



Fundación Tradiciones Mayas

Tejiendo la identidad cultural con oportunidad
Weaving culture with opportunity



Annual Report
2012



Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to report that 2012 has been a very busy and successful year for the Foundation. After assuming the role as Executive Director in late 2011, I have been working hard to help the organization address long-term sustainability issues, which will permit it to carry on with the mission and vision that our Founder Jane Mintz established. Three years after Jane's passing, I feel we are well on the way to ensuring that the organization will thrive in meeting stakeholders' needs by providing high-quality, culturally-appropriate social programs that are designed to empower indigenous artisan women, their families, and communities.

In 2012, we were grateful to receive follow-up funding from First Peoples Worldwide Fund of the Tides Foundation to continue our education and advocacy work with indigenous traditional healers, guiding them in establishing a strong network of healers, providing health services in their local communities, and helping young people become more aware of the role of traditional medicine in the Maya culture.

Additionally, with the support of our talented and dedicated volunteers, we have expanded our webpage which has increased our presence in social media sites. We are indebted to their hard work and willingness to help us increase interest in our achievements and continued dedication to empowering women.

We are also happy to relay our continued and expanded collaboration with the Maya Educational Foundation. We are thankful for their support of our continued efforts to provide access to formal education for the children and youth of the artisans with whom we work. In 2012 we have offered workshops and guidance to students who have subsequently committed to sharing the resources we have identified to their local communities.

We have also had changes in staff. We are pleased to welcome our new Programs Coordinator, Marisol Morales, who brings experience working with numerous non-profits as well as an amazing ability with languages (she speaks K'iche, Kakchiquel, Spanish and English!). We also welcome US-born, long-time Australian resident Pamela Halouvas, who has been instrumental in helping to develop marketing, product design, and business strategies that are instrumental in leading us on the path to sustainability.

On behalf of all of the staff here at FTM, I wish to thank the many Fair Trade clients, organizations, and individuals whose support of our activities motivates us as a team and enables us to work continuously towards becoming a leading Fair Trade social enterprise that enriches community culture, nurtures creative growth, and creates opportunities for economic sustainability.

MarcelleRenkin
Executive Director



What We Do

As a non-profit social enterprise, Maya Traditions is dedicated to facilitating access for 180 Maya backstrap weaver artisans and their families in the highlands of Guatemala to national and international markets. Following a Fair Trade model, we seek to increase our artisans' access to formal education, health care, and personal development of entrepreneurial skills in a manner that is culturally appropriate and motivates indigenous women to strengthen their entrepreneurial ecosystems. Maya Traditions' complementary social programs currently reach out to more than seven different indigenous communities and more than 500 artisan family and community members with whom we work. We are conscious of an ever-competitive market for handmade artisan goods, and we are committed to expanding our services to meet the emerging needs of indigenous artisan women.

Mission

To empower and improve the quality of life for Maya women artisans and their families through education-driven social programs and market access to International Fair Trade and artisanal networks, which focus on Maya culture and traditions that contribute to the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge, art, and culture in Guatemala.

Vision

To be a leading Fair Trade social enterprise that enriches community culture, nurtures creative growth, and creates opportunities for economic sustainability.





2012 Overview

In 2012, we implemented the process of transitioning out of FTM-centered production and began to focus more on educating and empowering artisan women to be able to manage their own small, independent businesses while becoming more involved in the production process. The new direction for our Fair Trade Market Access Program is to ensure that the artisans with whom we work will become more autonomous and gain the ability to diversify and increase their income as well as improve their quality of life. We are happy to report that the early stages of this process have proven to be successful and we look forward to investing further in the education and empowerment of our artisan women in 2013.

Brief History

In 1988, Maya Traditions founder Jane Mintz, an experienced social worker and weaver, first began working with indigenous women artisans in Guatemala. After practicing social work for many years in the United States, she retired and became a tapestry weaver and teacher. While searching for weaving arts, she arrived in the Lake Atitlan area of Guatemala where she fell in love with the country and the people. Jane observed that the Maya women's skill of backstrap weaving offered a chance for them to earn more stable incomes and support their families. Maya Traditions was founded in order to help these skilled artisans improve their quality of life while preserving their culture by facilitating access to a Fair Trade global marketplace. Jane began to assist them with their designs, improving the quality of their work to make it more marketable in the United States.



