



Hilda Angelica, the Graduate



Hilda Angelica Estepan Colaj accomplished a major life goal: she recently graduated from high school. With her elementary teaching diploma in hand, she is now qualified for a position as a primary school teacher.

Attending high school was a challenge requiring confidence and determination. With no high school near home, Hilda and three of her village girlfriends rented small rooms from Monday through Friday in a house close to their school in the local market town. She had a hot plate in her room where she prepared simple meals almost always accompanied by tortillas.

At home Hilda and her three sisters enjoy weaving, especially the quiet focus inherent in the process. She wove the *huipil* (blouse) that she is wearing in the photo. Hilda also likes caring for the family goat who she named *Cafécita* - Little Coffee. Yes, it is brown. Never having owned a goat before, Hilda marvels at the wide range of vegetation that it eats as she walks it up and down the mountainside.

When asked what inspires her, she quickly answered: “AMIDI” because of its collaborative manner of working, its diligent work ethic, and its sense of purpose.

Hilda Angelica Estepan Colaj graduated from high school.

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.

AMIDI Coffee in the International Market!

In 2017, on one of his business trips, an international buyer from San Francisco's Ritual Coffee made a side trip to visit the AMIDI growers. He had previously heard about AMIDI and was impressed by their dedication and hard work. Staying in the village for three days, he spent time with the women inspecting their trees, looking at their harvesting/drying practices, and discussing marketing strategies once they improved the quality of their harvest. He saw their potential and readily volunteered his expertise.

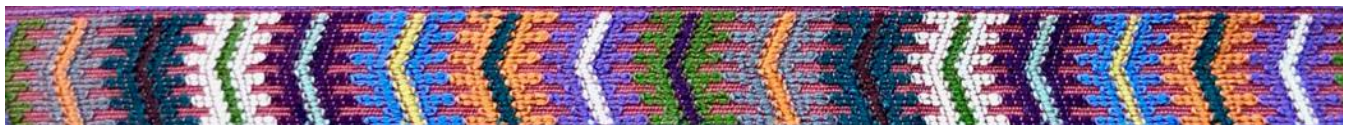
Adelina Jacobo Guicoy and her husband, Carlos, listened carefully, followed his suggestions, and worked hard. They could see the improvement in each successive harvest and decided to have their coffee professionally tested. It made the grade, and they were invited to sell their crop to COPECAFE, a Guatemalan umbrella cooperative that supports local cooperatives and markets to the world.



The successful coffee growers: Adelina Jacobo Guicoy and her family. They have more cause to celebrate since their daughter, Lesly Cristina (on the left), just graduated from high school.



A bag of Adelina's mountain-grown specialty coffee ready for the world market. Adelina has been an active AMIDI member since its inception in 2002.





In the pre-COVID-19 skit, at the annual 2020 celebration Maria Lazaro Coroy Tomas (left) and Maria Saturnina Mux Calicio show how bunnies are sold in the market.

COVID and Food Needs

The rabbit, chicken, and goat projects, funded by specially designated donations, are going well. Animal husbandry is second nature to the AMIDI women. The pandemic has, however, presented marketing challenges. One of the goals is to sell eggs, milk, and offspring in the local market town, but getting to market to buy or sell anything is problematic for both vendors and customers.

For months all public transportation was banned resulting in the increased cost of staples. Some bus service has been restored to half capacity with double the fare. AMIDI members know how COVID-19 is transmitted, and they fear using buses. This hardship led the AMIDI leadership to call for help, expressing concerns about members going hungry.

Since the pandemic began, specifically earmarked donations have provided three food distributions, and plans are being discussed about the need for a fourth one. The aid consists of staples such as corn, beans, grains like rice and oatmeal, as well as soap and disinfectant.



Wearing her mask, Chava Colaj Estepan collects oatmeal as part of her food aid package.



Ear plug on a Mayan trumpeter blowing a conch shell.

Mayan Ear Ornaments

The Mayans have an enduring history of wearing ear adornments. Today they are important because jewelry is portable wealth, easily traded or sold for cash.

Historically ears had immense significance because Mayans believed they were passageways for spiritual energy to enter the body. As such, ear decorations had considerable value and

importance. The most highly prized were made of green jade, not of gold that was also locally mined. Because of jade's hardness, creating a finished piece from raw stone was slow and difficult work. The earring's face was significantly larger and heavier than the back side, requiring the design of counterweights using natural fiber and beads to keep the ornaments in place.

Nowadays females of all ages wear earrings as adornments. Mothers pierce their daughter's ears at a young age.



A popular contemporary earring design.

Learn More About AMIDI

Should you prefer to receive an electronic version of Matiox, please sign up at www.amidiguatemala.org.

The Matiox newsletter is written and produced by Marilee Wingert, Barbara 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 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.