

Maya Educational Foundation

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www.mayaedufound.org



Maya Educational Foundation

Changing Lives
through Education
since 1992

2023-2024 Report



The Maya Educational Foundation (MEF) supports the educational and professional advancement of the Maya people in Guatemala, southern Mexico, and Belize, with special consideration given to women and girls and to students from remote areas.

Floralma graduates in criminology in Guatemala.

Dear Friends,

With many parts of the world in turmoil as I write this, including demonstrations going on in Guatemala, it is hard to focus on the tasks at hand. However, carrying out our mission and work keeps us grounded and going forward, day by day. The Maya students we support in Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize with scholarships do not despair and neither will we. They have had to overcome so much already in their lives: poverty, hunger, discrimination, difficult family situations, and more. Still, they are fighting hard to achieve better living and working conditions. Unlike others in their community who see emigration as the only way out, MEF students want to stay in school and reach their full potential. Today, we wanted to share with you some thoughts from MEF scholarship students at our nonprofit partner Grupo Cajolá in Guatemala:



Martha

The students were asked to write about both positive and negative effects of migration, with the most negative being the disintegration of families, due to many years of separation between couples. **Martha** says: “I personally do not want to leave my family. I want to fulfill my goals to help young people and children to be examples in the progress of my community.” Another student, **Claudia**, regrets the family disintegration and the forgetting of Mayan roots and practices, language and culture. **Estela** says: “I want to be an example in the community by reducing migration.”



Claudia



Estela

We can hear the pain of family bonds being strained, especially at the end of **Gladis’s** essay: “I was 4 years old when my dad emigrated... Due to his efforts, it is true, we have a house, food, health, clothing, but we don’t have Dad when we need him most: in birthday celebrations of the children and in each success that we have over the years.” ... She thanks us for the scholarship support and says “it allows us to move forward and dream of a different system, a society with opportunities to live in, with dignity and without migration...” We thank Grupo Cajolá for sharing these students’ thoughts with us.



Gladis

With your contributions to MEF, we are able to provide educational opportunities to more than five hundred Maya students in Guatemala, Mexico and Belize this year. We hope you will join us in our continued efforts on behalf of the Maya people. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Elisabeth S. Nicholson
Executive Director

Meet More of This Year's MEF Scholarship Students

Despite great setbacks in the educational realm worldwide due to the pandemic, with some effects still lingering today, our Maya students are working hard and are achieving success. Here are some of them:

Álvaro, a student in our Ben and Lois Paul Scholarship Program, which is under the local supervision of our nonprofit partner Mayan Hands/ ATUCA, is studying law in Guatemala.

He writes: "I have made progress with working towards my main objective which is to graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Legal and Social Sciences.

The opportunity you have given me is the greatest gift for a young person trying to achieve their dreams. I will continue to strive to be a successful professional. Thank you very much."



Nicolasa, a MEF scholarship student at our partner Amigos de Santa Cruz, Guatemala writes: "Since I was a child, I have wanted to become a nurse. I remember watching a series called The Toy Doctor and it was through that show that I began to be interested in everything related to this profession. I feel very proud of the progress I am making to fulfill my dream."

Karen, a student with our partner FEPMaya in Guatemala, is studying medicine in Huehuetenango, says: "One of my great objectives as a professional is to establish a clinic to offer medical consultations in my community, so the people do not need to go to another more distant place and also to carry out workshops for young men and women on health care and how to prevent diseases.

I feel fortunate to be a beneficiary of the MEF scholarship. I decided to study Medicine, because my grandfather was a healer.

I lived with him for many years, I liked to see how he healed people. Once I graduate as a medical professional, I will also include Natural Medicine."



Celebrating Achievements

Congratulations to all our Graduates!

One of them is [Crisly](#) from the FEP Maya program in Guatemala. She says:

“I feel very happy to achieve a long-awaited goal in my life, which was to graduate as a medical doctor and surgeon. This achievement is very significant for the development of my career as a health professional.

I want to thank the Maya Educational Foundation and FEP Maya for opening the doors to me and for all the support that they provided to me.”

