

## YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

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

This past year, more young people were able to access training and employment opportunities, helping them start new businesses or gain quality employment.

Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education training empowered young people to better understand their health and their rights.

In addition, more families were vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, with 3,265 "I Get Vaccinated" kits distributed to help dispel myths and misinformation about the disease.

**Your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Polochic.**



# 3774

Students were awarded scholarships



# 150

Fathers learned active fatherhood techniques



# 1093

Young people trained for entrepreneurship



## 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 it is to get an education—and to help other girls and young women in her community do the same. With tools from Plan, she challenged cultural and gender stereotypes that limit girls' access to education. She is now a leader in her community, helping others attain a better future.

## 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.

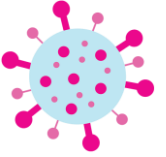
As a result, teachers and parents in Mabelin's community see the importance of girls' education, and help to advocate for equality.



*Mabelin participating in a workshop*

**WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 6,000 CHILDREN IN POLOCHIC**

# OUR PROJECTS IN POLOCHIC ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



## SAFETY AGAINST COVID-19



Videos, radio spots and workshops helped children and adults in the community learn about the risks of COVID-19 infection and preventative measures.

**Mistrust towards COVID-19 vaccines still affects many people in Guatemala.** Misinformation means that COVID-19 cases, some lethal, impacted many families in Polochic. The “I Vaccinate” campaign supported community access to life-saving vaccines. Health authorities helped families to obtain accurate information, addressing myths around the pandemic and vaccinations.

In cooperation with staff at health districts, this initiative reached 5,500 people, the majority of the population. In addition to vaccine access, the community learned about the dangers of COVID-19 and ways the virus spreads, as well as how to prevent infection. As a result, more than 90% of sponsored families received educational material about COVID-19 and agreed to get vaccinated.

Since COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the region's economic situation, 5,500 humanitarian daily rations were provided to families.

## LIFE SKILLS TO SUCCEED



**Many young people in Polochic lack job opportunities and food security.** Yet with resources, information, and support, they can start small agriculture businesses to grow food and gain economic independence.

The Youth Agribusiness project promotes the economic empowerment of Indigenous and economically marginalised young people. Youth who want to start or improve an agribusiness can join the entrepreneurs' or agribusiness club.

There, they receive training in business management as well as vegetable production. They receive support to certify their vegetables, register their businesses, and sell their products. As a result, 393 young people in 15 clubs received invaluable skills, information and resources to establish economic independence and reduce food scarcity for themselves and their community.

“I see myself in the future as a vegetable producer for my family and community. This will generate income for our families to pay for household expenses. Thank you Plan for thinking about us girls, for training us about planting. It is a great opportunity to improve the future of my family and that of myself.” **-Wendy, 19, from Polochic**



# YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



## FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



47%

Of women are illiterate



12%

Of students enrol in secondary school



25%

Increase in child abuse cases during COVID-19 in Guatemala



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

- Only 55% of young people have access to secondary school. In rural areas this is especially limited. We will help more youth attend school with scholarship opportunities.
- We will continue supporting young entrepreneurs in sustainable business management for income generation.
- Recently, two regressive 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.
- In an estimated 85% of cases of sexual violence against girls and young women, perpetrators are either relatives or close to the family. We will work to strengthen community protection networks and mechanisms to safeguard girls.

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



“With your contributions, children, particularly girls, change their mindset and actions. We provide them with spaces and opportunities to make positive decisions, and work to ensure they are respected by all people in their lives. Thank you for your

**Analy Duarte de Díaz**  
Programme Area Manager, Polochic

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