

Jalapa Guatemala

Positive changes are happening in Jalapa. Learn more about how we're supporting children and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

Plan International has been involved in Jalapa, Guatemala since 1997. The region is located in the dry corridor of Central America and is particularly vulnerable to the climate crisis, often prompting families to migrate seasonally to other parts of the country. Additionally, the poverty rate is quite high in the region. The lack of flexibility in the traditional school system, combined with economic vulnerabilities, often forces children to quit their education and start earning money at a young age.

This lack of education opportunities also leads to a rise in various types of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. This year, thousands of community members have come together to tackle these issues and safeguard their families.



Gender -quality programs empower young girls.

"I study business administration on weekends and have taken workshops on gender equality. I believe in my abilities and skills." - Edith, 16-year-old, project participant



Impact in Numbers

630

children received scholarship for secondary school

446

youth trained in sexual health and rights

337

youth graduated through our Flexible Education models

Gelen challenges gender roles



NAME:

Gelen

AGE:

21 years old

DREAMS TO BE:

An Entrepreneur

“As women we can contribute in the development of our community, have independence and fight to reduce the rates of violence.”



Meet Gelen

Gelen is a young entrepreneur and is the fifth daughter out of ten. She enjoys playing soccer and wants to open her own nail salon in the future. Gelen has an entrepreneurial spirit and is optimistic about gaining financial independence to elevate her family out of poverty and as means to make her own life decisions.

Leadership school

Like many women in Guatemala, Gelen faces various barriers in accessing education and financial freedom. Due to gender inequalities and stereotypes, some in the community deter women from accessing the resources that they have. This further confines into limited roles prohibiting them from aspiring for further challenges, or hold any decision-making powers within their families.

Through Plan International's *Connection for Success* initiative, Gelen saw a window of opportunity to participate in her family's loom business, and contribute to its growth. Subsequently, she participated in several other training processes including Leadership School that equipped her with finances, skills and abilities to make informed decisions to grow the family business.

Economic Empowerment

Gelen received seed capital and bought an artisan loom. The new loom generated better profits and she was soon able to buy another machine. This helped her diversify her family's source of income. With her economic freedom, Gelen was soon able to bring technological and design innovations.

She is determined in her goals, and assured of her skills. Her economic freedom has made her postpone starting her own family. Gelen wants to open her own salon, and is currently enrolled in a vocation training to be a manicurist.



Gelen has scaled up her family's loom business.

We Work With 5,902 Sponsored Children in Jalapa

Projects That Support Lasting Change

Improving Sexual Health

Due to limited access to information and lack of openness around sexual and reproductive health and rights, teenage pregnancies remain a concern in Jalapa.

Empowering communities—especially young boys and girls—with information and resources about their rights and recognizing this form of violence is crucial.

Since 2023, eight education centers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, have contributed to creating a safe environment for young girls. 446 people received training and learned topics on how to protect themselves from sexual violence, and women's autonomy over their rights and future. The approach teaches both genders how to be respectful of each other's experiences and rights. By fostering an environment of mutual understanding and respect, the participants have a better foundation to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Young people learn about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

446

youth are informed of their reproductive rights



Children learn how to recognise violence.



Empowering children to know their rights.

Safer Together

Children everywhere in the world have the right to grow in an environment where they are safe and able to exercise their individual rights. Violence against girls and young women has multiple causes and consequences, therefore it requires a comprehensive approach. In Jalapa, the local communities, teachers, and educational centres have joined hands to try to create a protective and nurturing atmosphere around children of all ages.

In collaboration with state institutions, Plan has created workshops to empower young participants to recognise their rights, and advocate for themselves. These workshops also equip children with skills and tools to report abusive behaviours and take proactive steps. As a result, 136 participants are now able to identify and address three forms of violence: physical, psychological and sexual, and know mechanisms to report them.

"I really liked learning about the rights of boys and girls. I told my parents what I learned and it's important children know about these issues." - Yeison, 13-years-old, sponsored child

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Education tools help children access flexible education.

Together, we're working to create a more just world.

As teenagers drop out of high school in favour of financial stability, we will develop flexible modalities to fit their schedules and bring training and curriculum that help them get more meaningful education.

We aim to prevent and respond to violence against children and youth. We will continue our work with health services, teachers and families in Jalapa so we together can create safe spaces and environments for children of all ages.

1,638 teen pregnancies were recorded last year. Next year, we will continue to work together with families, teachers and institutions to develop a more comprehensive sex education module and outreach.

Message from Plan Staff

"It is a satisfying to see the positive impact of workshops and trainings. Families have adapted to better practice, leading to continuous growth and success stories from the community."



Analy de Diaz,
Programmer
Area Manager,
Jalapa

The Plan Effect

Sponsored children are at the centre of everything we do and they help plan our programmes based on what's important to them. Sponsors donations are a gateway into a community. This helps build trust and credibility to attract even more funds from new sources. This makes more sustainable programmes possible in sponsorship communities. This powerful synergy is something we call The Plan Effect.

Progress in Numbers

137

youth trained in
entrepreneurship

415

parents trained in
gender equality

19

student
governments are
formed

1,252

parents
countrywide
trained in