



Fundación Tradiciones Mayas

*Tejiendo la identidad cultural con oportunidad,
Weaving culture with opportunity*

Annual Report 2011

Introduction and Overview

In 2011 we were experiencing and are still in a period of transition, and the loss of Jane as visionary and donor has forced the organization to continue to look at long term sustainability issues and strategies. To meet this challenge, staff and stakeholders worked together to create and implement a three year strategic plan (available on our website). The direction of the strategic plan ensures that the foundations Jane laid for Maya Traditions will be further strengthened and allow the organization to prosper and continue to have a profound impact on the lives of indigenous women, their families and communities in Guatemala. The new direction for our Fair Trade Market Access Program is to ensure that the artisans we work with will become more independent and able to diversify and increase their income and improve their quality of life therefore 2011 has been the beginning of the process of transitioning out of FTM centered production with more focus on educating and empowering artisan women to be able to manage their own small businesses and become more independent and involved in the production process. We are happy to report that the beginning stages of this process have proved to be successful and we look forward to further investing in education and empowerment of artisan women in 2012.

The Foundation continues to work on developing its educational programs through; economic and moral support for indigenous youth, women artisans, and our Health program. In 2011 we celebrated 15 years of offering scholarships to the children of the women artisans with whom we work. In memory of Jane, we will be starting with the Jane Mintz Leadership Scholarship for University Study in 2012. Graduates from our high school scholarship program will be eligible to apply to seek funding to begin or continue with their university studies. We also completed our second year of the Natural Medicine Project whose objective is to promote and preserve traditional medical practices by empowering Ajq'omaneles (Maya healers) and emerging youth to educate their communities and provide access to affordable and appropriate health care in rural indigenous areas.

Mission

To create opportunities for Maya Women in Guatemala through Fair Trade and social programs in education, health and development of handicraft skills through both application of ancestral knowledge of backstrap loom weaving and other skills to improve their quality of life.

Vision

To be a leading Fair Trade organization that offers high quality products and services. Maya communities in Guatemala socially and economically developed in a sustainable manner, preserving their culture and assuring that their communities have access to a good quality of life.

Brief History

In 1988, Maya Traditions founder Jane Mintz, an experienced social worker (MSW Columbia University) and weaver herself began working with indigenous women artisans who were living in poverty after surviving decades of armed conflict in Guatemala. Jane observed that their skill of backstrap weaving was a chance for them to earn a stable income for their families while working from home doing what they were already good at. Maya Traditions was founded to help these skilled artisans succeed and preserve their cultures through access to a Fair Trade global marketplace. Today Maya Traditions is a Guatemalan Foundation which provides social service and scholarships supported by the production of Fair Trade products and grants from several foundations and individuals. We provide consistent work for 85 Maya backstrap weavers and their families. In addition, we strive to improve their quality of life by offering assistance in the areas deemed most valuable by the weaving groups, access to education and health and further development of artistry skills. Currently, FTM is working in six different indigenous communities in the rural highlands of Guatemala and benefitting over 500 indigenous Mayas.

