

## Alta Verapaz Guatemala

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

This past year, we worked together with children and their families, communities and stakeholders in Alta Verapaz to build skills and strengthen resources for girls to advance their position and value in society. Through our entrepreneurship program, financial support, and flexible education, young girls build capacity and knowledge to earn their own income.

To address the cases of acute malnutrition due to food and nutritional insecurity in the country, we supported the local communities with food vouchers and rations. The brunt of climate change causes landslides, mud flows, floods, and droughts and continues to disrupt daily life and worsen the poverty rate in the region. We are implementing sustainable agricultural practices for better food-security in the communities.

**"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**



The Maya represent 93 % of the population in Alta Verapaz.

### Impact in Numbers

**9,544**

**girls received  
menstruation kits**

**1,531**

**youth benefited  
from scholarships**

**811**

**students enrolled in  
Flexible Education  
modality**

# Gelen challenges gender roles



**NAME:**

**Gelen**

**AGE:**

**21 years old**

**DREAMS TO BE:**

**An entrepreneur**

**“I learned that as women we can participate in the development of our family, but above all to have independence and the fight to reduce 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 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 a vocation training to be a manicurist.



Gelen has scaled up her family's loom business.

**We Work With 14,884 Sponsored Children In Alta Verapaz**



# Projects That Support Lasting Change

## Economic Freedom

**The effects of climate change and the need for financial security compel the local youth in Alta Verapaz to migrate to other regions of the country.** Through our skill development in agricultural entrepreneurship, young people are gaining access to better economic opportunities.

The participants received training in leading agricultural projects, completing different phases of project implementation from identification and preparation of land, fertilization, harvest, and marketing at community and municipal levels. This not only accelerates the local economy through improved product quality and diversification of crops to better suit the changing climate but also empowers young women to develop skills in fields such as control of income and expenses, where they are often excluded. These initiatives provide the youth with the tools and knowledge to build sustainable livelihoods within their communities, reducing the need for migration.



Young farmers engaging in tomato harvest.

# 1,125

**youth trained in economic empowerment**



Adolescents take charge of their sexual rights.



Distribution of menstrual kits help reduce economic burden.

## Let's Change the Rules

**The societal taboos and lack of information associated with topics around menstruation result in young girls and women facing rampant exclusion in education, employment, and other daily activities.**

This ecosystem further perpetuates stigma and has repercussions on health, dignity, and sexual and reproductive health.

To enable a safe environment and ensure that young girls can safely exercise their rights, Plan has introduced projects through menstrual management and hygiene education. Moreover, we have implemented projects to educate young boys on positive masculinities. Curriculums are designed around consent that empowers adolescents to improve their knowledge and self-esteem, marking a significant reduction in gender stereotypes. These initiatives collectively foster a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

**"I wish more girls like me could receive these workshops so that they are informed and remove all those taboos that are heard in my community."**

# You're Supporting a More Equal Future



Gender equality is a fundamental human right

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

- To address the education inequalities and improve the school dropouts due to various factors, we will strengthen the resources to implement technology-based learning among teachers and students in the coming year.
- We must prioritise the issue of acute malnourishment in children. Plan International will continue to raise awareness of nutritional food security, improved breastfeeding practices, and complementary feeding among mothers.
- Through Generation with Decision and Leadership projects, we will empower the young members of the community to occupy seats in decision-making spaces.

## Message from Plan Staff

"Through various workshops and trainings, we have developed positive actions for young people in the community. A holistic approach allows us to collaborate with various stakeholders in the community giving us the opportunity to bring better change for everyone."



Rogel Leal,  
Programme Unit  
Manager Alta  
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

**142** teachers improved skills in mathematics

**431** parents trained in responsible parenthood

**260** adolescents receive sexual education

**360** male youth learn about positive masculinity