



Maya Traditions Foundation

2013 Annual Report



Weaving Cultural Identity with Opportunity



Contents

- 3 Letter from the Director
- 4 Our Work
- 6 Where We Work
- 7 Mission & Vision
- 8 Artisan Development Program
- 10 Community Health Program
- 12 Youth Education Program
- 15 Unlocking Silent Histories
- 16 Fair Trade Access Program
- 18 Community Tourism
- 20 Volunteers
- 21 Our Team
- 22 Financials
- 23 Partners & Donors
- 24 How You Can Get Involved

Letter from the Director

Dear supporters of Maya Traditions Foundation,

Since joining the Maya Traditions team in March 2013, I have been continuously amazed with the organization. Through the support of a dedicated team, wonderful volunteers, fair trade retail and wholesale partners, partner NGOs, and our donors, the Foundation has been able to implement empowering, culturally appropriate work for over twenty years.

When meeting the artisans and their families, it is immediately evident how impactful the foundation's programs have been to their personal and professional growth. Artisans, such as Yolanda, are able to stand in front of groups of people and speak passionately about the importance of their culture and the tradition of back-strap weaving. Students, such as Carmen, are able to analyze problems in their communities and seek ways to change the current reality in order to improve not only their own lives, but also the lives of their families and friends.

These stories, and countless others, are a testament to the work that Maya Traditions Foundation has been doing in Guatemala for over two decades and why the Foundation continues to thrive to this day.

As we begin 2014, we are filled with the hope and expectation that this year will be even better than the last. We thank you for your commitment to the education and empowerment of our Maya artisans and their families. We simply would not be able to do any of this without you.

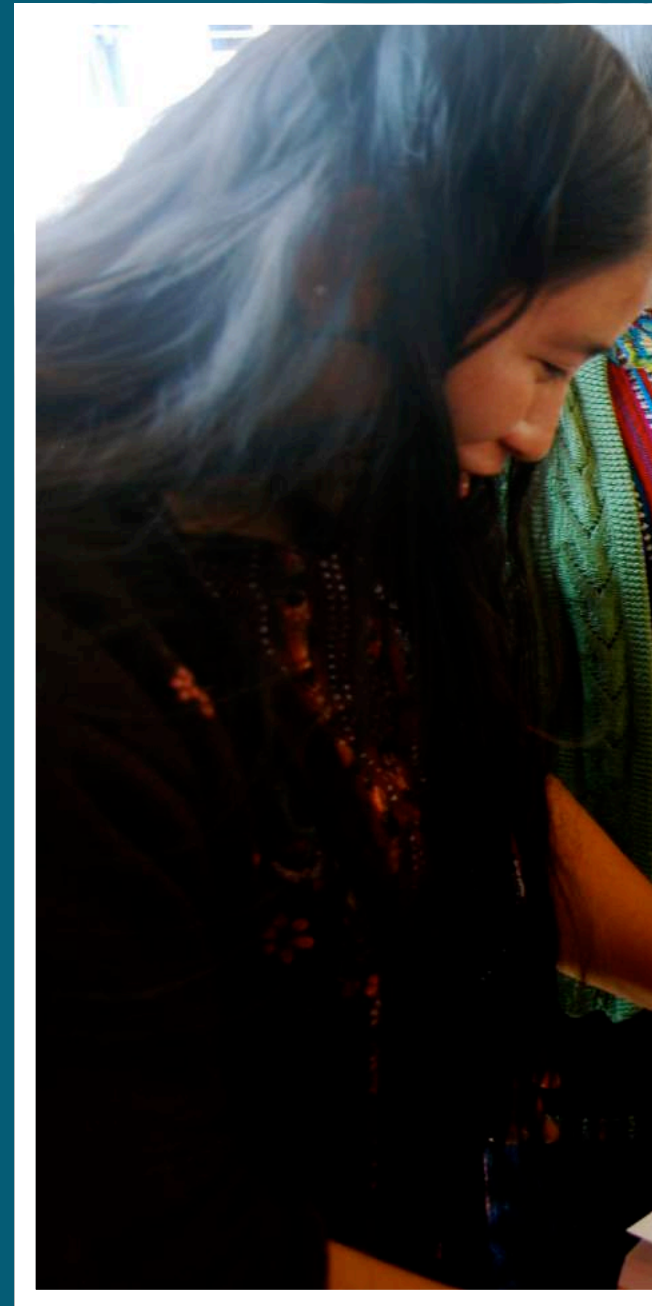
Best,

Erin Kokdil
Director

What We Do



As a nonprofit social enterprise, Maya Traditions Foundation is dedicated to facilitating market access for over 100 Maya artisans and their families in the highlands of Guatemala. Following a fair trade model, we seek to increase our artisans' access to formal education, health care, and personal and professional development workshops in a manner that is culturally appropriate and motivates indigenous women to strengthen their entrepreneurial ecosystems. Maya Traditions' complementary social programs currently reach more than six different indigenous communities and impact more than 500 family and community members with whom we work.





