

## Baja Verapaz Guatemala

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

Located in the basin of Motagua river, the economic development of this region relies on agricultural trade and export. However, the climate changes in recent years have led to drought, forest fire, and lack of rainfall, forcing families to seasonally migrate for employment opportunities to nearby districts.

The migration would deter young people - particularly young girls - from accessing education and development opportunities. Through our entrepreneurship program, financial support and flexible education, young girls can access the resources on their own terms.

Throughout the year we have worked together with young girls who have dropped out of school, to reenter through a flexible education programme.



Empowering girls through leadership schools.

**"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

**968**

**parents sensitized to girl's education**

**354**

**women enrolled in Flexible Education modality**

**248**

**adolescents with entrepreneurial skills**

# 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 a means to make her own life decisions.

## Leadership School

Like many women in Guatemala, Gelen faces various barriers to accessing education and financial freedom. Due to gender inequalities and stereotypes, some in the community deters women from accessing the resources that they have. This further confines them into limited roles prohibiting them from aspiring for further challenges or holding 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 vocational training to be a manicurist.



Gelen has scaled up her family's loom business.

**We Work With 8,102 Sponsored Children in Baja Verapaz**



# Projects That Support Lasting Change

## Open Dialogue

**Due to the societal taboos and lack of information associated with topics around sexuality, the rates of gender-based violence and teen pregnancies remain a concern in Baja Verapaz.**

Every child has the right to live free from violence at home, in school, in public spaces and their communities.

Together with parents, teachers and community members, we foster meaningful intergenerational dialogues within families, helping build trust through positive parenting and open conversation.

This makes it easier to have a more open conversation about difficult topics and creates a safer, non-judgemental space to discuss topics of sexual and reproductive health at home.



Families create a welcoming environment for dialogue.

# 80%

**cases of violence occurs at home**



Leadership training empower young women.

## Leadership School

**In Baja Verapaz, due to the prevalence of traditional gender roles, young girls are often confined to specific societal roles, limiting their opportunities for personal growth and empowerment within their communities.**

Children are the leaders of tomorrow! Empowering young people through leadership not only strengthens their self-esteem and self-confidence but also equips them to take on pivotal roles in decision-making processes and confidently voice their opinions. Through our comprehensive leadership workshops, we empower adolescents to deepen their understanding of their rights, articulate their ideas, and assert their feelings with conviction.

As a result, the youth in Baja Verapaz are actively taking charge of their lives, making informed and collective decisions to address the systemic inequalities that impact their communities.



Economic empowerment empowers girls of Baja Verapaz.

**"The leadership workshop has taught me to improve communication with my community. Now I feel more confident and empowered to talk about the things that affect me."**

# You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Children wearing traditional clothing from Baja Verapaz.

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

Technology gaps, access to credit and gender inequalities result in a lack of employment opportunities for the youth. With your support, we will train young people in economic entrepreneurship and employability so they can be financially independent.

80% of cases of violence occur at home. We will continue to collaboratively organise and strengthen Community Protection Networks for a safer, stronger Baja Verapaz.

The average enrolment rate at the secondary education level is 27%. Access to education will remain our priority, as we support scholarship projects and bring students back to the education system.

## Message from Plan Staff

"Plan's work has transformed thousands of lives in Baja Verapaz. It has enabled the fulfilment of children's rights and equality for girls which is important today, more than ever."



Nicolas Véliz  
Villavicencio  
Programme Area  
Manager Baja  
Verapaz

## 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

512

**scholarships for  
secondary  
education**

564

**parents receive  
sexual education**

180

**young girls in  
leadership  
workshops**

33

**youth get training  
for employability**