade and traditional Maya cultures and art. The up-close and intimate nature of our cultural exchanges ensures that visitors come away with a



clear understanding of why Fair Trade is important and its impact on women artisans in Guatemala.

With every tour and visit to the community, both artisans' and healers' confidence, competency, and communication skills have improved significantly.



It was a lovely and meaningful time, which allowed us all to put into perspective the amazing amount of artistic skill and care that these women have. Watching the weavers demonstrate their work, as well as teach it to our students at Colegio Maya, enriched our understanding and increased our respect for this ancient art form.

- MARGARET KESSEL, visitor

This Program has provided me with a beautiful opportunity, allowing me to share my town and culture with tourists. I have learned a lot about customer service and how to communicate with foreigners.

-MARIA CECILIA MENDOZA COCHÉ, artisan partner



MULTIPLIER *effect*

Maya Traditions maximizes our impact through partnering with women. It is estimated that girls and women spend 90% of their earned income on their families, while men spend only 30-40%.¹ When we invest in one woman, we invest in a generation.

Through earning a fair price for their work, Maya Traditions' artisan partners are able to support other women in their communities. Together, we have seen the power of indigenous women working together to strengthen their communities. [1] UNAC, 2012

JUANA & YOLANDA

Juana has five children and a husband who is unemployed, so to keep a roof over her family's head and food on the table, she works odd jobs for Yolanda and other women in the community. Yolanda is one of nearly 100 indigenous artisans who work with Maya Traditions Foundation. With the extra income she earns as one of the senior weavers in her cooperative, Yolanda is able to employ and financially help other women and families, like Juana's. Every Saturday morning, Juana and a few of her children can be found working at Yolanda's house. Juana spends the morning hand washing the clothes of Yolanda, her two children, husband, and mother-in-law in the pila, a large traditional outdoor sink, a monumental task for any one person to tackle.

While Juana works away at the laundry, her children are nearby removing corn kernels from ears of corn that had been drying for several months. The process for the children begins



by beating a 20 pound bag filled with the dried ears of corn with a stick to loosen the kernels. They then remove each kernel from each cob by hand. In a few hours, they refill the bag with more dried corncobs and begin again.

At lunch time, Yolanda's husband and son come home from work and the family, including Juana and

her children, even the children who didn't work for Yolanda that day, eat lunch together. Not only does Yolanda feed all of Juana's family, she also provides her with a regular source of income by paying her and the children for all of their work.

The combined incomes of Yolanda and her husband have afforded them many benefits, including a comfortable two-bedroom home with an indoor flush-toilet bathroom, a separate room for Yolanda to work on her weavings, and enough land to grow corn and other crops to feed her family. Yet, the wage Yolanda earns from weaving ethically sourced, Fair-Trade products goes deeper than in her own pockets. As noted by Yolanda's story, Maya Traditions has had an immeasurable impact on the lives of countless indigenous women in rural Guatemala. Indigenous women helping other indigenous women and working together to strengthen their communities epitomizes the Maya Traditions' mission of weaving culture with opportunity.



**“Maya Traditions reflects our deepening commitment to work with Maya women in preserving textile traditions as well as bettering their lives economically.”
-Jane Mintz, founder**

DONATE

Maya Traditions is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code in the United States, EIN 98-1128490. All US donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Our goal is to communicate accurately and effectively the impact of our work on our artisan partners and their communities to Maya Traditions Foundations friends, family, and stakeholders.

Whenever possible, we used industry-aligned indicators and best practices to collect and analyze the most relevant data while limiting the burden on our artisan partners. The metrics reported are estimates based on self-reported data collected between August 2014 and August 2015.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS: PHOTOGRAPHERS WITHOUT BORDERS: ROBYNE HAYNES, KELLY GIARROCCO, MARLENE WALTER, KARIM ILIYA

- 2009-** Artisan Development Program launched to further support artisans’ personal and professional growth
- 2012-** Nawal Ja’ Cooperative of Nahuala founded
- 2012-** Maya Traditions Foundation began collaborating with Unlocking Silent Histories
- 2013-** We expanded our Youth Education Program to introduce university scholarships
- 2014-** Maya Traditions Foundation goes through an organizational rebranding to transition into a social enterprise model and works toward sustainability
- 2015-** Became a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization in the United States