Maya Traditions Foundation's Programmatic Areas

- ❖ Artisan Development
- ❖ Community Health
- ❖ Youth Education
- ❖ Fair Trade Market Access



Where We Work



Guatemala is a country marked by severe inequality. From a history of exploitation, discrimination, and systemized violence is born a country caught between two worlds--one where the Ladino population dominates the political, economic, and judicial spheres, while the other remains a harsh reality that the indigenous Maya population has faced for hundreds of years and continues to face to this day.

By restoring respect and emphasizing the importance of traditional Maya practices, Maya Traditions Foundation works to preserve Maya culture and promote it as a means of economic development for the indigenous communities we work with. We currently work in the departments of Sololá and Quiché, in the rural communities of Chirijox, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán; Chuacruz, Sololá; Patanatic; San Juan La Laguna; Quiejel, Chichicastenango; and Santa Clara La Laguna.

Mission

To empower and improve the quality of life for Maya women artisans and their families and to contribute to the preservation and promotion of traditional knowledge, and culture in Guatemala. To do so, we offer the women artisans and their families education-driven social programs, and market access to international fair trade and artisanal networks with a focus on traditional Maya culture and traditions.



Vision

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



Artisan Development Program



Achievements in 2013

Since 1996, the Artisan Development Program has provided Maya Traditions' (MT) artisan cooperatives with diverse workshop series that promote both professional and personal development. In 2013, Maya Traditions collaborated with other organizations, designers, and individuals to ensure that our artisans received high-quality, capacity building activities.

- **Workshop on Clasp Bags, March 2013**-MT held a workshop with COMO Foundation Ambassador Ella Lee on how to make small clasp bags. Working with the Waqxaqib' kan' Cooperative in Chuacruz, four artisans with sewing skills learned how to make the bags using a sewing machine. Artisan Coordinator Isabel is looking to follow up on the product for inclusion in our 2014 catalog.
- **Education and Empowerment 101, May-August 2013**-Through a collaboration with A Heart for Guatemala, thirteen artisans participated in a workshop series directed at teaching literacy and basic math skills. Teachers Karin Evertz and Alison Kelly provided energetic and dynamic classes that involved active participation from each artisan. At the close of the nine-week workshop, artisans expressed more confidence in both reading and writing. We plan to offer the same workshop series in 2014 with two groups of artisans.
- **Physical Therapy Visits and Introduction to Yoga, September 2013**-MT visited the communities of Chuacruz and San Juan La Laguna with support from volunteers Dave and Leian Scee to perform physical therapy treatments. Volunteers Diveesha and Zoe then led the women in basic stretching and yoga exercises, encouraging the artisans to take breaks during weaving to avoid injury.
- **Crochet Hat Workshop, November 2013**-Artisans in the Flor Clarene Cooperative in Santa Clara La Laguna received new designs and thread to develop children's hats with support from Ashley Kauffman. The artisans were very excited to learn the new design and were able to produce sample of the hats that were identical to the designs.





Community Health Program



Achievements in 2013

The Community Health Program began in 1997, offering women's health services and workshops to weavers. In 2001, the Organic Medicinal Plant Garden was established to study and preserve traditional medicinal plants. We began working with a network of traditional Maya healers (Ajq'omanela') and youth to educate and promote traditional knowledge on the use of these medicinal plants in 2009. We continue to collaborate with the Ajq'omanela' to this day and, through a recent grant from First People Worldwide (FPW), were able to establish the network as a legal association in Guatemala.

