



AMIDI from Founding in Year 2000 to Their Latest Project

In the late 1990s peace returned to Guatemala and along with it came hope. A group of humble, hard working women in Pachay las Lomas met periodically to discuss how they could bring that hope to their community. They had never worked as a group before, and a hopeful future was a new idea to them. They decided to go out of their comfort zone, take forays outside of their isolated village, and see who or what could help them. They learned that step one involved plenty of paperwork, including a lawyer, and a well developed plan. They needed to become a legal entity in order to reach beyond their village for assistance. It took more than a year to complete the process; on April 28, 2000 AMIDI was born.

Because of their legal status, AMIDI came to our attention in 2002. Since then AMIDI has been on a prosperous path: education, disaster recovery and preparedness, premium coffee growing, medicinal herb gardening, reforestation, and more. Their latest endeavor involves 20 families who are taking classes in

how to create home chicken projects including how to raise their own feed. A local NGO will supply five chickens (four hens and one rooster, all from their favorite local breed) and enough chicken wire to create enclosures that measure 12 feet by 12 feet. Each family will provide the rest of the building materials and the labor. Once their chickens are reproducing, they have pledged – in their generous AMIDI fashion – to give some of the offspring to other village families.

The women who founded AMIDI and are all still active members.



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.

Photos of Daily Life in the AMIDI Community



Clockwise from the top left: 1. An AMIDI board of directors member takes her biweekly turn cultivating the coffee seedlings in their nursery. 2. A shady spot under the roof of a porch is a favorite place to weave. 3. The AMIDI members live in a mountainous area where corn fields and coffee are planted in clearings on steep slopes. 4. Women cook tortillas on one of the fuel efficient stoves we donated. Notice that they adroitly use their fingers - not spatulas or other utensils - to flip the tortillas.

Donations in 2017

Fundraising in 2017 was successful thanks to the generosity of the donors. The donations totaled \$13,360.00. The AMIDI students, their families, and all of the AMIDI members send their heartfelt gratitude.

Photos of Daily Life Continued



Clockwise from the top: 1. Both mothers and daughters wear *bui piles*, traditional handwoven blouses. 2. Over the centuries, the Mayans have discovered innumerable uses for the entire corn plant. In this case the field-dried corn stocks are used for making an entry way to a village home. 3. The men who are playing the musical instrument, the *marimba*, wear classic footwear.

Cruz Valentina Succeeds and Inspires

The Winter 2014 edition of Matiox featured an article about Cruz Valentina Atz Lopez, a 17-year-old high school student, who was just beginning a two year course in nursing and management skills. It took courage for her to enroll in this program because it was offered in a town four hours away by bus. She was the first of our students to move away from home to study. Although she received a scholarship from our program, her parents provided the rest of the funding for schooling, housing, and transportation. They faced the challenge, and she persevered. She graduated from the course, spent about a year getting all of the paperwork in order to apply for a job, passed the required three month probationary period, and today, at age 21, she has a coveted full-time job as a field technician with the Ministry of Health. She works in indigenous communities and teaches families about health and nutrition as well as taking care of their basic health needs, including vaccinations.

Angela Patricia Ajbaj Ajbaj, another of our scholarship recipients, attended the course with Cruz Valentina and has secured a similar job. Together they inspired two more students to apply to the program, and they now have jobs in public health.



Cruz Valentina Atz Lopez, a field health technician.

Learn More About AMIDI

Should you prefer to receive an electronic version of Matiox, please sign up at 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, 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 the 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 to donate via Paypal.