Foundation Governing Structure

Executive Board of Founders and Benefactors

Murray Mintz, Armando Alfonso and Brenda Rosenbaum

Advisory Board

President: Murray Mintz

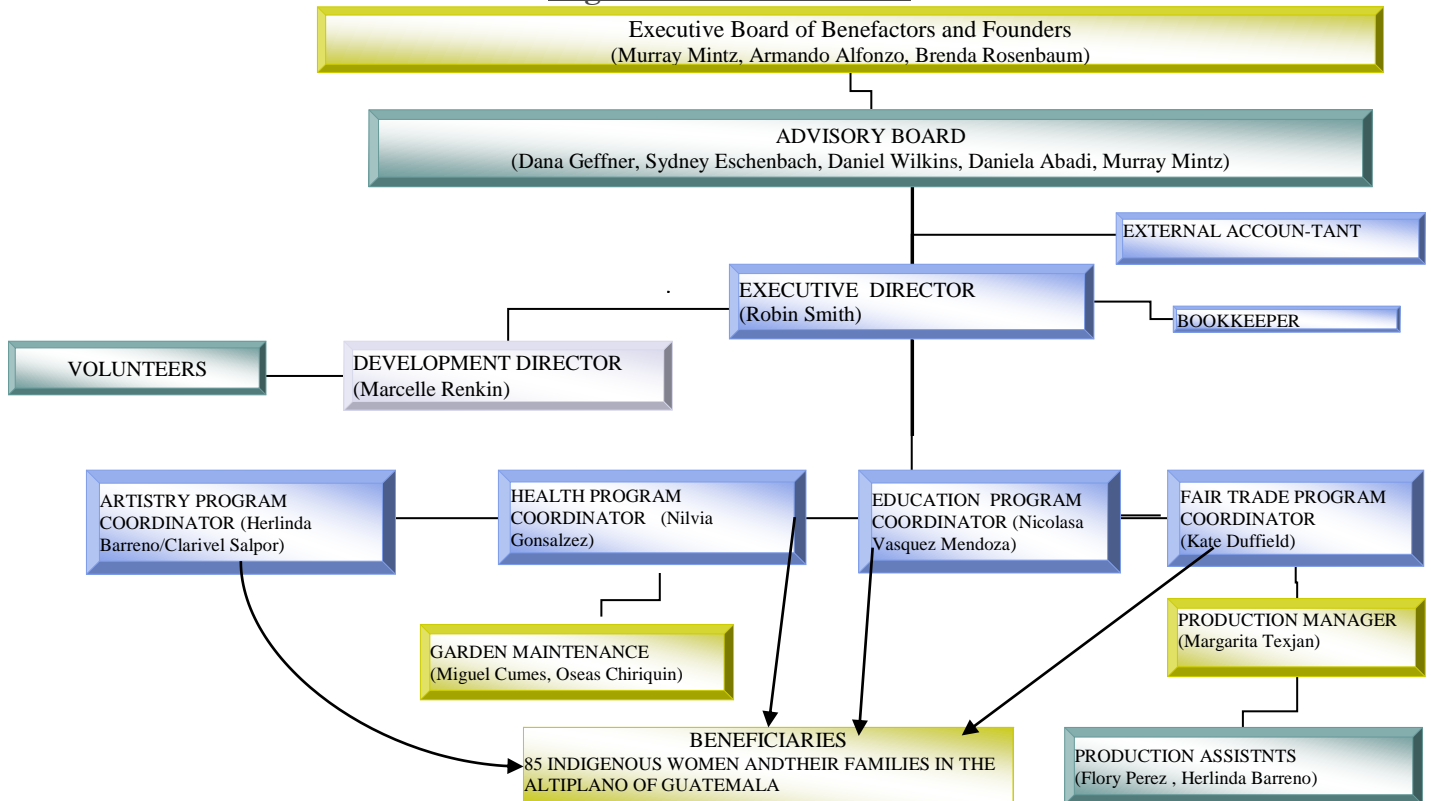
Vice President: Dan Wilkens

Treasurer: Sydney Eschenbauch

Secretary: Dana Geffner

Board Member: Daniela Abadi

Organizational Flow Chart



2011 Full Time Staff: 9

Part Time Staff: 3

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Key Activities in 2011

Community Health Program

FTM is pleased in 2011 to have completed Stage II of a project working with Traditional Mayan Healers (Aq'jonomeles) and youth in order to promote and pass on traditional knowledge about the use of medicinal plants for healing common diseases. With the support of the *First People's Worldwide Fund of the Tides Foundation*, FTM launched the 12 month Natural Medicine Project from April 2009-2010 and received follow up funding to implement activities in 2011. Fourteen traditional healers and five young adults from ten communities in the Lake Atitlán region of Guatemala were participate in the project including Ajq'ijes (spiritual guides), Iyoms (midwives), Chapalb'áqs (bonesetters or traumatologists), Ch'ajal b'oq'ochs (eye specialist), and Chayeros (blood specialist).

In its first year, the project achieved great success in strengthening the knowledge of the healers and youth participants, establishing a network of natural medicine practitioners in the Lake Atitlan region, preserving and promoting knowledge of traditional medical practices, and increasing access to natural health care in ten indigenous communities.

FTM was able to achieve the following goals through the implementation of this project:

➤ 14 Ajq'omeles and 5 youth receiving advanced training in the properties and uses of medicinal plants and plant products as well as in best practices for conducting community clinics.

Themes included Use and Cultivation of Medicinal Plants and Curative Properties which focused on outcomes of the comprehensive diagnostic study of access to health care and occurrences of preventative illnesses to expand knowledge of use of plants widely available for treatment of the most common illnesses identified, Post Partum infections, diarrhea and pneumonia, Spearmint, Pericon, Chamomile) as well as learning about the properties and uses of other plants for the same illnesses (Apacin, Nightshade and Chilca). Bonesetter, Don Juan Pacach reflects on his attendance at the workshop, *"These workshops will help me to be able to help the people in my community. With this knowledge I will be able to help by curing different illnesses."* Participants also had an opportunity to learn more about how to make medicinal plant products and how to prepare for conducting clinic in the communities. Issues such as Patient-Practitioner confidentiality, record keeping and general client service were covered by workshop Facilitator, Doctor Anabella Perez. .