- **Producing Natural Products, January 2013**-Collaborating with Kanima'Ixoqi', MT staff and the Ajq'omanela' Association learned how to make aloe vera shampoo and a natural Vick's cream, made from cypress, pine, and eucalyptus. As a result, Maya Traditions has been producing aloe vera shampoo and the Association has been conducting workshops, teaching others how to utilize plants to create natural Vick's cream for treating chest colds.
- **School Workshops on the importance of Medicinal Plants, April 2013**-Through support from FPW, the Association held workshops in schools in 6 indigenous communities, focusing on the importance of medicinal plants. Over 290 students attended the workshops and were given their own seedlings to grow medicinal plants in their communities. As a result, many of the schools have established medicinal plant gardens and have expressed interest for more workshops on medicinal plants in 2014.
- **Development of Natural Medicine and Medical Clinics in Local Indigenous Communities, April-June, 2013**-Through the support of FPW, the Association was able to produce their own natural medicine to treat colds, coughs, allergies, and parasites, and to distribute these remedies in local communities during a series of medical clinics. Beginning in May 2013, the Programs Coordinator and the Association held medical clinics in five rural indigenous communities, treating more than 350 individuals. The Ajq'omanela' saw many cases of parasites and head colds, and distributed natural medicine free of cost to those suffering.
- **Participation in the fourth annual meeting on "Biological Diversity and Recuperation of Ancestral Knowledge on Nutritional and Medicinal Plants," March 2013**-Both staff and the Association participated in the meeting organized by CONAP.
- **Workshop on Nutritional Plants: Chaya and Chia Seeds, August 2013**-With support from Pura Vida and Miracles in Action, MT staff and the Association participated in a workshop on native nutritional plants from Guatemala--specifically, chia seeds and the chaya plant. Each participant was given a Chaya plant at the end of the workshop in order to help further educate others on the importance of these native plants that are not commonly used today.
- **Entremundos Workshop: Fundraising and Developing Projects**-Two members of the Association participated in this workshop series to learn how to develop projects, create budgets, and seek funding. In 2014, Maya Traditions plans to further provide workshops to promote the independency and sustainability of the Association.



Youth Education Program



Achievements in 2013

Since 1997, the Youth Education Program has been able to offer more than 2,300 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 2013, Maya Traditions Foundation provided scholarships to the following amount of students:**

41 Primary Level Students

29 Junior High Students

33 Senior High Students

2 University Students

Total of 105 indigenous Maya students in the Youth Education Program in 2013

- **Ben & Lois Paul Program**-In 2013, MT administered seven scholarships to students from San Pedro La Laguna and Chicacao for Maya Educational Foundation. MT's Programs Coordinator provided ongoing support and academic guidance to the students.
- **University Students**-In 2013, MT offered two university scholarships to indigenous Maya women--our own Programs Coordinator, Marisol Morales Cael, and a former MT scholarship student, Mariela Sahon Rosales.
- **Community Service Initiative**- Each year, the community service project is offered in order to strengthen the personal and professional development of our students. In 2013, Maya Traditions offered the series "When We Improve, We Better Our Community" to students at the senior high level. Youth received various workshops including first aid, how to make products from medicinal plants, the proper use of social media and the internet, and self-esteem and leadership to foster the integral development of youth. Following these workshops, the students implemented community service projects that were developed with the artisans in all communities.





Graduates from our Youth Education Program in 2013

Unlocking Silent Histories Project



In 2013, Maya Traditions continued our collaboration with the Unlocking Silent Histories Project. The project works closely with indigenous youth involved in our Youth Education Program, allowing students not only to learn about an often unspoken part of their history, but also to identify areas of interest within their communities, analyze issues, and engage in creative storytelling.

The process begins as the students view different films about the history of Guatemala. Placing special focus on the civil war, students begin to learn a part of their personal history that is often unspoken. Afterward, they explore a topic of interest, engage in conversations with members of their community, learn video techniques through video classes and workshops, and edit and produce their own films. The final documentaries are then shared with their own and other communities in a film showcase. After the project is complete, students have the opportunity to act as leaders, helping to teach the next group of participants.

In 2013, we saw a total of nine students complete the project from the communities of San Juan La Laguna and Chirijox, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacan. In November, students shared their films in a film festival at La Galeria in Panajachel where over 200 people participated to view the youth-directed documentaries. In 2014, we plan to expand the project to include other communities, as well as further develop the leadership skills of those students interested in teaching subsequent groups.



Fair Trade Market Access Program



Achievements in 2013

In 2013, Maya Traditions Foundation continued to carry out the 2012 Marketing and Communications Plan, building on our current position in the international and national fair trade market, and establishing new fair trade retail partners. As we begin 2014, we continue to strive towards sustainability, fostering economic independence, and empowering our artisans.

