



2024 ANNUAL
& IMPACT REPORT



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VOICES FROM OUR TEAM:

2024 Achievements



INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

328 Local Leaders

82% Maya women, strengthened their skills through community-led programs

8 Deep community partnerships established

3 New institutional collaborations

673 Environmental stewards trained



NUTRITION & HEALTH

Through our community-based treatment program

92%

of children diagnosed with acute malnutrition achieved recovery, representing

115

children who are now healthy

115 children supported through malnutrition prevention

30

Maya midwives expanded expertise, 85% showing increased capacity

53

community health promoters leading initiatives across 7 communities



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

286

Women entrepreneurs increased monthly income by average of

\$52

153

Women collectively saved \$29,701 in 8 savings groups

95%

Now employ at least one additional community member

111

Graduates from 9 vocational courses



EDUCATION

83%

Academic success rate among

278

Scholarship recipients

72%

of tutoring students achieved honors grades

32

students strengthened Kaqchikel language skills

90

youth developed leadership skills across 5 communities



CLIMATE RESILIENCE

255

Families established gardens combining ancestral Maya and climate-adaptive techniques

64%

generated additional income through surplus produce

418

community members trained in climate-resilient agriculture

Renewable energy solutions implemented in communities

4



Together, we reflect on what we collectively accomplished in 2024. These voices from our team capture the achievements that brought us joy and satisfaction—reflecting both the impact of our shared work and the heart behind it.

“ *Communities active and communicative with Natün—building relationships founded on mutual trust and respect.* ”



“ *Teaching life skills for personal development of participants, honoring both traditional knowledge and new opportunities.* ”



“ *Opening tutoring to new participants beyond our scholarship program, expanding educational access throughout the community.* ”



“ *673 people trained in the management of natural resources, strengthening community stewardship of the land.* ”



“ *Kaqchikel classes supporting youth to connect with their heritage while building skills for the future.* ”



“ *A more united and trust-based team, with purpose and stability to prepare us for the future.* ”





EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

Letter from Executive Director

2024 was a year of growth and transformation at Natün as we strengthened our programs, refined our model, and reinforced our commitment to local leadership.

As we near the end of our 2020–2025 strategic plan, our program pillars in Education, Nutrition & Health, and Economic Development are focusing more deeply on building community capacity and skills; this approach equips families, women, children, the elderly, and future Indigenous leaders in Guatemala to drive the changes and growth their communities seek. We launched our Shared Threads framework—cross-cutting themes woven throughout our program areas—that we deem essential to making long-term, systemic impacts. We expanded our reach and worked across 19 communities through 9 holistic programs, reaching over 2000 individuals directly and over 10,000 wider community members.

Internally, we focused on providing training and development opportunities for staff to ensure our incredible team is best prepared to run and support our programs and community relationships and on restructuring various roles, teams, and leadership. Notably, the creation of our Community Alliances department, which not only is the home to strengthening our Shared Threads, but equally



ensures we are firmly focused on external relationships, strengths-based partnerships, and positioning Natün as an ally within local systems and institutions.

It was also an important year in further shifting our model towards centering local leadership and expertise - we assembled our current leadership team, composed of outstanding, passionate Maya leaders, who oversee and bring the best out of our highly skilled, majority Indigenous, team. Alongside this, with the unwavering support of our Guatemalan and US boards of directors, we put the structures in place to shift the organization to a co-leadership model, conducted a full hiring process for a qualified local Indigenous leader to guide our programs, community relations and team. We are so proud to take this step in deepening our commitment to community-led work and begin this new chapter in 2025.

As Natün continues to strengthen our model and support Maya communities in more impactful ways, we look forward to deeply analysing our strategy going forward and solidifying the trajectory of our current evolution. Our achievements, like our work, are grown through community - thanks to our program participants, community leaders and advocates, wonderful staff team, many partnerships with other like-minded institutions, incredible donors, volunteers and supporters from near and far, and the guidance of our two boards, we are able to collectively achieve something special together.

Thank you for being a part of our community.