1 Teachers and Students in Santiago receive education about medicinal plants

➤ 359 women and youth receiving workshops on preventive medical practices focusing on the use of medicinal plants

Healers, with the help of the youth focused their workshops in schools and with the artisan women in the six communities FTM works in on themes such as, "Staying Healthy and Preventing Common Illnesses". Each of the students and their teachers received either a medicinal plant seedling or tea. Plants were chosen based on the outcomes of the diagnostic study that helped identify common preventative illnesses such as Lemon Grass (for colds), Licorice and Horehound (for coughs) and Yarrow (for gastrointestinal infections). Students also received instruction on how to prepare teas and how to look after their seedlings. Women in the six communities Maya Traditions Works in with artisan production attended two workshops in each community led by facilitators selected amongst the 19 Ajq'omeles and youth. Women from the artisan groups in San Juan La Laguna and Santa Clara La Laguna manifested interest in learning more about the elaboration of medicinal plant products as a form of income and as a means to be able to provide low cost medicine to community members.

➤ 10 communities benefiting from access to mobile medical clinics and treatments attended by Aq'jonomeles:

The clinics held in the communities proved to be very popular and there were very high levels of attendance. Each clinic was attended by a minimum of two Mayan Healers and one youth participant. In villages where a higher number of patients were expected at times three healers attended to patients in order not to turn away people interested in treatment. 662 medicinal plants and plant remedies distributed and a total of 551 patients were attended in the communities of Panajachel, Patanatic, Chaquijya, San Andrés Semetabaj, Chirijox, San Antonio Palopo, Santiago de Atitlán, Santiago de Atitlán, Chuacruz, San Pedro La Laguna and Quiejel.



2 Traditional healers attend to a child patient in community clinics

➤ **15 Ajq'omaneles serving as a point of access to affordable medicinal plant products as well as promoters of preventive health practices.** The Ajq'omaneles have expressed that they feel that learning to make the salves and syrups has been very useful. Maya Pediatrician , Catarina Flaviana Tambriz, from Chirijox reports that she has *“been able to use her new knowledge to make salves and syrups to better treat patients at an affordable price”*. Traditional midwife, Josefina Vasquez and student participant Sheyli Zunu, both from San Pedro La Laguna reported that they have made 100 salves and are selling them at the low cost of Q10 (USD\$1.25) to their patients, they believe that *“ this will help the people in the communities use medicinal plants and save money”*.

Youth Education Program

New Program Coordinator

In March 2011, the Foundation was happy to welcome new Program Coordinator Nicolasa Vasquez Mendoza to the team. Nicolasa is from San Juan La Laguna and is the daughter of an artisan group member. Nicolasa graduated from our scholarship program in 2009, with a certificate in Bookkeeping and Computing. She is currently in her second year of a Social Work degree at the Panamericana University. On completing elementary school in 2000, Nicolasa went to Guatemala City in search of work to help sustain her family. She worked in a plastics factory for five years before deciding to return home to finish her studies at high school. Nicolasa has coordinated educational projects in her community, and we are proud to be able to have scholarship program graduates become more involved in the operations of the Foundation.

2011 is the 15th year that FTM is able to offer scholarships to the children of the women artisans with who we work. With the support of MEF and other individual donors we are proud to be able to continue to invest in the personal and professional development of indigenous children and youth. Through a holistic program FTM is positively contributing to the development of successful, empowered and socially conscious youth that will affect change in their communities.



3 Scholarship students from Santa Clara

Direct Scholarships

In 2011 FTM provided full scholarships to the following numbers of students:

60 primary level students

34 Junior High students

28 Senior High Students

Total 122

In 2011 three students have left their studies for diverse reasons. Before each student withdrew from studies, the Education Program Coordinator was actively advocating for each student to finish his or her studies. We hope to see these students return to school in 2012. Students unfortunately left the program due to diverse reasons such as teenage pregnancy and discrimination experience in the educational institution. Although the Coordinator was able to give guidance and support to these students they ultimately decided to discontinue their studies.



