

Mayan Hands

celebrating 30 years!

Annual Report
2019-2020



This year, Mayan Hands celebrates 30 years of fair trade work with Mayan women. As a young anthropologist in 1990, I had lived and conducted research for many years in Mayan communities, where I was graced with generous hospitality and friendship. I also witnessed both the hard-working lives and amazing talent of the Mayan people I knew, as well as the terrible effects of the marginalization and discrimination they have suffered for centuries. At the time when we embarked on our work, many Mayan communities were engulfed in the Guatemalan civil war and suffered tremendous devastation and loss.

Mayan Hands was born with the idea of opening markets for Mayan textiles. Mayan weavers, especially women working on the back-strap loom, are hailed the world over for their weaving skills and their magnificent textiles. Connecting them to markets willing to pay a fair return for their work, the women would have the opportunity to earn a consistent income and support their families. From the beginning, Mayan Hands chose to adhere to fair trade principles.

Over the course of 30 years, we have seen the transformative power of economic opportunity in the lives of Mayan women and their families. When women have income, they put food on their families' tables, send their children to school, invest in their local communities and work for a better future. Hope blossoms where despair had reigned.



Brenda Rosenbaum
Founder

In 2019, in recognition of 30 years of partnering with Mayan women artisans in Guatemala, Mayan Hands began a process of reflection and planning to guide our work going forward in support of Mayan women and girls in Guatemala. The efforts and determination of our amazing artisan partners, coupled with the support of donors, demonstrates the power of women to create lasting impact in their communities, while at the same time preserving and sharing their rich cultural traditions.

2020 has been a momentous year. As is true for the rest of the world, the impact of Covid-19 affects every aspect of our operations and exposes the vulnerability of the marginalized indigenous population of Guatemala. At the same time, as increased awareness and outrage over racial injustice spreads in the United States and beyond, we rededicate ourselves to transforming systems that oppress into those that assure social justice and human rights. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to align our work and values to maximize the impact Mayan Hands represents for the women we work with and their families. Never has our work been more important.

This annual report documents and celebrates the resiliency of our remarkable artisan partners and the compassion of donors who have extended their generosity in a time of great need. Thank you for accompanying us on this journey - past, present and future.



Anne Kelly
Executive Director



Mayan Hands artisan partners
craft sustainable futures as they
preserve the culture they cherish.

Mission

Mayan Hands is a fair trade nonprofit dedicated to providing economic and educational opportunities to Mayan women and girls, so that they can build sustainable futures for themselves, their families and communities, as they continue to live within the culture they cherish.

Over the last 30 years of partnership with Mayan women and girls, we have witnessed a sea change in the lives of the women we work with: they speak out, resist domestic oppression, and, counting on a regular income, have more agency in their lives. We are all especially excited about Mayan Hands Education Fund, which provides scholarships and other support to the daughters of our artisan partners.



When women have income, their families thrive, communities benefit, and economies grow.

We Believe in Women

Women are powerful agents for social and economic change in developing countries. **When women work, families thrive, their communities benefit, and economies grow.** With access to resources and tools, women are able to achieve their full potential and ensure the same for those around them.

According to the United Nations, women invest 90 percent of their income back into their families, improving their chance to achieve health and prosperity. This, in turn, creates a cycle that sustainably alleviates poverty.

During our thirty years working together, our artisan partners have given their all to improve their work and expand their opportunities in the market. They have demonstrated creativity and perseverance as they learn new techniques, create new possibilities and embark in the painstaking processes of their craft. They have taken on leadership roles, learned business skills, and supported one another along the way. They have worked hard to accomplish their goal: the dignity of making a living and crafting a better future for their families.



With access to opportunities, women are able to realize their full potential and ensure the same for those around them.

How We Work



Market Access

Access to global markets provides women with opportunities to earn critical income.



Capacity Building

Artisans participate in trainings to develop business, technical, and leadership skills.



Education

Mayan Hands in the next generation by providing scholarships and support to indigenous girls.

