

Mayan Hands



handmade · fair trade

Annual Report
2020-2021



As this fiscal year draws to a close and we reflect on the journey, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the support of the Mayan Hands community, which allowed our artisan partners and their families to navigate the enormous challenges of the pandemic.

Your donations provided stipends when there was no work, so families had food, medication and other basic necessities. As the market rebounded and the demand for our products grew, your purchases of their fine handmade artisan goods created steady work and income, giving Mayan women a dignified path out of poverty. You sponsored scholarships for the daughters of artisan partners, so often the first generation to access education.

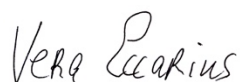
The increased spread of Covid in their local communities and the structural inequality, rampant poverty, lack of access to health care and other important safety nets means that life for the women of Mayan Hands will continue to be precarious. Our mission of offering economic and educational opportunities to Mayan women and girls has never been more important.

Your support allows us to dream bigger and we look forward to the new year with optimism and excitement. Mayan Hands' new strategic plan includes partnering with more Mayan women to bring their handmade goods to market. Several new cooperatives have already participated in initial training workshops to develop their business and technical skills, and we are all encouraged by their progress. As part of our commitment to improving the quality of life of our artisan partners, we will focus on plans to offer access to health care.

On behalf of our artisan partners, thank you for your continued support through this challenging time. It sustains the women and their families and enables Mayan Hands to continue and expand our mission of bringing their exquisite creations to market, improving quality of life for families and communities, offering educational opportunities to the next generation, and preserving rich cultural traditions.



Brenda Rosenbaum
Founder



Vera Eccarius
Board President



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.



When women earn 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, their 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 invests 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 proud to be a founding member of the [Fair Trade Federation](#).



Artisan Spotlight

Lilian Ujpán is a member of the artisan group that crochets Mayan Hands' fine crocheted kippot. Her story is one of ingenuity, perseverance and hope.

After years of hard manual labor, first as a child and then as an adult working in the fields, Lilian was determined to create a different future for her children. She loved to crochet, enjoying the creativity of working with color, patterns and textures. She believed that if she could find a market for her products, she would be able to work from home and care for her family.



Lilian organized a group of women in her village to form an artisan cooperative so that they could support one another in their work, but middlemen extracted too much profit, leaving the women with little to no income. Ever determined, she connected with Mayan Hands and presented sample kippot. With thousands of artisans in the country and scant opportunity to sell their work, the women knew that price was crucial, so they quoted us a price they believed we would find

acceptable. We explained that our goal was to strengthen their earning power, not to increase our profit at their expense. Mayan Hands now pays two and a half times what the women initially requested.

“Now we have hope because we know that with hard work, we can create better lives for our children. That is our dream, the most important thing in life.”

Lilian loves making kippot: “Jewish people use them to cover their heads; it’s like God is accompanying them everywhere, like they are under God’s protection. I feel like our work is sacred and serves a very special purpose.”

Lilian is proud not only of the work she does, but what it means for her family and her community. She loves that her children have opportunities that she did not as a girl. She has been able provide them with nourishing food and send them, even the girls, to school. Her own life journey is an inspiration for them and for the other women in the cooperative. She says, “Now we have hope because we know that with hard work, we can create better lives for our children. That is our dream, the most important thing in life.”

Madre Tierra

Mayan women are renowned worldwide for their exquisite weaving, yet most are not able to earn enough to sustain their families. Competition, local and international, is fierce and far too often Mayan Hands has not been able to provide the weavers who partner with us as much work as they need.



Our newest collection, *Madre Tierra* or "Mother Earth" (Q'nan Ulew in K'iche) builds on the strong market appeal of our popular pine needle baskets by developing textiles that coordinate with the baskets and also tells a story of culture and tradition. Inspired by the Earth's exquisite color palette, the collection honors the wisdom of Maya culture that emphasizes a loving connection between people and nature.