We Commend the Students for Their Hard Work and Congratulate Them On Their Successes.

This year, we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our long-time partner [FEP Maya](#) in Guatemala where several hundred Maya students have been able to receive MEF scholarships and have graduated from universities, as impressive, young Maya professionals.



We would also like to congratulate our friends at nonprofit partner [Sna Jtz'ibajom](#) (Sna) on their 40th Anniversary. They have been on the forefront of Maya cultural preservation and revitalization in Chiapas for all these years. A proud milestone.

Especially well known and sought after are their Mayan language literacy classes and their writings and theater plays. In addition, they have helped us to create a successful scholarship program for Maya students in Chiapas. Currently, 35 university students are under their supervision plus they recently agreed to assist us with our scholarship program in San Pedro Chenalhó. We are grateful and wish them the best.



Sna Mayan language literacy class in Los Mangos, Chiapas, Mexico.

In Chiapas,

[Ana Gabriela](#) is studying towards a Bachelor's Degree in Language and Culture at the Intercultural University of Chiapas (UNICH) in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and wants to become a teacher.

Her parents are small-scale farmers growing corn and she has two brothers. She writes that her research topic is: "The puppet theater as a pedagogical means to teach vocabulary associated with the flora and fauna, in the Tsotsil language," for fourth grade students at an elementary school in Chiapas. "I want to rescue the use of my Mayan language for the next generation. Through my profession, the children will learn more about the use of the Tsotsil language in my community and will be able to pass the knowledge on to the next generations."



[María Magdalena](#) is studying towards a *Licenciatura* degree in Primary Education for indigenous children.

She writes: "I am infinitely grateful for the scholarship. I come from a rural community, from a family with low economic resources. I do not have any family support and it has been very difficult and complicated for me. I have finished my degree, but I still need to complete my pedagogical proposal to obtain the professional title.

My thesis topic is "Strategies for the assessment of the history of the community within the school with 5th grade students." The research has been complicated for me because they have changed the work center from Tselal speakers to now Tsotsil speakers.

My parents are subsistence farmers. We are 11 children and I am the second one. None of us is a professional yet. Most of us are dedicated to studying but we also help our parents when they plant and harvest corn and beans for our family's consumption."

In Belize,



Calvin had a MEF scholarship with our nonprofit partner Julian Cho Society and has now successfully completed his 4-Year High-School Degree.

He is a proud graduate from the Business Department at Corazon Creek Technical High School. Calvin graduated second-highest overall in his school and had the honor of delivering the salutatory address at his graduation ceremony.

As the eldest child in his family, he continues to strive to be a positive role model to his younger siblings. Calvin wishes to continue his education to the tertiary level with the ultimate goal of positively contributing to his village.

Honorato is in his second year at Julian Cho Technical High School. His desire is to become a teacher. Honorato's passion for teaching stems from his belief that education is the key to uplifting individuals and empowering communities.

With a firm grasp on the importance of both theoretical and practical knowledge, Honorato aims to impart holistic education to his future students. This is a result of his upbringing and assisting his Family in their farming.



Onaida is a young and determined girl hailing from Corazon village. Her unwavering commitment to her education is driven by her desire to inspire other young girls to dream big and pursue their aspirations. She understands the transformative power of education in breaking barriers and creating opportunities for personal growth and success.



Your support makes MEF programs possible.

For more on the scholarship programs and the important work of CIRMA and Sna Jtz'ibajom and their cultural preservation work, see

www.mayaedufound.org



CIRMA continues to receive important collections donated by people aware of the importance of safeguarding Guatemala's historical memory and making it available to the public.



2024 marks 20 years of ELP. We thank all past and current English Language Program Volunteers who give so much to the Maya students in ELP-Guatemala and ELP-online. You are amazing!

Give the gift of education to a student in Guatemala, Chiapas, or Belize.
The young people you support through MEF are the hope and future of their countries.
Thank you!



Lisa studies social work in Guatemala.



Kevin studies pharmacology in Chiapas.



Crisly is now a medical doctor in Guatemala.

Your contributions to MEF are changing lives.
Donate today at
www.mayaedufound.org



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Thank you!