Elena Wason

Elena Wason



IMPACT OVERVIEW & OUR APPROACH



Our strategic approach recognizes and amplifies existing community strengths, addressing both systemic challenges and immediate needs.

In 2024, we focused on strengthening local leadership and building capacity, reflecting the power of Indigenous leadership and collaborative problem-solving in creating pathways toward thriving Maya communities.



Shared Threads

Cultivating Community Wisdom: Natün's Six Shared Threads

Natün's approach to community development is guided by six interconnected threads that weave through all our programs: Cultural Relevance, Indigenous Rights, Gender Equality, Leadership, Partnerships for Systemic Change and Environment.

This approach recognizes the historical marginalization of Indigenous communities, while building upon the rich cultural knowledge and community governance systems that have sustained Indigenous communities for generations. By focusing on these interconnected threads, initiatives contribute to lasting, systemic change that supports the vision of strong, vibrant, and self-sufficient Maya communities.

CULTURAL RELEVANCE

Respect for the cultural and social context of Indigenous communities - language, food, customs and traditions, and organizational structure.

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Contributing to upholding basic, individual, collective and cultural rights of Indigenous communities.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality and social inclusion of women in all domestic and community spheres, and decision-making spaces.

LEADERSHIP

Skills to guide and attract committed people, providing the necessary resources to achieve objectives that generate changes in communities. Strengthen internal Indigenous leadership to transmit to communities.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Create coordination spaces with key system actors to define joint actions and build community for the common good.

ENVIRONMENT

Take into account the network made by various ecological systems including climate, water cycle, land, flora, and fauna, in all our actions.



A New Chapter in Community-Led Development



In 2024, Natün established our Community Alliances Department, composed of local Maya community leaders who serve as the vital bridge between our organization and partner communities. This strategic expansion reflects our deepening commitment to community-centered approaches and Indigenous leadership.

The Community Alliances team has rapidly become central to our work, establishing direct communication with *COCODEs* (Community Development Councils) and positioning these local governance structures as strategic allies.

Key Components

Strategic Alliances: Through new and existing partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations, we employ a strengths-based approach to be able to join forces and amplify our impact.

Community-led Initiatives: The department supported various community-driven projects, including infrastructure developments, that benefit entire communities.

Promotion of Shared Threads: Integrating these values into our work by leading initiatives such as installing solar lighting and training community members to blend traditional Maya knowledge with modern environmental practices.

In 2025, we will engage 50 community promoters to preserve and share ancestral practices, ensuring traditional knowledge guides community development while adapting to today's challenges and strengthening the shared threads of leadership and cultural relevance.



Geographic Reach and Partner Communities

ID	COMMUNITY
1	Morales
2	Vasconcelos
3	Cooperativa el Tablón
4	Santa María
5	Peña Blanca
6	Tierra Linda
7	San Jorge
8	San Antonio Palopó
9	Panimatzalam
10	Tucaché
11	Quinto
12	Chucumuc
13	San Andres
14	Panajachel