FTM Founder Jane Mintz

In 1996, Jane and anthropologist Martha Lynd joined forces to work with four cooperative groups of Maya backstrap weavers in various highland villages.

Jane's small retail business in the United States became a wholesale import business, *Maya Traditions*, and was registered with the Fair Trade Federation. A needs assessment was carried out in 1996 among the weaving cooperatives, which led to the initiation of health and education projects that have gradually evolved to become today's dynamic social programs.

In 2007, Maya Traditions was established as a public Foundation in Guatemala, which proved to be an important step in addressing the organization's long-term sustainability goals. This has allowed the organization to continue to respond to the needs of stakeholders whilst diversifying its funding sources.

In November of 2009, the Foundation suffered a great loss with the passing of Jane Mintz. Since the loss of Jane, the Foundation has been working to continue on with Jane's vision by looking for more sustainable funding sources.

To this day, FTM works to ensure that the legacy of Jane will continue to have a profound impact on the lives of the women to whom she dedicated so much of her life. We strive to provide the highest quality of service to our women artisans, empowering them to support their families and better their lives in a sustainable approach.



Foundation Governing Structure

Executive Board of Founders and Benefactors

Murray Mintz, Armando Alfonso, and Brenda Rosenbaum

Advisory Board

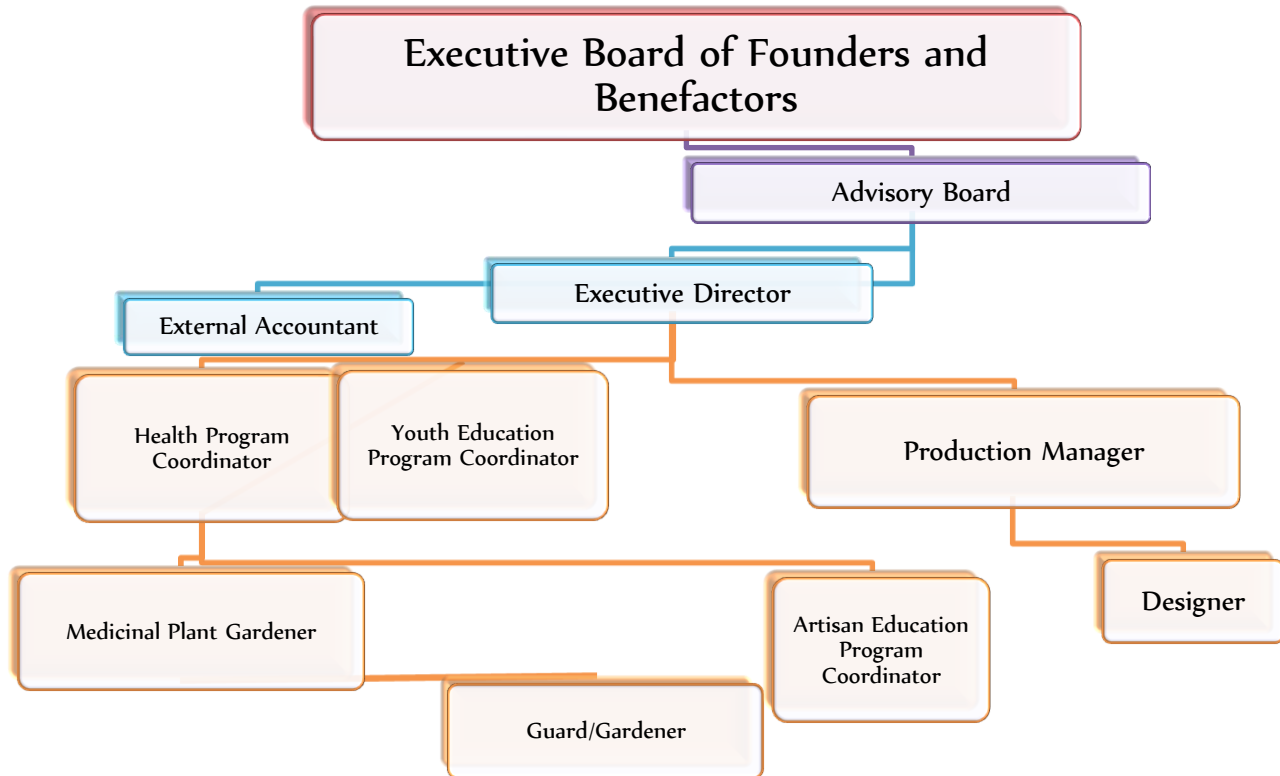
President: Murray Mintz

Vice President: Dan Wilkens

Treasurer: Sydney Eschenbauch

Secretary: Dana Geffner

Board Member: Daniela Abadi



2012 Full Time Staff: 7

Part Time Staff: 1

Outside Consultants: 1

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Programs in 2012

Community Health Program

The health program was initiated in 1997, offering women's health services to weavers via mobile clinics. Maya Traditions has conducted many workshops within the communities that focus on a preventative approach to health. In 2001, an organic herb garden was established to study and preserve traditional medicinal plants.

Starting in 2009, FTM began working with a network of traditional Maya healers

(Ajq'omaneles) and youth to educate and promote traditional knowledge on the use of medicinal plants for healing common diseases. Fourteen traditional healers, the majority of whom are indigenous Maya women, and five young adults from ten communities in the Lake Atitlán region of Guatemala have collaborated in the project with us. These collaborators include Ajq'ijes (spiritual guides), lyoms (midwives), Chapalb'aqs (bonesetters or traumatologists), Ch'ajalb'oq'ochs (eye specialists), and Chayeros (blood specialists).

Through this collaboration we hope to strengthen the knowledge of both healers and youth participants, establish a network of natural medicine practitioners in the Lake Atitlan region, preserve and promote knowledge of traditional medical practices, and increase access to natural health care in indigenous communities.



FTM implemented the following workshops in 2012:



Vermiculture and Composting

