

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Thanks to your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Baja Verapaz. Learn more about the valuable ways your support has benefitted them.

This past year, girls outside of the formal education system had the opportunity to complete their secondary education through the flexible education project. In addition, young people in rural communities - especially women - who had been trained on entrepreneurship had the opportunity to start a business for income generation.

And nearly 1,000 adolescents now have access to secondary education thanks to the scholarships they have been awarded.

Your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Baja Verapaz.



493

Young people trained in entrepreneurship



275

Youth learned about sexual and reproductive health & rights



490

Parents learned about early childhood development



COVID-19'S IMPACT IN GUATEMALA

Hear from Juana Yazmina about how COVID-19 has impacted her community.

"The pandemic has been difficult. I have been unable to study properly. My parents motivated me to participate in Plan training workshops, where we were told about the importance of education. My dream is to continue studying and become a community leader. Thank you Plan and sponsors for the support to materialise my dreams."

CASE STORY: EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE



NAME: MABELIN

AGE: 14 YEARS OLD

HOBBY: BASKETBALL

"I believe in my dreams and goals. I understand the situation of many girls, due to their lack of education and sadly because parents accept it. Now, in my community, girls study to change their lives and have clear goals for their futures. Thanks to Plan for the work in my community."

Meet Mabelin

Like your sponsored child, Mabelin has been empowered by Plan International to change her life. Mabelin is in secondary school, where she understands how vital an education is - and helps young women in her community to do the same. With tools from Plan, she challenged stereotypes that limit girls' access to education. She's a leader in her community, helping others.

Challenging Gender Expectations

Most girls in Mabelin's community are not encouraged to stay in school. Many parents do not believe education is a priority for girls. When they drop out of school, girls often become part of an informal couple and get pregnant at an early age. For Mabelin, this was normal - no one talked to girls about this, not even parents or teachers.

Yet Mabelin now has the knowledge to challenge these limiting expectations. Along with other girls, she learned about self-esteem and gender equality, and about her right to an education. With Plan's support of a school scholarship Mabelin is more secure in her future.

Embracing Leadership

The Champions of Change programme helped empower Mabelin and other girls with leadership skills and opportunities. Today, Mabelin embraces her leadership position as she speaks with youth and adults in her community. As a spokesperson, she participates in meetings with community leaders at the municipal level, where she speaks about the importance of secondary education for girls. As a result, teachers and parents in Mabelin's community see the importance of girls' education, and help to advocate for equality.



Mabelin participating in a workshop

WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 9,000 CHILDREN IN BAJA VERAPAZ

OUR PROJECTS IN BAJA VERAPAZ ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



Helping people produce their own healthy, fresh food is vital to addressing food insecurity. The project promoted fish farming and the consumption of tilapia, a local fish, as well as two poultry farms.

FEEDING THE FUTURE



Climate change means parents in Baja Verapaz struggle to provide healthy, nutritious food for their families. The absence of rain in the region caused heavy losses in the harvest of basic grains. This puts food security at risk. Education and resources are key to addressing this crisis.

Informational sessions empowered 500 parents with resources on health and nutrition. Rural learning centres established 18 water storage systems, enabling micro-irrigation of vegetables, and promoting fish farming.

In addition, 403 families affected by food insecurity due to climate change received cash transfers as support. Project activities were carried out with the technical support of government agriculture, food and natural resources departments. Together, these initiatives help families strengthen their resiliency skills and resources to respond to the effects of climate crises.

EDUCATION OPENING UP DOORS



Many girls in Baja Verapaz leave school early in order to work. In fact, only 54% of students attend secondary school. Most drop out due to lack of money.

With flexible education, girls and adolescents can access their right to an education. This project, certified by the Ministry of Education, is the result of a series of roundtables with spokesgirls, scholarship beneficiaries and institutional representatives.

Girls pointed out the lack of education services for those without opportunities to continue or complete their secondary education. As a result, the project enabled 436 girls to participate in secondary school, developing technological skills and competencies and preparing them to improve their future job opportunities.



“The project helped me continue my studies. I can organise my time to continue helping with chores. I also participate in training sessions on gender equality, leadership and health. We receive much guidance that helps us assert our rights as girls and women.” **-Mercy, 20, from Baja Verapaz**

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



32%

Of women are illiterate



62%

Of students who leave school cite lack of money as the reason



77%

Of families are affected by serious food insecurity



Your support helps girls and boys to stand up for their futures.

-More children and youth migrate in search of better opportunities, becoming at-risk of sexual violence and trafficking. We will work with our partners on education projects to address the prevention of violence and help youth access quality employment opportunities.

-We will promote technical training for youth entrepreneurship and employability.

-Recently, two bills put the rights of diverse people and children's lives at risk. We will continue working in cooperation with children's organisations to prevent the approval of regressive laws.

-We will continue with the flexible education programme to help reduce the number of school dropouts.

We know the best is yet to come, and together we will continue to work for a brighter, happier future for the children in Baja Verapaz.



"Thank you for your trust, solidarity and generosity. Your financial support promotes children's rights and their comprehensive development, and our programmes contribute to ensure that children live free of violence."

Nicolás Véliz Villavicencio
Programme Area Manager, Baja Verapaz

YOUR GENEROSITY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN STANDING UP FOR THEIR FUTURE AND RIGHTS