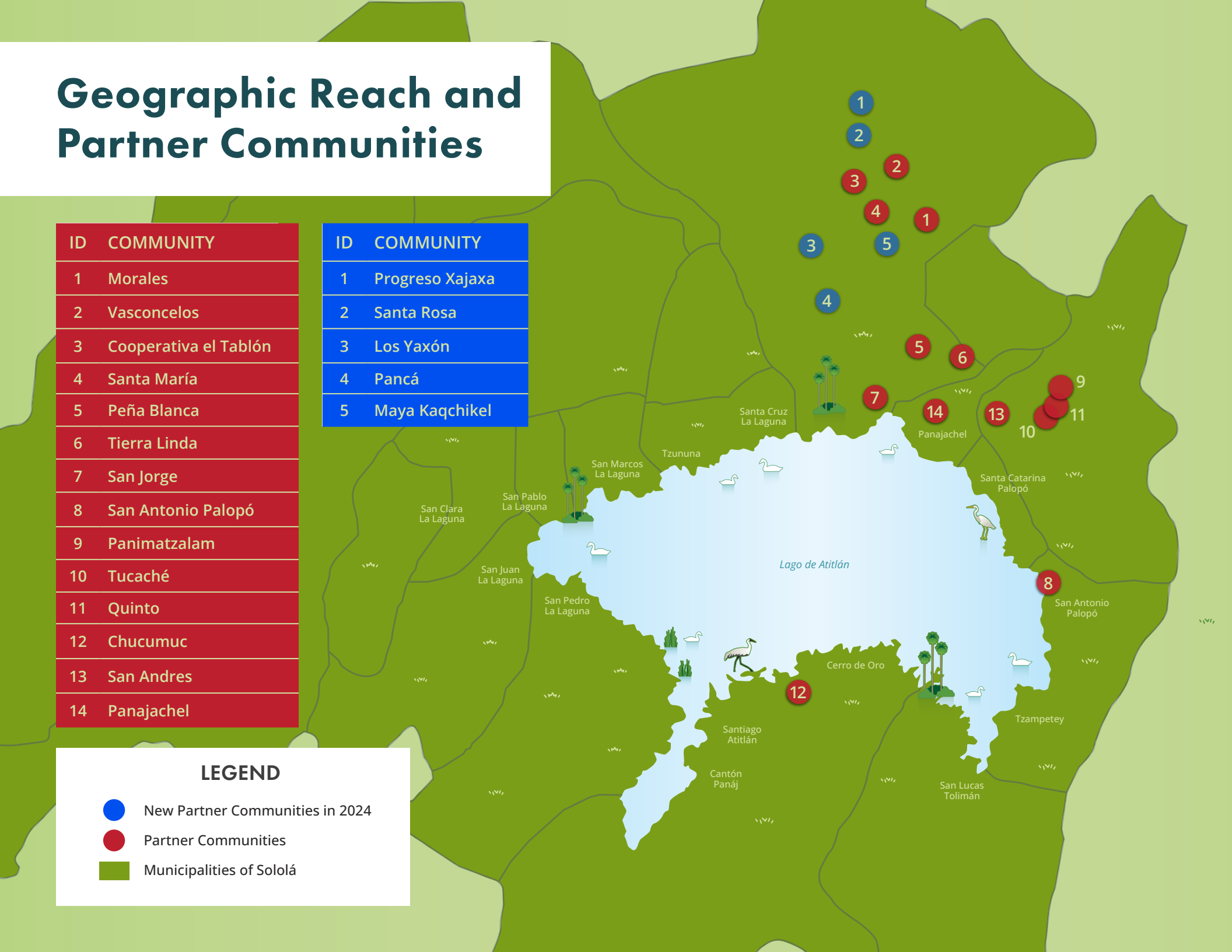
ID	COMMUNITY
1	Progreso Xajaxa
2	Santa Rosa
3	Los Yaxón
4	Pancá
5	Maya Kaqchikel

LEGEND

New Partner Communities in 2024

Partner Communities

Municipalities of Sololá





PROGRAM IMPACT



EDUCATION

At Natün, our education work is guided by a deep belief in the power of culturally relevant learning that builds on Indigenous knowledge and leadership.

PRESCHOOL NUTRITION CENTERS

In our Preschool Nutrition Centers in Peña Blanca and San Antonio Palopó, 32 young children have flourished through a play-based learning curriculum that honors and builds upon their cultural identity, while building foundational academic skills. Each center provides bilingual education in Spanish and Kaqchikel, integrates Maya cultural elements, and offers daily nutritional meals that support healthy development. We've been particularly inspired by how mothers from these communities have become advocates for this program, resulting in nearly tripling enrollment for the coming year in Peña Blanca.

SEEDS OF EDUCATION

Through our Seeds of Education program, we've engaged with 273 students across primary, middle, high school, and university levels, providing the financial resources they need to continue their education. What makes this program transformative is its holistic approach; participants and their families learn finance management strategies, while students receive career workshops to prepare them to graduate and be ready to succeed in the world.

COMMUNITY LEARNING

In our Community Learning Program, we partnered with 152 youth who are developing skills in leadership, teamwork approaches, gender equity, and emotional intelligence. Through structured group-based tutoring and academic support led by Maya educators, these young participants have strengthened their academic performance while building confidence and social connections. Groups of young Maya leaders have formed 5 community commissions, becoming agents of change in their communities and giving back through community service.