A group of 23 Ajq'omaneles and youth attended a series of workshops detailing the theory, practice, and importance of vermiculture and developing a compost garden. The objective of this workshop was to promote the importance of using organic fertilizer in order to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers. The workshop took place in FTM's medicinal plant garden where the participants learned how to install and manage a compost garden. At the end of the workshop series, participants exhibited a greater comprehension of the concept of vermiculture. Many left the workshop with the intent to continue this agricultural and cultural practice through the development of composts in their own communities.

Maya Cosmvision and Natural Medicine

More than 30 students received training on the Maya cosmvision and its relation to natural medicine. The purpose of this workshop was to promote the network of Ajq'omaneles among Maya youth with the goal of expanding their knowledge about their culture as well as ancient and modern practices regarding natural medicine. This workshop series was developed by La Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (ALMG: The Academy of Maya Languages of Guatemala) in collaboration with FTM. Topics discussed during the workshop include the Maya calendar and the Bak'tun, among others. To better understand



these concepts, the students received a Maya calendar and training on the nahuales of the year from ALMG. The students actively participated throughout the workshop. At the conclusion, many students were able to use the information they learned to teach the importance of natural medicine in these community and service-based activities.

Permaculture and Medicinal Plants

In November, 20 individuals received training on the importance of medicinal plants that exist within a permaculture environment. Permaculture refers to the sustainable use of ecological resources in order to conserve nature by saving materials and producing less waste. This series of workshops was carried out in the medicinal plant garden of FTM. During this workshop, members of the network of Ajq'omaneles discussed the influence of the moon on medicinal plants, a practice that is being lost as many people are unaware of the relation of the cosmos with plants. For the workshop's practical portion, all participants helped to design a plank using medicinal plants, compost, leaves, and soil conservation practices. Participants left the workshop excited to replicate what they had learned in the workshop in their own communities.



Other Achievements:

Two representatives from the network of Ajq'omaneles, Juan Pacach and Marta Saloj, together with FTM's Community Health Program Coordinator, Marisol Morales, participated in a national conference regarding institutional strengthening. The workshop detailed the importance of structural organization, a strategic plan (mission, vision, and goals), attitude before change, and anticipation as well as adaptation to change. All of the themes mentioned assist in the development of a better structured organization and address ways to identify an organization's weaknesses. The course lasted two days and, at its conclusion, attendees received certificates recognizing their participation.