We believe that when provided with economic and educational opportunity, women and girls can realize their potential and have a dignified path out of poverty



Market Access



Market Access

Selling their beautiful handcrafted creations, month after month and year after year, has provided critical and reliable income to our artisan partners. Our long-term partnership provides financial stability and gives the women more agency so they can plan for the future and have more control over their lives.

Since our inception, Mayan Hands has followed fair trade principles, which include fair compensation, safe working conditions, ensuring the rights of children, environmental sustainability and respect of cultural identity. We are a proud member of the [Fair Trade Federation](#).



Artisan Spotlight: Maria Ana Lajuj



*Maria Ana Lajuj with daughter Blecin,
circa 1990*

Maria Ana Lajuj is leader of our oldest partner cooperative, located in Rabinal, where hundreds of men were killed during the civil war in the early 1980s, leaving widows with children to support, but no opportunities for earning income in their remote location prone to drought.

After an international NGO taught the women to weave on the foot loom, typically used by men, they produced mountains of textiles that unfortunately did not sell as planned in the U.S. market. Determined entrepreneurs, the recently trained women obtained loans to buy the treadle looms and took them back to their communities in the rural areas. Maria Ana led a newly formed cooperative of women hoping to weave textiles for the local market.

Thirty-two years ago, when Mayan Hands was just an idea, we heard their story, and commissioned textiles from the group to sell in the United States. We are proud to say that Maria Ana's group is still working with Mayan Hands to this day. Despite being far away from tourist markets, the coop consistently has work thanks to Maria Ana's leadership.

Maria Ana's determination and resiliency has inspired not only her cooperative members, but her three grown daughters, all of whom have attended school, two at the university level:

"My mother is an exemplary and brave woman. Since I was very young, she has supported me so that I could study... Education is the basis for the development of every human being." – Blecin Lajuj



Maria Ana and Blecin



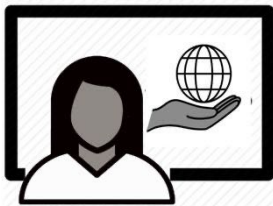
Capacity Building



Capacity Building

In addition to paying fair wages for their work, programs that support our artisan partners in realizing their potential as artists, businesswomen, and leaders in their communities help them create lasting change at home, and allow the women to share their creativity and culture with the global community.

Our artisan partners participate in capacity-building programs that offer technical assistance, new skills or technique development, product design, business and leadership development, and occupational health and safety, as well as workshops in gender role awareness, conflict resolution, and health and wellbeing.



Business Skills



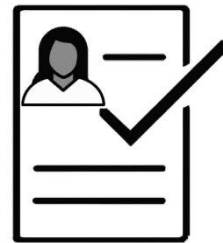
Leadership



Health &
Well-Being



Technical Skills
& Design



Occupational
Health & Safety

Covid-19 Response



The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on the lives of our artisan partners and their families. Mid-March, Mayan Hands' previously robust sales in the United States came to a halt as businesses closed their doors and grappled with their immediate survival. At the same time, when the virus arrived in Guatemala, the government quickly imposed severe restrictions to contain the virus. All borders were closed, non-essential businesses and public transportation shut down, followed by a curfew and ban on interdepartmental travel within the country. Rural and vulnerable communities have been severely affected since the first days of the lockdown, as the cost of food skyrocketed and opportunities to earn income disappeared.

Mayan Hands, committed to the wellbeing of our artisan partners and their families, especially during this time of urgent need, instituted the following programs:

Education and Communication

- Workshops with cooperative leaders which included information on the virus, its transmission and prevention, and natural medicines
- Hygiene kits, including masks and soap
- Bi-weekly check-ins with cooperative leaders

Continuing to provide work and income when possible

- As women can work from home safely without traveling, they were able to earn income when there was demand for production.
- New strategies for safely delivering raw materials, quality control and product reception

Direct Financial Support

During months when there was no work, each woman received emergency stipends, thanks to the tremendous generosity of our donors in response to an Emergency Artisan Support Appeal in April-May 2020.



Educating girls can break the cycle of poverty
in one generation.