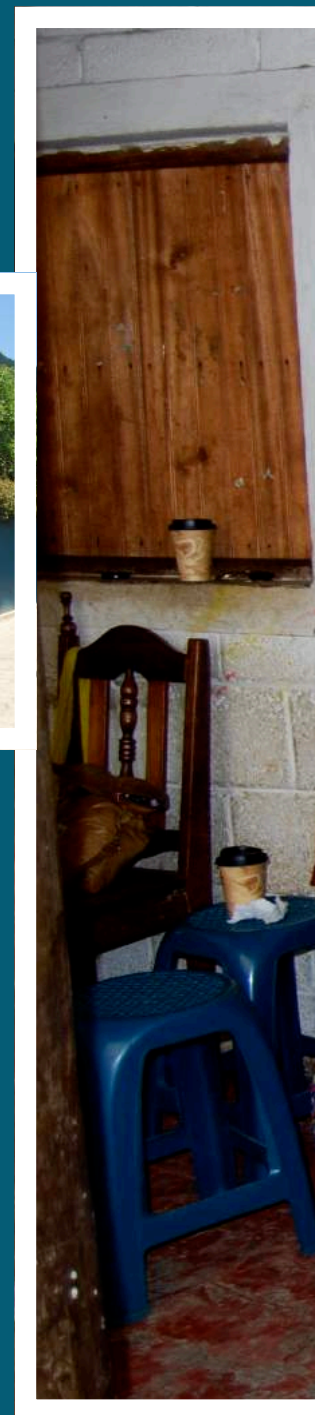
- **AGEXPORT/Project ICCO**-Maya Traditions participated in Project ICCO, financed by the government of the Netherlands and coordinated by AGEXPORT and the Commission of Artistry in Guatemala. Designer Diego Olivero worked with MT's artisan cooperatives to design a modern line of products. Products developed include: ipad cases, infinity scarves, pillow cases, table mats, and more. Maya Traditions Foundation was invited to participate in the New World Crafts Fair in Antigua, Guatemala to showcase the new range of products.
- **Maya Traditions Story and Photo E-book**-Volunteer Lara Funke worked with MT's Business Development and Product Design Consultant to develop an e-book featuring the Maya Traditions' story, and photos of our new products. With the development of this e-book, we hope to establish more relationships with fair trade partners and designers.
- **New Leather Range**-Designer Pamela Halouvas developed a new leather range with different fabrics to fit in with current fashion trends. Items developed include: ipad case, overnight bag, coin purse, key tag, and small/medium handbags.
- **Participation in the Feria de Comercio Justo y Solidaridad, December 2013**-MT participated in the Fair Trade and Solidarity Crafts Fair in Antigua, Guatemala, reaffirming our commitment to the local fair trade market.



Promoting and Preserving Maya Culture Through Community Tourism



As we seek ways to further benefit the communities that we work with, we continue to place great emphasis on our community outreach program, which includes community tours, garden tours, and weaving classes. In 2013, Maya Traditions was able to offer COMO Ambassador Ella Lee a four day tour of our organization and an in-depth look at our work, visiting the cooperatives and communities that the Foundation has worked with for over twenty years. In 2013, we also saw an increase of visits to our Organic Medicinal Plant Garden which is currently listed as the #6 thing to do in Panajachel on [Tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com). In 2014, we hope to further seek collaborations with other organizations and businesses in order to provide high-quality, culturally appropriate visits and tours that are beneficial to the communities.





Volunteers

In 2013, Maya Traditions was fortunate enough to have valuable contributions from a wide variety of dedicated and skilled volunteers and interns. We wish to thank the following individuals for their commitment to Maya Traditions Foundation and their dedication to the artisans, youth, and healers with whom we work.

- Yenny Martin
- Angelis Solis
- Kathie Friedly
- Adrienne Varkiani
- Ditte Tofting
- Dave and Leiann Scee
- Diveesha Shahani
- Zoe Feinstein
- Nathan Kalb
- Erik Leacock
- Garrett Burgess
- Lara Funke
- Julie Young
- Adam Greenwell
- Nicole Morrow
- Jen Manning
- Nancy Scott