LEARNING TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY TUTORING SUCCESS STORY

In San Antonio Palopó, where economic hardship often forces children to prioritize work over education, fourth-grader Jefferson and fifth-grader Gladys have found a pathway to learning through a community-based tutoring program.

"I'm an only child, so I have to help my mom and dad with the house chores and work," explains Jefferson. "My dad is my biggest motivator. He likes that I come to the tutoring classes to learn new things and finish my homework."

Gladys actively invites her peers to join. "I asked her to come because [the tutor] said that anyone can come, and I want us to finish our homework for tomorrow," Gladys explains when introducing a friend to the tutoring center.

Natün's collaborative work with parents, teachers, and local officials led to the municipality donating space for tutoring sessions last year, allowing the program to expand. Our approach is rooted in Maya values and co-creating solutions.

Through this community-driven initiative, students in San Antonio Palopó are finding new pathways to learning despite challenges they face, exemplifying Natün's commitment to culturally relevant, community-led education.

This story highlights our Community Learning, which provided tutoring support to 62 students across five communities in 2024.



2024 *By The Numbers*



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

32 Preschool Children developed critical motor, cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical skills

2 Fully Operational Preschools serving rural communities where early education was previously inaccessible

100% of students received bilingual instruction in both Spanish and Kaqchikel, preserving cultural heritage while building language foundations

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS

278 Students received scholarship support across primary, middle school, high school, and university levels

83% of Scholarship Recipients successfully completed their academic year despite economic and social challenges

90 Youth developed leadership skills to become agents of change in their communities

STRENGTHENING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

62 Students received targeted educational support through accessible and individual tutoring support

72% of Tutoring Participants raised their grades to honors level

Learning Communities Program operates in **5** Communities, creating localized educational support systems



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic resilience begins with recognizing and building upon existing community strengths. Throughout 2024, our Economic Development department collaborated with Maya communities to transform ancestral knowledge into sustainable livelihoods and financial independence.

TRADE SCHOOLS

In 2024, Natün's Trade Schools offered 9 distinct courses that integrated traditional Maya techniques with market-relevant skills. A total of 111 students graduated with Ministry of Education certified training in areas including sewing, back-strap weaving, embroidery, baking, and culinary arts. These graduates applied their newly-certified skills to expand income opportunities while preserving cultural heritage through traditional craft practices.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

The Entrepreneurship Program strengthened business skills for 286 entrepreneurs through comprehensive training that honored Indigenous knowledge while building market connections. This training translated into immediate economic

impact, with 100% of participants reporting increased monthly income. Women entrepreneurs saw an average income increase of \$52 per month, significantly improving household financial stability. Perhaps most impressively, 95% of women entrepreneurs created additional employment opportunities for at least one community member, generating economic ripples throughout their communities.

In parallel with entrepreneurship training, Natün facilitated 8 community-based savings groups that empowered 153 women to collectively save \$29,701 in 2024. These groups provided both financial resources and peer support networks. Participants reported planned uses for their savings that reflected both business growth (34% planned to reinvest in their businesses) and family wellbeing (66% designated savings for health, education, nutrition, and home improvements).



One of the most inspiring achievements of 2024 was witnessing the interconnection between these economic initiatives, as women applied skills learned in Trade Schools, grew businesses through the Entrepreneurship Program, and built financial security through Savings Groups. These complementary approaches demonstrated how community-led economic development created pathways toward sustainable livelihoods rooted in Maya identity and collective strength.



INDIGENOUS WOMEN LEADING CHANGE THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In the rural Indigenous community of Los Morales, four sisters—Olga, Blanca, Aura, and Marta—are part of a remarkable transformation as members of the Los Morales Women's Group. They're breaking barriers and building new paths toward economic independence and leadership.

The partnership began in 2022 when community women approached Natün requesting training in artisan skills and entrepreneurship. "Working closely with community members sets programs up for success," explains Yesica, Natün's Trade Schools Program Coordinator.