This project brings cooperatives that specialize in the distinctive artisan techniques and traditions of their communities together to celebrate their common relationship with Mother Earth as expressed through their creative work. Handwoven textiles are carefully crafted on ancient backstrap looms by the hands of talented weavers. Weavers who specialize in *jaspe* (also known as ikat) incorporate these graphic motifs into the warp of their textiles, while another group adds the visual interest of brocade into the weft of theirs. Basket weavers, working with sustainably harvested longleaf pine needles and *pajón*, a wild grass of the Guatemalan Highlands, create exquisite baskets.

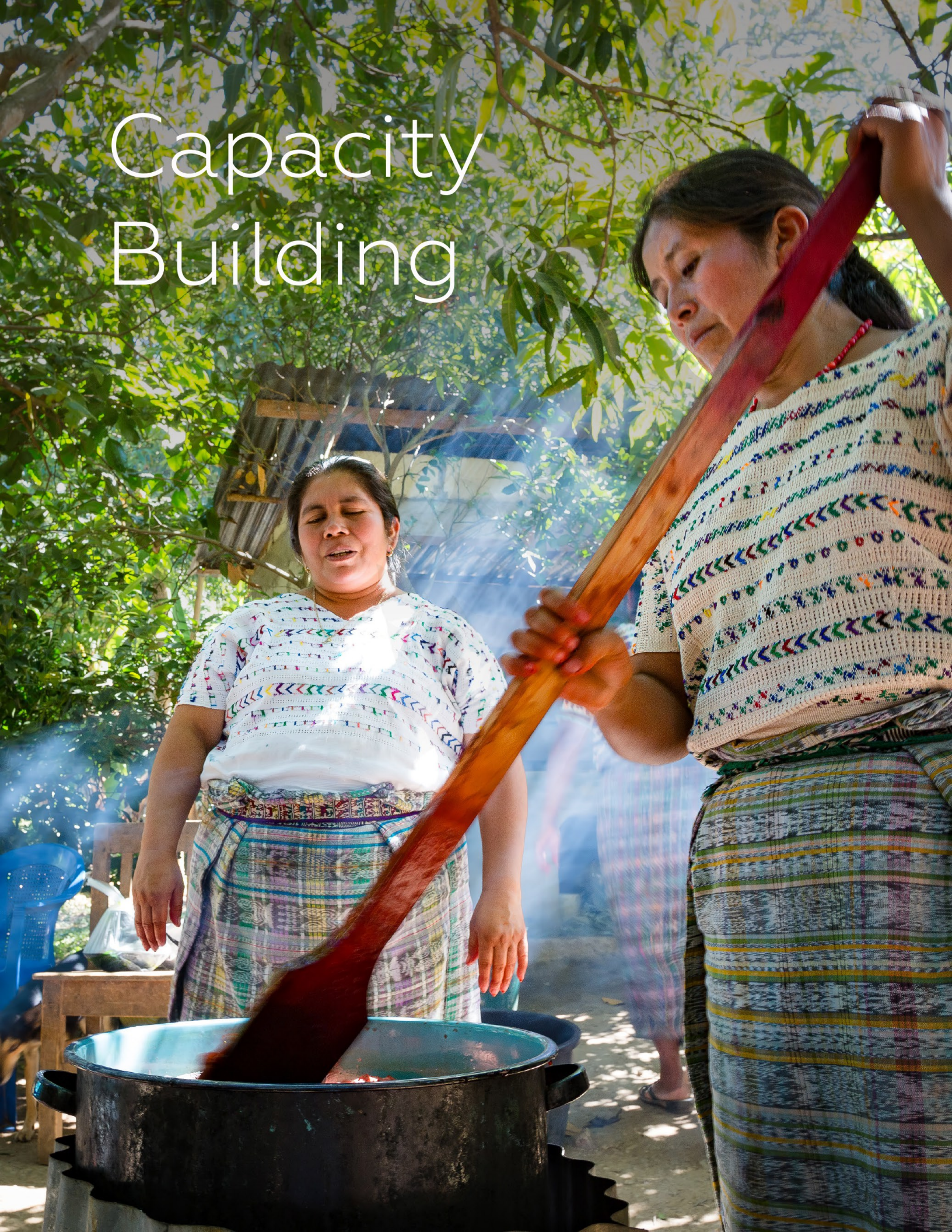


Backstrap weavers from San Rafael specialize in the fine art of brocade.

