

KENOLI NEWSLETTER

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Visits to Guatemalan Organizations

From September 16th to 24th the Kenoli team visited organizations we support in Guatemala. We had the opportunity to deepen our understanding of each organization and to appreciate the remarkable work they carry out within the communities.

Fundación Puente: Empowering mothers and strengthening children's development



Fundación Puente was founded by 4 professional women in 2009 with the objective of reducing chronic child malnutrition in Guatemala. The organization works in rural communities of San José Poaquil, Chimaltenango and Santa María Cahabón, Alta Verapaz. There they work with Nútreme centers in which they provide nutritional monitoring, early childhood stimulation, health and nutrition education for mothers and caregivers. Their focus is on the first 1,000 days of a child's life, which is considered the critical period for healthy growth and development.

During our visit, we witnessed an early stimulation session led by a mother educator trained by Fundación Puente. She guided seven other mothers and their children in activities designed to help children differentiate colors. Using creative methodologies, she ensured that mothers and children worked together, while she provided gentle guidance rather than direct instruction.

This approach reflects Fundación Puente's philosophy: empowering mothers with knowledge and skills so they can actively foster their children's development. By strengthening families, Fundación Puente is building healthier communities and brighter futures.

Voces y Manos: Growing hope in Guatemala's dry corridor



During our recent visit to Rabinal in the Dry Corridor of Guatemala, we had the chance to see firsthand the inspiring work that Voces y Manos is carrying out with local schools and families.

We visited two schools in the region, where Voces y Manos has established school gardens to complement school meals. In one of these schools, we witnessed the strong commitment of the community: 24 children from 4th and 5th grade actively participate in farming activities guided by Voces y Manos technicians. Beyond agriculture, children are also learning about dental care. Voces y Manos has provided toothbrushes and toothpastes, teaching them the importance of daily brushing.

The impact extends beyond the classroom. Voces y Manos is supporting family gardens, encouraging children to replicate what they learn at school in their own homes. We visited the family garden of Aaron Ixtapá, a student who proudly shared that he works alongside his mother. Together, they have already harvested radishes, lettuce, and tomatoes, produce that has been consumed by their family, strengthening both nutrition and self-reliance.

Through these initiatives, Voces y Manos is not only improving school nutrition but also fostering healthier habits, stronger family bonds, and sustainable practices that empower the community.

Natün: Strengthening families through health, nutrition and agriculture.



Natün is working across 18 communities through three interconnected programs: health, nutrition, and agriculture. Families are encouraged to participate in all three, building on the knowledge they already have while gaining new tools for resilience.

During a recent visit, we met Irma Yolanda, who has been cultivating her family garden for seven years. Working alongside her father, she has enjoyed strong harvests that nourish her household. Yet, like many families, she has faced challenges due to the prolonged drought, which has affected crops across the region.

Natün acknowledges these difficulties but is actively seeking strategies to help families overcome them. By combining traditional practices with innovative solutions, they continue to strengthen food security and ensure that communities can thrive even in the face of climate challenges.

Vivamos Mejor: Cultivating leadership, growing resilience



Vivamos Mejor is working hand in hand with 15 community leaders, women and men, who are being trained to support 300 families. Together, they are establishing family gardens, planting native seeds, and adopting environmentally sustainable practices. These leaders are not only gaining technical skills; they are becoming role models in their communities. Their example shows that food security, resilience, and dignity can truly grow from the soil, inspiring families to believe in a healthier and more sustainable future.

Vivamos Mejor implements two main programs: environmental and social. Through the environmental program, they promote agroecology and environmental education. The social program focuses on early childhood development, a component Vivamos Mejor has strengthened for the past nine years. Their work begins during pregnancy and continues until children reach six years of age, ensuring that families receive the support they need during the most critical stages of growth.