Education

Their children's education is the highest priority of our artisan partners. Unfortunately, in Guatemala, girls face barriers to the quality education they deserve simply because they are girls. Cultural bias, poverty, hunger, violence, and early or forced marriage are a daily reality. Mayan Hands invests in the next generation of women leaders by offering scholarships and support to the daughters of our artisan partners.

Educating girls can break the cycle of poverty in one generation. Educated girls are healthier, earn more, and stand up for their rights. With equal access to education and opportunities, girls can eventually grow into resilient women able to take on leadership roles and improve the social and economic well-being of their families, their communities, and their country.

Mayan Hands Education Fund provides scholarships to the daughters of our artisan partners to cover the cost of tuition, enrollment fees, uniforms, travel and school supplies. Mayan Hands scholarship recipients participate in programs to support students as they encounter the unique challenges of being first-generation indigenous girls seeking an education.

SERNiña – To Be a Girl



Mayan Hands scholarship recipients at workshop

Education for girls can transform communities, countries and our world. Girls education is an investment in a healthier society, economic growth, and the future of our planet.

This year, forty-nine scholarship recipients moved heaven and earth to study remotely in the midst of a drastic country-wide lockdown. The girls, including 10 at the university, successfully navigated the new and complex process of online learning.

As a global pandemic reveals the vulnerability of a population that is marginalized, we are inspired by the aspirations of Mayan Hands scholarship recipients that participated in the SERNiña program designed to support girls as they navigate the challenges and possibilities of being the first generation of girls to access a formal education in a male-dominated culture.

I have dreams of being a doctor so I can help people in my community who are suffering from so many illnesses. – Ema

My dream is to become a professional that serves society. I want to continue at the University so that I can be a lawyer. – Lidia

My great dream is to study to be a professional nurse. I want to be able to help those needing my assistance so that in my village there will be no more deaths from curable diseases. – Elida

As a girl I have the same rights as my brothers. I can dream and make plans for my future and nobody has the right to take these dreams away from me. Just like me, every person deserves respect regardless of their age or gender.” - Marina

Statement of Financial Position as of May 31, 2020

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	235,169
Inventory	138,587
Accounts receivable	9,435
Deposit	<u>500</u>
Total Assets	<u>383,691</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	4,898
Accrued expense	<u>8,778</u>
Paycheck Protection Loan	<u>17,600</u>
Total Liabilities	31,276

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	<u>352,415</u>
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Statement of Activities Year Ending May 31, 2020

SUPPORT

Donations	90,734
Miscellaneous	<u>2,550</u>
Total Support	<u>92,284</u>

PROGRAM REVENUE

Product Sales	497,884
Cost of sales in support of Mayan women	<u>315,109</u>
Net Program Revenue	<u>182,775</u>

EXPENSES

Program Services	143,457
Support Services	5,485
Fundraising Services	<u>3,086</u>
Total Expenses	<u>192,028</u>

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	84,031
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NET ASSETS , beginning of year	<u>268,384</u>
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NET ASSETS , end of year	<u>\$352,415</u>
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For a complete copy of Mayan Hands Foundation audited financial statements, please contact us at (518) 729-1900.

thank you • gracias • matiox

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who accompanied us this year on this journey of creating opportunity and hope.

Artisan Partners

You inspire us each day with your dedication to your families and communities, your enormous talent, and your perseverance in the face of so many obstacles. We are honored to work by your side.

Donors

Your generosity changes lives by helping to lift families out of poverty through programs that empower and educate. Thank you for your support.

Wholesale and Retail Customers

We appreciate your commitment to putting people before profits by purchasing Mayan Hands products. Your collaboration is integral to our success.

Volunteers

Thank you for countless hours of service at our warehouse, in stores, churches, weaving guilds and at other events around the country.

Fair Trade Allies

We are grateful to the collaborative network of fair traders who educate, inspire, and support us.

Board of Directors and Staff

Thank you for the passion, dedication, and skill you contribute to our work together.

Mayan Hands Foundation Board of Directors

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Mark Van Wormer



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