Mayan Hands artisan partners are proud to share their work in the hopes that it will bring beauty and pleasure to the homes of people living in other places and that it will help them connect with *Madre Tierra* and the earth which sustains us all.

With much gratitude to designer Frank Millero, who collaborated with us through each phase of developing this special collection celebrating the beauty and sacredness of Madre Tierra.

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



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.

In Her Words

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

This year, forty-one scholarship recipients moved heaven and earth to study remotely as Covid spread in their rural communities. Even though the pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities that create barriers to girls' education, the families of Mayan Hands scholarship recipients remain committed to their daughters' education. The students, including 9 at the university, navigated the enormous challenges of transitioning from in-person education to remote learning.



“It is a struggle to study during the pandemic, but I am proud that since my first semester I have completed each course. I am always grateful for the scholarship, which supports me in achieving my dreams. I will continue to work each day to be a person who contributes to society.” – Silvia Leticia

“I love studying music. The process is not easy at all, but I have learned to work on the small things so I can reach the bigger goals. My dream is to become a professional composer and musician, and start my own music academy.” – Lucia Francisca

“I love my course of studies, even though it is not easy to receive classes online. I think we must face these difficulties and see them as a challenge to overcome.” – Maria Miguelina

“This year I have more complicated courses and sometimes is difficult to understand what my teachers explain online. But I will strive because my goal is to learn until I become a doctor. Thanks to the support of Mayan Hands, I have what I need - my internet, my tools, my books. Thank you so much.” – Darlyn Mishel

“I want to be a professional who can help vulnerable people. All I am and have learned is thanks to my whole family, especially my grandfather, who taught me that if someone falls, they should get up again and go on because life is about that.” – María Concepción

Our Impact

Over more than 30 years of long-term partnership with Mayan women and girls, we have witnessed a sea change in the lives of our artisan partners: they speak out, resist domestic oppression, and, counting on regular income, have more agency in their lives.



this year, by the numbers...

203 women earned fair wages, benefiting **1,000+** dependents.

50,469

fair trade, handmade products sold

8 of the artisan cooperatives we worked with this year have partnered with us for more than 20 years - **and some for more than 30**

179 families received emergency aid when there was no work due to the pandemic.

Mayan Hands' mission of providing economic and educational opportunities for Mayan women and girls and preservation of their rich cultural traditions was supported by

280

generous donors.

41

Indigenous girls navigated the challenges of the pandemic to attend school, supported by Mayan Hands scholarships.

Mayan Hands Foundation LTD.

Statement of Financial Position as of May 31, 2021

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	296,368
Inventory	120,105
Accounts receivable	22,528
Deposit	<u>500</u>
Total Assets	<u>439,501</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	5,030
Accrued expense	<u>6,348</u>
Paycheck Protection Loan	<u>17,792</u>
Total Liabilities	29,170

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	<u>410,331</u>
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Statement of Activities Year Ending May 31, 2021

SUPPORT

Donations	81,216
Miscellaneous	<u>287</u>
Total Support	<u>81,503</u>

PROGRAM REVENUE

Product Sales	476,301
Cost of sales in support of Mayan women	<u>322,232</u>
Net Program Revenue	<u>154,069</u>

EXPENSES

Program Services	144,311
Support Services	47,894
Fundraising Services	<u>3,051</u>
Total Expenses	<u>196,256</u>

FORGIVENESS OF PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM LOAN

17,600

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

57,916

NET ASSETS, beginning of year

352,415

*For a complete copy of Mayan Hands Foundation
Independent Accountant Review Report,
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

Vera Eccarius-Kelly, president
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Photo credits:
Mark Van Wormer: pages 1-18
Anne Watts: page 11 (top)
Anne Kelly: page 12 (top)

Thank you to our artisan partners who consented to including their images in this report.

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