Fifteen Ajq'omaneles served as channels to affordable medicinal plant products as well as promoters of preventive health practices. The Ajq'omaneles have said that learning to make medicinal salves and syrups has been very useful. A Maya pediatrician named Catarina Flaviana Tambriz from Chirijox reports that her new knowledge of how to make salves and syrups better enables her to treat patients at affordable prices. Traditional midwife Josefina Vasquez and student participant Sheyli Zunu, both from San Pedro La Laguna, reported that they have made 100 salves and are selling them at the low cost of Q10 (USD\$1.25) to their patients. They believe that "this will help the people in the communities use medicinal plants and save money."





Youth Education Program

Since 1997, the Youth Education Program has been able to offer more than 2,234 scholarships and has seen more than 100 students graduate and become professionals. The Youth Education program continues to encourage young people to give back to their communities through a student community service project that has been an integral part of the program since its inception.

In 2012, FTM marked its 16th year of offering scholarships to the children of women artisans with whom we work. With the support of MEF and other individual donors, we are proud to continually invest in the personal and professional development of indigenous children and youth. Through a comprehensive program, FTM is positively contributing to the development of successful, empowered, and socially-conscious young people who will affect change in their communities.



Direct Scholarships

In 2012, FTM provided full scholarships to the following numbers of students:

43 primary level students

34 junior high students

29 senior high students

Total 106

FTM implemented the following workshops in 2012:

Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Workshop

Within the theme of “Problems that Affect Today’s Youth”, 38 students participated in a series of workshops that addressed sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. The workshops took place in April of 2012 and participants included students from the communities of Chirijox, Patanatic, Queijel, Santa Clara La Laguna, San Juan La Laguna, and Chuacruz. Led by two facilitators from Red Juveniles (Youth Network) along with the Executive Director, the Youth Education Program Coordinator, and FTM volunteers, the workshop included team-building exercises, participatory games, group reflections, critical thinking exercises, and role-





playing activities. At the end of the workshops, the students reported a better understanding of how to identify an unhealthy relationship where sexual abuse is present and the essential actions needed to evade potentially undesirable consequences.

“Health and Nutrition in My Community” Workshop Series

In collaboration with local NGO Vivamos Mejor (www.vivamosmejor.org.gt) and the network of



Ajq'omaneles, FTM offered a series of workshops concerning personal hygiene, health, and nutrition for a group of students in November of 2012. The workshop covered natural medicines, personal hygiene, and the importance of a balanced diet. With the help of nutritionist Gabriela Lima, the students learned about specific foods that are especially nutritious and also prepared a meal together. The workshop also featured a section on cosmovision and its relation to traditional Maya medicine. The workshop concluded by providing ways to transmit learned knowledge into each of the students' communities.

Unlocking Silent Histories Project

In collaboration with Donna DeGennaro, a professor of Educational Technology at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, FTM began to facilitate a series of workshops with students in our Youth Education Program. These workshops provide students with the opportunity to write, direct, and produce documentaries based on their own stories. Through this project, we hope to further empower the youth with whom we work by encouraging them to explore their respective histories, cultures, and lives. They can then share their discoveries with their own



communities and the outside world. Donna has been training FTM's Programs Coordinator Marisol to lead the project once Donna has left. There are six students from the Community of Chirijox currently involved and seven students from San Juan La Laguna. With assistance offered by workshop facilitator Donna DeGennaro, the students will share their experiences and footage with youth in the Dominican Republic and the US once all of the documentaries have been completed, FTM hopes to expand this project in 2013 and offer it to all the communities with which FTM works.





Artisan Education and Capacity Building Program

Since 1996, the Artisan Education Program has provided to FTM's women artisan cooperatives a rich series of workshops in design, weaving techniques, color pallets, basketry, crochet, conflict resolution, Fair Trade practices, quality control, and environmental education.

In the past year, FTM focused on teaching women artisans how to manage their own small businesses and income taxes with the hope of building self-sustainability and reducing their dependency on the Foundation. In 2012, 85 women and 14 students received artisan-related capacity-building workshops thanks to support from the following generous donors: The COMO Foundation, ICCO, Agexport, and Counterpart International.



FTM implemented the following workshops in 2012:

Pricing for the International Fair Trade Market

With the support of Counterpart International, FTM provided training to a group of artisan women on how to increase capacity and self-sufficiency in order to efficiently manage the production of commercial products that are both economically and environmentally friendly to the global fair trade market. The workshop taught these women how to determine production costs, identify and differentiate variable and fixed costs, establish an equilibrium point in production, and set wholesale and retail prices for the items they are producing.