4. Students in the leadership project brainstorm on possible project

Youth Leadership and Initiative Project (YLIP)-

With 2011 being an election year in Guatemala, our focus this year for the Youth Leadership and Initiative Project is on educating leaders about political history and processes and how they can affectively promote democratic processes. Twelve students in total participated in three leadership workshops. These workshops laid the ground work for these budding leaders to organize a civic activity in their communities to become more actively involved in promoting transparency and democratic rights in their communities, beginning with educating their mothers and families. Students from each of the 6 communities where FTM works organized talks with the artisan groups to further educate the women about civic participation and their rights and responsibilities in a free and fair electoral process.

Workshops Implemented 2011

Youth and the Guatemalan Reality Workshop

On the 19th of April, all sponsored students from grades 10-12 (38) came together to celebrate the beginning of the year with a workshop. Every year this workshop theme is selected based on recommendations by the youth participants in the previous year's workshop. This year the theme was, The Cosmovision Maya, and was led by a Spiritual Guide, (Sacerdote Maya). This workshop provided students with a space in which to comfortably explore their own Maya heritage and to better understand why and how these traditions are passed on from generation to generation. Students were excited at the opportunity to be able to learn more about the Cosmovision Maya and how it pertains to their identity as young indigenous people.



Ilustración 5 Youth participating in a Mayan Ceremony

Choosing the Right Career Workshop

This workshop was attended by 13 students in grade 9 on the 20th of April. The objective of this workshop is to further inform students about different career options. Each year FTM invites a student who has graduated from the scholarship program to come and talk to students about their experiences after high school and how they have shaped a career path from the career that they choose. This workshop serves as motivation for 9th grade students to start thinking about their own career paths.



Ilustración 6 Volunteers David and Nicole participate in Youth Workshop Activities

Community Service Preparation Workshop – ‘Breakdown of the Family Unit’

To get the students thinking of ideas, facilitators from the Human Rights Ombudsmen's Office and the Legal Center for Human Rights in Sololá came to talk about this year's theme. Through discussions and skits, the students shared about many difficult topics, from domestic violence to the effects of poverty, and were able to brainstorm a lot of great plans for their projects. The community service projects are a great way for our scholarship students to 'give back' to their communities.

Community Service Activities

Through two workshops with the artisan women in each community the students explored the theme of Disintegration, including role plays, explanations and frank and open discussions from both students and women participants about their realities and behaviors that can negatively affect the family unit and lead to its break down. This led to open discussions in each community about the ways in which family disintegration can be combated and how to deal with such issues as drug abuse and domestic violence. This theme was also explored with youth in each community through the organization of a youth focused activity. In total 78 women participated in the workshops and 133 youth participated in workshops and activities to promote discussion on causes and solutions to creating harmony at home.



Ilustración 7 Women in Patanatic learn about solutions for dealing with family issues

Accompaniment and Support to Youth

During the month of May, after receipt and revision of first semester grades, the Program Coordinator, Nicolasa, visited the 38 senior high school students in their homes as a means to offer moral support, especially focusing on those students who were struggling in some courses. Students always show a great appreciation for the time and energy the Coordinator dedicates to visit them individually and are motivated by these visits to improve and or keep up grades. Through the accompaniment project it has also come to light that a 9th grade student from the community of Quiejel had dropped out of school due to him experimenting with drugs during school hours and on school premises. Although the student

believed that he just needed to take the rest of the year off in order to avoid being in an environment where students were abusing drugs, Nicolasa was able to talk with him and his mother and advocate for him to be accepted into another school mid semester. We are happy to report that he hasn't dropped out of school and that follow up support for him will include visits with a psychologist/social worker. Nicolasa is currently investigating the possibility to invite representatives from the National Police's Anti- Drug Education Program to give motivational talks to junior high students in Chichicastenango area.

Artisan Education and Capacity Building Activities

As part of a strategic shift to help the women artisans the foundation works with to become more independent, Artistry Education Coordinator, Herlinda Barreno and part time Coordinator Clarivel Salpor worked on educating the women more about managing their own small businesses and income taxes. This is a complicated process and was ongoing throughout 2011 in order to ensure that the artisans can either properly manage tax receipts and reporting or that they have found a reliable accountant.

Developing Small Business Management Skills

Counterpart International funded this small Project to help the women on their road to independence by learning the basics of managing the micro business entities that FTM helped them establish in 2007. The objective of this project is the strengthen the artisan groups and provide accompaniment in their process of actively participating in the formal economy. This project was carried out in late 2011 and consisted of workshops, community visits and follow ups as well as accompaniment for the artisans in establishing a working relationship with accountants in their communities.