In 2024, the program launched with 14 women receiving artisan supplies and participating in weekly advanced embroidery technique workshops. The training includes leadership skills, entrepreneurial capacity building, and financial management, with some participants now receiving microloans.

“It’s important for women to participate in community leadership,” explains Blanca, acknowledging the cultural barriers that exist in many rural Maya communities where women have traditionally been excluded from decision-making roles.

The practical impact became evident when the sisters’ mother fell ill unexpectedly. Using savings generated through their participation in Natün’s program, they covered emergency medical expenses without resorting to burdensome loans—a testament to their growing financial independence.



“Seeing women in courses and in savings groups is so empowering, demonstrating to themselves that it is possible and that women can be the decision makers of their own lives,” Yesica observes.

Through these community-led initiatives, women like Blanca and her sisters are not only improving their economic situations but also reshaping what leadership looks like in rural Indigenous communities.

This story highlights our Trade Schools and Entrepreneurship Programs, which provided artisan training and financial education to 325 women across multiple rural Indigenous communities in 2024.

2024 By The Numbers



ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

286 Entrepreneurs strengthened their business skills through comprehensive training courses

100% of Participating Entrepreneurs increased their monthly income after program completion

\$52 Average Monthly Income Increase for women entrepreneurs

95% of Women Entrepreneurs now employ at least one additional community member, creating economic ripple effects throughout their communities

SAVINGS GROUPS

153 Women participated in 8 community-based savings groups

\$35,340 Collectively Saved by participants across all savings groups

Participants Plan to Invest their savings in:

- **34%** will invest in Growing Their Businesses
- **66%** will invest in Essential Family Needs (health, education, nutrition, and home improvements)

TRADE SCHOOLS

111 Students Graduated From **9** Different Vocational Courses, gaining marketable skills in traditional and contemporary trades

Through these interconnected programs, we're supporting Maya community members in building sustainable livelihoods while preserving cultural knowledge and strengthening local economies.



NUTRITION & HEALTH

Throughout 2024, Natün Guatemala's Nutrition & Health department has continued working alongside Maya communities to address critical health challenges and prevent malnutrition in the Lake Atitlán region.

HOLISTIC MALNUTRITION PREVENTION PROGRAM

Our Holistic Malnutrition Prevention Program begins with women's sexual and reproductive health, partnering with Maya midwives (*Comadronas*) and working with pregnant women to prevent malnutrition before birth. After delivery, we support families through the first 1,000 days of a child's life, combining regular health monitoring with educational workshops on nutrition and hygiene. This year, our team of Maya health practitioners provided comprehensive, culturally relevant care through home visits in Kaqchikel, ensuring that each family received support tailored to their context and resources.

COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM

Through our Community Health Program, we worked with 53 Maya community health promoters (Promotoras), developing knowledge, skills, and leadership to strengthen female representation in community spaces, encouraging the Promotoras to become points of reference for community needs. Alongside this, we provided food baskets to families at risk of malnutrition and worked with 29 elderly residents by providing social, nutritional, health, and agriculture support, ensuring community well-being covers all ages.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

One of our most encouraging developments has been the installation of family gardens by 53% of community members invited to participate in our Community and Family Agriculture program. These families chose to establish gardens even without receiving benefits from other programs. The program integrates traditional Maya agricultural knowledge with sustainable gardening practices, promoting food security and nutritional diversity while preserving cultural farming techniques. Through community-led garden initiatives, families are increasing their access to fresh, nutritious foods throughout the year.

Supporting awareness building around health while bridging traditional midwifery with complementary medical care requires patience, cultural sensitivity, and consistent communication in the local Maya language. With each success, we're learning that persistent, respectful approaches that honor local beliefs lead to sustainable improvements in community health and malnutrition prevention.





COMADRONAS TO THE FRONT

High in the mountains of Sololá, in the community of El Tablón, Elena gathers with other Maya midwives to receive training and medical supplies from Natün. As a Maya-Kaqchikel Comadrona (traditional midwife), she embodies generations of ancestral wisdom in maternal healthcare.

