



## Ana Susana, the Activist

Ana Susana Boror Jacobo, a sixth grader, has inherited the activist spirit of her grandmother, Ana Maria, the founder of AMIDI. For the past five years, two or three times annually, she has initiated a recycling project at her school with support from the staff. Each student carries a large cloth sack, the kind that holds 100 pounds of corn. The assignment is to search in and around the village, filling the bags with discarded items and returning them to school for recycling. Ana Susana is also active in the school vegetable garden project. Initially she donated onion seeds and now is on the team that cultivates the plants.

Since starting school, her grades have always been 90 percent or higher. Although math (especially division and multiplication) is her favorite subject, she loves to study an anatomy book that her parents have at home. In her well spoken, self confident way, she asks “What do you think our stomachs look like? What does it look like inside?”

At home she cares for the animals. If one of them is sick or injured, she likes to help heal it with homemade medicine. She dreams of becoming a doctor or a vet. When asked what her parents dream for her, she replies “They want me to have a strong work ethic.”



*Scholarship recipient, Ana Susana Boror Jacobo*

Matiox, pronounced ma-ti-osh, is a Kakchiquel Mayan word that means “thank you”. Kakchiquel Mayan is the language spoken by our scholarship students, and the sentiment is theirs.





## The Impact of COVID-19

From the beginning of the pandemic, the Guatemalan President, a medical doctor, has imposed strict regulations including curfews and strict travel restrictions within the country. He has even banned public transportation. Fortunately there have been no outbreaks of the disease in and around the area where the AMIDI members live; however, the economic impact has been devastating. The price of corn and beans rose dramatically and without bus service the women cannot sell their products in the nearby market town. Unexpectedly they found themselves in a situation where they no longer had enough food to eat.

Generous donors provided funds for the purchase of corn, beans, soap, and disinfectant for each AMIDI family. Because of the ongoing impact of the virus, there have been two food distributions. One in April and one in June. Time will tell if the need continues.

*(Above) Fortunata Atz Alvarez's rabbit breeding program is a success; but without access to the local market town, she cannot sell her bunnies.  
(Left) Felipa Atz Bar helps distribute corn to AMIDI members.*



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# The Corn Harvest

Like their ancestors, the AMIDI members plant yellow, white, red, and black corn when the rainy season starts at the beginning of May. The time to harvest is much less precise. Once the farmers deem that the corn has reached the correct moisture content, they bend the stocks back upon themselves and leave the inverted ears in place to complete the drying process (see photo below). This practice prevents moisture damage and provides an efficient, space saving way to store the crop during the six-month long dry season.

Once they bring the dried corn in from the fields, family members collectively separate the kernels from the cob by hand. The highest quality kernels come from the central part of the cob and are stored separately. Some will be used for the next season's planting.

*(Right) The highest quality kernels are located on the central portion of the cob.*

*(Below) Corn drying in the field.*



## Goats for AMIDI Members

An inspired donor offered funds to buy goats for interested AMIDI members. Early in the year, in a self selection process, 22 of the members signed up for the project. The 22 goats, all vaccinated and pregnant, were delivered to the AMIDI community center where each participating member received a rope/leash to walk her goat home. It was a lively, joyous occasion.

To ensure success of the program, the seller guaranteed the goats' survival for a period of three months. As there are no veterinarians in Pachay las Lomas, he agreed to visit each of the goats after two months to check on their well being. To date the project is successful.

There is a market for goat milk right in the village, especially for children and breastfeeding women. One of the AMIDI husbands walks his family's goat around Pachay for about an hour each day, stopping at customers' homes to deliver fresh milk. He milks the goat on the spot and collects a premium fee since goat milk is more expensive than cow's milk.

Members make use of the goats in other ways. They collect both the goat urine and manure. Once it is composted, the women use it as fertilizer. In the future they plan to learn how to make cheese.



*Maria Dominga Camey walks her goat home.*

### Learn More About AMIDI

Should you prefer to receive an electronic version of Matiox, please sign up at [www.amidiguatemala.org](http://www.amidiguatemala.org).

Visit Facebook under AMIDI: Mayan Women Who Farm and Weave.

The Matiox newsletter is written and produced by Marilee Wingert, Barbara Bowman, Bill Bowman, Aletha Soule, and Anya Glenn. No donations to AMIDI are used to fund this newsletter.

### To Make a Donation

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the AMIDI scholarship fund, please make your check payable to Slow Food Sonoma County, a 501(c)3 non-profit that manages then funds at no cost. Please send the check to:

Slow Food Sonoma County North  
P.O. Box 1494  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Or visit [www.amidiguatemala.org](http://www.amidiguatemala.org) to donate via Paypal.