Workshop1: *Managing Invoices for the Tax Office (SAT)* Was conducted by FTM staff and involved participation by 22 artisan women. Follow up workshops and accompaniment in communities was carried out in all 6 communities as workshops with the women. A total of 77 women participated in these replica workshops. Workshop II, *Contracting a Reliable Accountant* was held in the communities and carried out by registered accountants in the appropriate indigenous language. Three follow up visits in each community were carried out to accompany women in interviewing and contracting potential accountants. *Outcomes of the project include:*

Community	Name of Group	% of participants that can now correctly write invoices	% of participants that can now calculate sales taxes
Santa Clara	Flor Clarence	87%	80%
Chirijox	Qatoqib'	67%	60%
Quiejel	Chuwila'	55%	50%
San Juan la Laguna	Voz de los Tzutujiles	71%	60%
San Juan la Laguna	Flor Juanera	44%	40%
Patanatic	Ixoqib' kukan kib'	57%	50%
	% TOTAL	64%	60%

Environmental Education for Artisans

In collaboration with local NGO, Vivamos Mejor (www.vivamosmejor.org.gt) Artisan Education Coordinator Herlinda has also accompanied Environmental Education Project Coordinators from Vivamos Mejor in the first phase of this project. Diagnostic visits were carried out with each of the six artisan groups in communities in order to further develop community specific curriculums that truly meet the needs of both the artisan groups and the community at large in regards to environmental issues that they identify as impacting their communities. Organic composts have been set up in five of the FTM communities.

Fair Trade Access Program

Counterpart International, a USAID funded project, made it possible for FTM to once again participate in the New World Crafts Fair in Antigua in September 2011. This was the Foundations third opportunity to participate was an important platform for FTM to be able to attract potential new clients, thus furthering its goal of economic empowerment and promotion of Fair Trade. Artisan Education Coordinator, Herlinda Barreno,



8 Vivamos Mejor roject Coordinator, Andrea Paiz, teaches women about composting

worked alongside our six Fair Trade artisan groups to give in-community workshops. An ongoing issue that Herlinda has met with the women about is group cohesion; she worked on teaching the women better communication and conflict resolution skills. Quality control of Fair Trade products is also an ongoing process and requires constant monitoring and community visits in order to ensure that the women can consistently produce the highest quality product possible. The Foundation believes that through teaching women about Quality Control it is enabling them to become more independent and prepared to deal with other clients in the demanding global market. In 2011 FTM reported a total in sales of GTQ 631 708.03, approximately USD\$83,120. Some new markets were explored through the establishment of on line stores on both Etsy and Ebay, these channels for sales will be further explored in 2012.

Transitioning out of FTM centered production has involved addressing issues such as artisan's ability to reproduce existing colours and designs that have an existing demand. Fortunately the Foundation was able to work with the women to reproduce many popular colours which were approved by wholesale clients. This has been a process and in 2012 Fair Trade Program Director, Flory Perez, will continue to work with the women and accompany them as they move further towards becoming more independent producers. We continue to work with our ever supportive largest wholesaler, Global Crafts on ways in which we can continue to transition through production changes and continue generating income for the artisan women with whom we work.

Volunteers and Interns

In 2011, FTM was fortunate to have valuable contribution to our programs through the hard work of dedicated volunteers. FTM wished to express its gratitude to the following volunteers.

Natalia Robinson (Artisan Education and Medicinal Plant Project) , Molly Laing (Fundraising and Medicinal Plant Project), Caroline Whitson (Marketing and Outreach) and Nicole Staggs (Education Program).

We would also like to welcome on board our Development Associate volunteer David Durica who started in October 2011 and will be with us until September 2012.

Local Internship Program

FTM was to be able to host three local interns whilst providing an opportunity for these students to gain some professional experience. FTM always benefits from the extra help keen interns have to offer. The 2011 high school interns included: Marily Sicaly ,Mariela Rosales and Clarivel Salpor.

Gifts Received in 2011

FTM thanks the following organizations and institutions for their support in 2011:



TIDES FOUNDATION

First People's Worldwide Fund of the Tides Foundation



Individual Donors

FTM also thanks the following individual donors for their generous contribution in 2011; Jane Mintz Trust, Murray Mintz, Brenda Rosenbaum, Margot Scheville and Linda Robertson.

Financial institutions holding the foundation's funds

Maya Educational Foundation, Jane Mintz Trust