“Comadronas bring life to the world,” Elena explains. “We are responsible for the expecting mother.” Her words reflect the profound responsibility she carries in a community where traditional health practitioners like her are often the only healthcare providers available to pregnant women.

In rural Indigenous communities like El Tablón, systematic discrimination creates significant healthcare barriers. “The community comes to us first because we are caring and kind,” Elena shares. “In hospitals, they don’t speak our language and often scold us.”

Since 2022, Elena has participated in Natün's program alongside 83 other Comadronas from rural Sololá. The initiative combines medical training, leadership development, and community-building activities designed to strengthen the role of traditional midwives and bridge their services with the Western healthcare system.



Through supporting practitioners like Elena, Natün helps preserve ancestral medical practices while driving systemic change that ensures rural women can access the culturally appropriate care they deserve.

This story highlights our Women's Health initiatives of the Holistic Malnutrition Prevention Program, which collaborates with 30 Comadronas (Maya midwives) across multiple communities to strengthen access to culturally relevant healthcare.

2024 By The Numbers



MALNUTRITION PREVENTION

92% of Children Recovered From Acute Malnutrition through our community-based treatment program

115 Children Received Comprehensive Malnutrition Prevention support

23 Expectant Mothers Received Critical Prenatal Care and nutritional support

11 Women With Pregnancy Complications Received Timely Interventions, all resulting in successful deliveries

30 Maya Midwives (Comadronas) Received Training and equipment, with **85%** Demonstrating Increased Capacity to combine ancestral practices with modern techniques

COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS

53 Community Health Promotoras now lead local health initiatives across 7 communities

4 Community Food and Nutritional Security Committees established to promote local health governance

FOOD SECURITY AND TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE

255 Functioning Family Gardens Established, increasing household access to nutritious food

418 People Trained in climate change-adaptive agriculture

64% of Families sold excess produce to increase income

Through our integrated Nutrition & Health programs, we're addressing immediate health needs while building sustainable, community-led health systems that honor Maya knowledge and leadership. By combining traditional practices with complementary medical approaches, we're creating pathways to improved health outcomes that respect cultural values and strengthen community resilience.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP



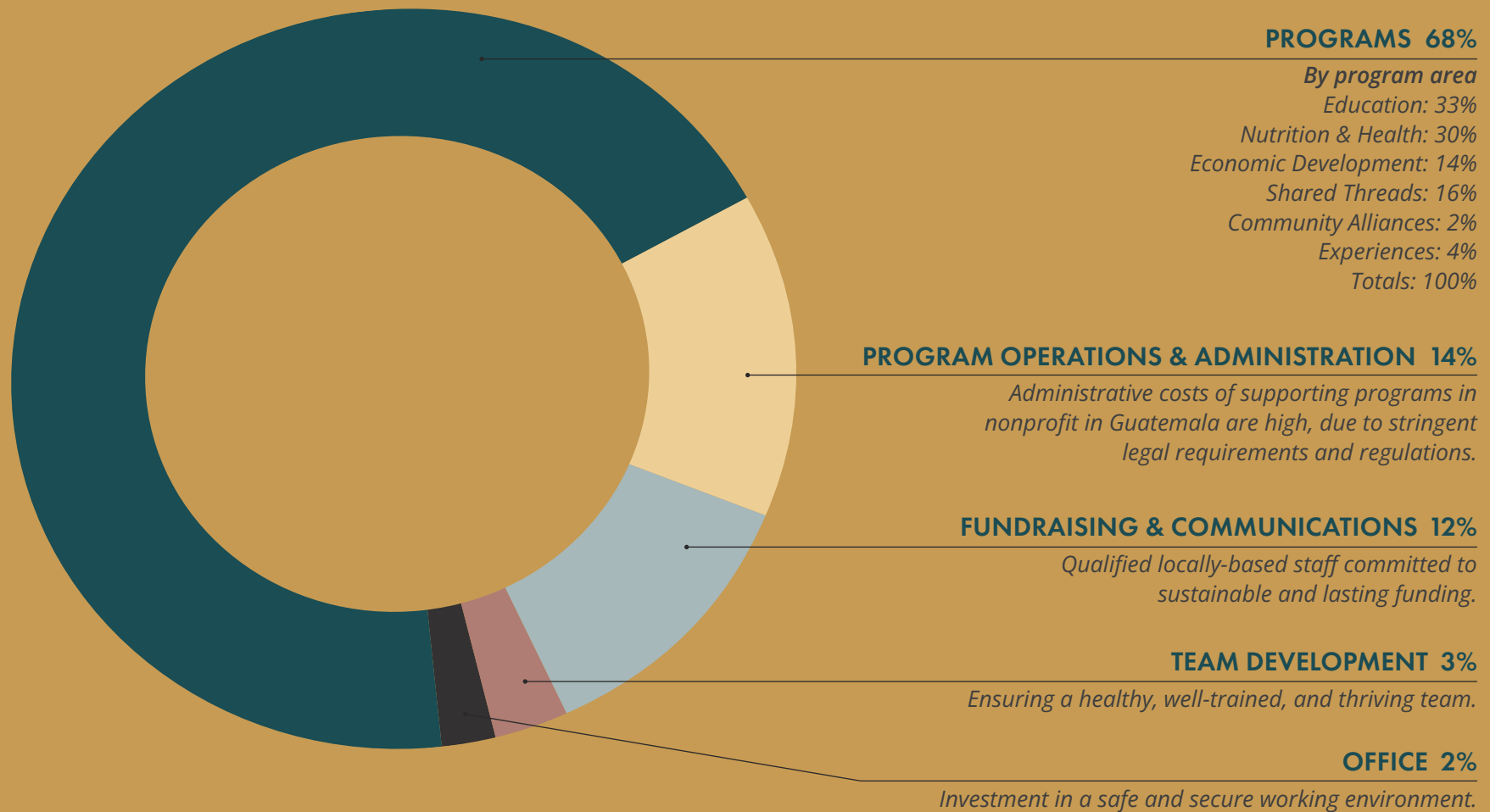
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

At Natün Guatemala, we understand that financial stewardship reflects our deepest organizational values and our commitment to our partner communities. We approach our financial responsibilities with the principles of transparency, cooperation, and accountability.

In 2024, we strengthened our financial systems to ensure every quetzal and dollar entrusted to us advances our shared vision. We are proud to have successfully completed independent financial audits in both Guatemala and the United States. These results confirm our full compliance with all laws and best practices in both countries, reinforcing trust with communities, partners, government agencies, NGOs, and donors.

The achievements highlighted in this report represent not just what funding makes possible, but what becomes possible when resources align with community vision and leadership.