Quality Control Workshop

FTM offered a workshop on quality control of finished products for the international market to its women artisan groups. In the workshop, the women learned how to create a protocol for internal quality control in order to detect areas of weakness in product production and better ensure the quality of export products. During the training, group collaboration was stressed and the women worked together as a team to critique each other's products, identify their strengths, and address any weaknesses. The workshop concluded with the creation of a quality control form that will serve as a long-term tool to strengthen the weaker aspects of craft production in the several women artisan groups.

Conducting Market Research for International Fashion Trends

To promote self-sustainability, FTM offered a workshop to teach students how to conduct market research. Two students from each community participated in this workshop with the intention of helping their local artisan groups to research product design and current market trends. The objective was to train the students to use the Internet as a tool for exploring products according to the current market demand. As a result of the training, all groups developed between three to five new products. The students learned to utilize the Internet as a means to support the artisans in their home communities by teaching them to incorporate new designs and colors currently popular in the international market. We hope to continue to explore computer and Internet literacy courses in 2013 in an effort to further empower the youth of the communities with whom we work.

Color Theory Workshop



Led by both a volunteer and the Programs Coordinator, seven artisan groups learned how products could be modernized by changing the color combination. The women who participated in the workshop learned how the color wheel and color schemes work in order to create color combinations. According to Lisbeth Arias, the volunteer who helped organize the workshop, *“The way they paid attention and asked many questions about each color scheme was evidence that they had never heard about this form of designing and were intrigued by it. They even brought scarves, handbags, and previous products they had made for critique to gain an understanding of how their color palettes could be improved. Their confidence was boosted when I told them they were on the right track. The women from the communities with prototypes blushed and smiled when I told them that their color combinations were great and that they had done their jobs well. For the communities who had not begun prototyping, they began talking amongst one another about new ideas they wanted to test using the color wheel. We knew the visits were successful when we would leave their homes and hear the women still talking about color combinations and new techniques they had learned.”*



Volunteer Lisbeth Arias leading the workshop on the color wheel

Other Achievements:

Communications and Marketing Plan

In 2012, FTM developed a new plan to evaluate its current position in the fair trade market and make a further commitment to increase income-generating activities for artisans by approaching sales and client relationships in a more structured manner. This comprehensive plan will be used as a guideline during 2013 in order to increase sales and further build long-term relationships with new clients.



Product Design and Business Development Consultant

With the development of this new position, FTM has already increased product sales by more than 51%. The Product Design and Business Development position has also allowed us to collaborate further with both Guatemalan and foreign designers, helping the women artisans build new skills and gain a greater understanding of the international Fair Trade market and product design. In 2013, FTM hopes to continue to diversify and increase our client base, build new relationships with international clients, and oversee the establishment of new protocols to improve operations with regard to Fair Trade goods.

Volunteers and Interns



In 2012, FTM was fortunate to have valuable contributions from a wide variety of dedicated volunteers and interns. FTM wishes to express its gratitude to the following volunteers: David Durica (website development and fundraising), Niamh Lacy and Milan Lamacke (development of new website and marketing), Leena Saarineen (monitoring and evaluation and program development), Lisbeth Arias (product design), Tara Scally (product design), and Kate Hage (product design, sales support, and photography).

Local Internship Program

FTM was able to host one local intern through a program that gives students the opportunity to gain professional experience. FTM always benefits from the extra help that keen interns have to offer. The local 2012 intern was Marisol Morales, who recently returned from a scholarship opportunity in the United States. Marisol’s skills and enthusiasm resulted in her officially joining the FTM staff in order to run our Community Health and Youth Education programs.

Support Received in 2012

FTM thanks the following organizations and institutions for their support in 2012:



TIDES FOUNDATION

First People’s Worldwide Fund of the Tides Foundation



Individual Donors



FTM also thanks the following individual donors for their generous contribution in 2012: Jane Mintz Trust, Murray Mintz, Brenda Rosenbaum, Margot Scheville, and Linda Robertson.

Financial Institutions Holding the Foundation's Funds

Maya Educational Foundation, Jane MintzTrust



For more information about Maya Traditions, please visit [http://www.mayatraditions.org/!](http://www.mayatraditions.org/)