Maya Traditions' Team

Board of Directors

Murray Mintz

Brenda Rosenbaum

Armando Alfonzo

Martha Lynd-Atlan

Dana Geffner



Staff

Erin Kokdil, Director

Floralma Sicay Perez, Production Manager

Marisol Morales Cael, Programs Coordinator

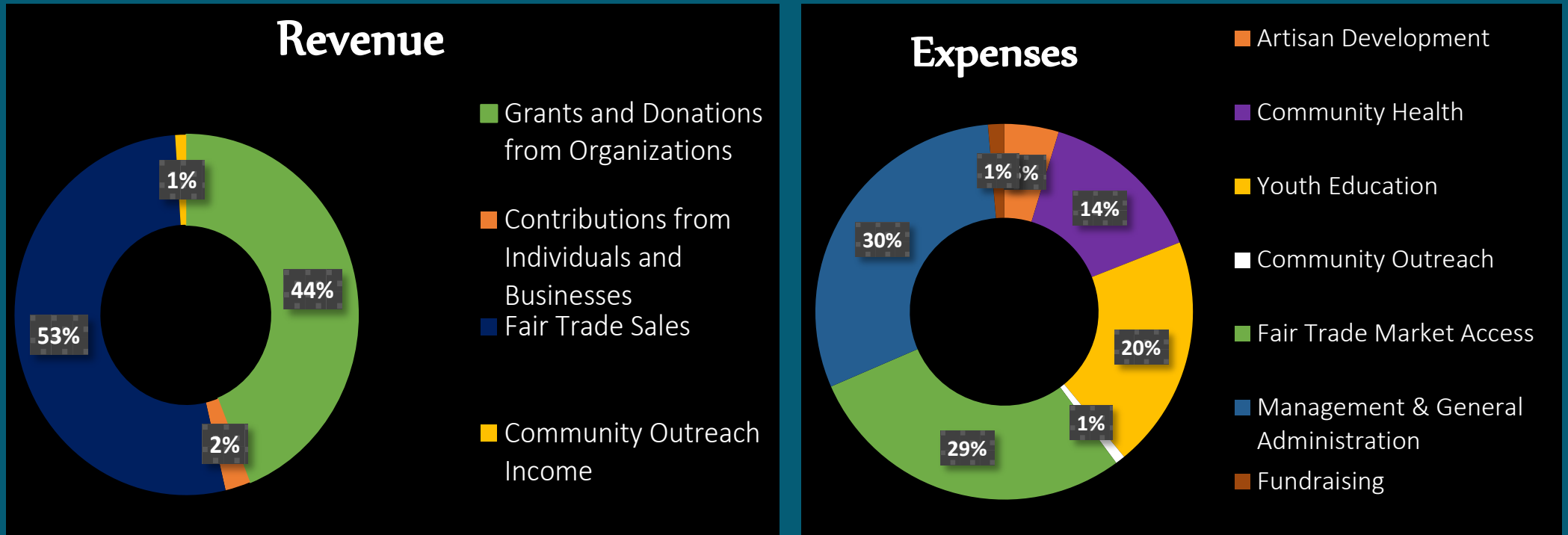
Alison Wandschneider, Sales and Marketing Coordinator

Isabel Chalcu, Artisan Development Coordinator

Braulio Jacinto Garcia Tol, Medicinal Plant Gardener

Oseas Chiriquin Aju, Groundskeeper

Financials



*Guatemalan labor laws require additional fees and payments which are represented in Management and General Administration rather than under the respective program costs. We additionally experienced staff transition which reflects 2013 expenses. Further financial information available on request.

Donors & Partners

We would like to thank the following organizations and donors for their generous contribution and support of our work in 2013. Together, we were able to serve our communities with high quality social programs with a focus on the promotion and preservation of Maya culture and traditions.



How You Can Get Involved

Maya Traditions' work to empower and improve the quality of life for Maya women artisans and their families is made possible through your support. Below are the different ways you can get involved:

-Volunteer! We are constantly seeking skilled volunteers to help in the areas of design, videography, market research, grant writing, and more. Contact guatemala@mayatraditions.org to request more information on volunteer opportunities.

-Donate! Support our work through a tax-deductible contribution through our fiscal sponsor Maya Educational Foundation. Visit www.mayatraditions.com/join/donate.html? to make a donation to support Maya Traditions Foundation.

-Buy Fair Trade! Visit www.mayatraditions.com/shop/wholesale.html to view our current catalog and retail partners.

-Tour with us! We are currently offering community tours supporting the cooperatives and healers with whom we work. Contact guatemala@mayatraditions.org for more information.

-Spread the word! Tell your friends and families about the work we do here at Maya Traditions and encourage them to get involved as well.



Maya Traditions Foundation

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