KEY METRICS & DISTRIBUTION | Expenditure By Category



Total expenditure: \$826,491

KEY METRICS & DISTRIBUTION | Income Sources

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

52%

FOUNDATIONS

24%

ROTARY CLUBS

10%

MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

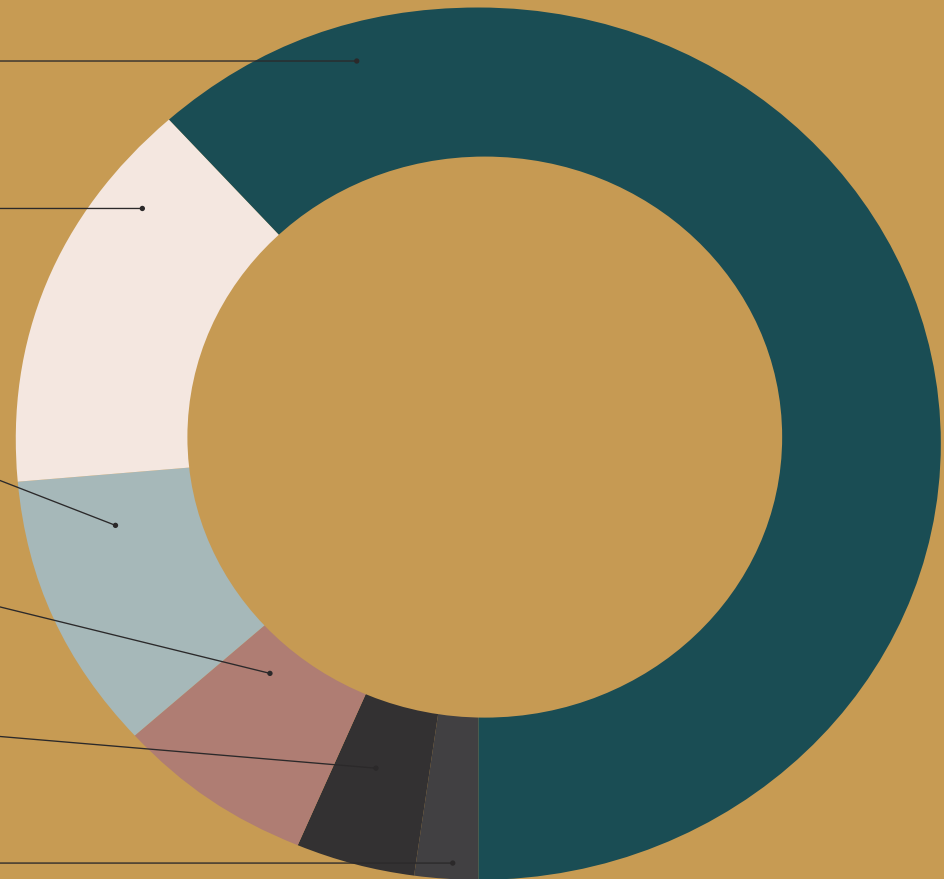
7%

INSTITUTIONAL GIFTS

4%

EARNED INCOME

2%



Total income: \$845,650



LOOKING FORWARD



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As we approach the final year of our current strategic plan, Natün Guatemala is setting the foundation for our next phase of community partnership and impact. Building on our achievements in 2024, we're focusing on several key priorities that will shape our work in 2025 and beyond.

In the coming year, we will conduct a comprehensive socioeconomic study and community assessment across the Lake Atitlán region. This research will provide critical insights into evolving community needs, strengths, and resources, ensuring our 2026 - 2030 strategic plan responds directly to community-identified priorities while building on existing local capacities.

These strategic priorities position Natün Guatemala to more effectively advance our mission while building capacity for generations to come.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The achievements highlighted in this report represent the collective efforts of many individuals and organizations who share our vision of vibrant, self-sufficient Maya communities in the Lake Atitlán region.

We honor the leadership, wisdom, and partnership of the community members, local authorities, and Indigenous leaders who guide our work. Our dedicated staff bring expertise, passion, and deep respect for the communities with whom we have the privilege of partnering. We particularly recognize our Maya team members, whose cultural wisdom strengthens all aspects of our organization.

THANK YOU

We extend our appreciation to both our Guatemalan and U.S. Boards of Directors for their governance and unwavering commitment to our mission, and to our community of supporters whose partnership made our work possible in 2024, which includes:

Adaptation Fund - UNDP

Dorothea Haus Ross Foundation

Honnold Foundation

Ironton Rotary Club

Kansas State University

Light a Single Candle Foundation

Light My Fire

Marietta Rotary Club

Moritz Family Foundation

Optimist

Paso Por Paso

Patrick J. and Kathleen
D. McCurdy Family Foundation

Prospera Latina

Santa Barbara Rotary Club

Sauerland Family Foundation

Sweetgrass Foundation

Tawingo Fund

Tri Village Rotary Club

The Ohio State University

Upper Arlington Rotary Club

Western Michigan University

Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation

World Renew

We also gratefully acknowledge the thousands of individual donors and volunteers whose consistent trust and support sustains our programs and operations throughout the year.





JOIN US

As we look to the future, we invite you to continue this journey with us.

There are many ways to support this work:

- Make a recurring donation to provide sustainable funding
- Share our story with friends and family
- Connect us with networks and resources that contribute to our mission and expand our impact
- Visit Guatemala and experience our work firsthand

Together, we can continue building a future where Maya communities around Lake Atitlán are vibrant, self-sufficient, and thriving on their own terms.



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