

2018

ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR FRIENDS,

I recently celebrated ten years with Friendship Bridge the same month we celebrated Mother's Day. As I reflected on my time with Friendship Bridge over the past decade, I kept coming back to the same thought: those amazing mothers! She wakes before dawn to care for her husband and children before working her business until dark. Late into the night, she is the last of the family to go to sleep. She is a strong woman — an entrepreneur — determined to create a better future for her children against all odds. Even with her impossibly busy life, she participates in our crucial education and health programs with a great attitude and interest, always thinking of how to improve herself and her family's future. Every single client is a new spark of motivation for me when I see her eyes, her energy, and her beautiful smile.

Although these ten years have been very challenging, they have also been the most rewarding of my career. With the support of our incredibly dedicated staff, I continue to be inspired to find sustainable solutions for Friendship Bridge and for our amazing clients. Perhaps I am most proud of how we have grown our organization to be one of the largest employers in rural Guatemala while staying committed to our social mission. We make our client the center of all of our decisions in order to create products and services tailored to her level of development. Most of our staff spends every day in rural areas braving difficult conditions, committed to bringing each client the resources she needs to improve her life. Because of our clients and staff, I am energized to keep delivering. Because of you, our stakeholders, volunteers, and investors, I am encouraged to continue this journey, which provides opportunities that help Guatemalan women create better futures for themselves and their families.

Never has our mission been more important than now with the current political environments in the United States and Guatemala. Friendship Bridge, as the name suggests, bridges the gap to provide programs and services that create opportunities so families can build sustainable futures in their own country. Thank you for traveling this journey with me as we continue to work hard to expand microfinance, education, and health services to more women entrepreneurs in rural Guatemala.



Karen Larson
President and CEO



We echo Karen's words about the strength, character, and perseverance of Friendship Bridge's clients in the face of enormous daily challenges. We serve some of the poorest women on the planet, and they are extraordinary. Their ability to start, run, and improve their businesses with a microloan and our Plus Services is inspiring on many levels. With our loans, they improve their businesses so they can improve the lives of their children while strengthening their communities. Everyone wins.

Our clients' repayment rate is an extraordinary 98%. In fact, a report from the Central American and Caribbean Microfinance Network ranked Friendship Bridge second in portfolio quality out of 100 microfinance organizations in all of Central America. And recently, Friendship Bridge received a Great Place to Work® Certification that recognizes Friendship Bridge as one of the best workplaces — in the nonprofit and for-profit world — in all of Central America. What a testament to the excellent leadership of Friendship Bridge in the U.S. and Guatemala!

As Board members, we are proud to be a part of this remarkable organization. Few nonprofits literally change the trajectory of lives. Friendship Bridge does. Thank you for helping to make our work possible!



Susan Zimmermann
Co-Chair, Board of Directors



James F. Wood
Co-Chair, Board of Directors

MISSION

CREATING

opportunities that empower Guatemalan women to build a better life.

VISION

EMPOWERED

women choosing their own path.



2018 HIGHLIGHTS

92,541
HOURS OF NON-FORMAL
EDUCATION

\$17.1
MILLION IN LOANS
DISPERSED

28,145
CLIENTS SERVED

98.4%
REPAYMENT RATE

POVERTY AND MIGRATION IN GUATEMALA

Guatemala has a population of approximately 17 million people. In 2018, there were over 815,000 Guatemalan immigrants in the United States, equaling nearly 5% of Guatemala's population.* Drivers of migration are interrelated and generally reinforce one another. In Guatemala, weak institutions, poor public programs, a corrupt government, economic growth that does not benefit the poor, rising levels of crime, drastic climate change that results in natural disasters and hunger, are all driving forces for the massive surge of people choosing to leave their home country.** Friendship Bridge recognizes that we need to address the issues at the source, and for this reason we provide programs and services that give women opportunities to build better lives in their own country and communities, keeping families together and creating lasting change for generations to come.

OUR CLIENTS WE SERVE 100% WOMEN

POOR 47%

31%
Farmer/Artisan

36% solely make decisions
on the use of their
business income



0-6 years of
formal education

60% MARRIED



**21% OWN A
REFRIGERATOR**



**24% OWN A GAS OR
ELECTRIC STOVE**



**34% HAVE A TOILET
WITH PLUMBING**



**88% HOUSEHOLD HAS
A CELLPHONE**



86% FOOD SECURITY



**EXTREMELY
VULNERABLE 21%**

80%
Commerce

49% solely make decisions
on the use of their
business income



0-9 years of
formal education

61% MARRIED



**50% OWN A
REFRIGERATOR**



**60% OWN A GAS OR
ELECTRIC STOVE**



**63% HAVE A TOILET
WITH PLUMBING**



**93% HOUSEHOLD HAS
A CELLPHONE**



87% FOOD SECURITY



VULNERABLE 19%

84%
Commerce

56% solely make decisions
on the use of their
business income



0-12 years of
formal education

58% MARRIED



**73% OWN A
REFRIGERATOR**



**79% OWN A GAS OR
ELECTRIC STOVE**



**78% HAVE A TOILET
WITH PLUMBING**



**96% HOUSEHOLD HAS
A CELLPHONE**



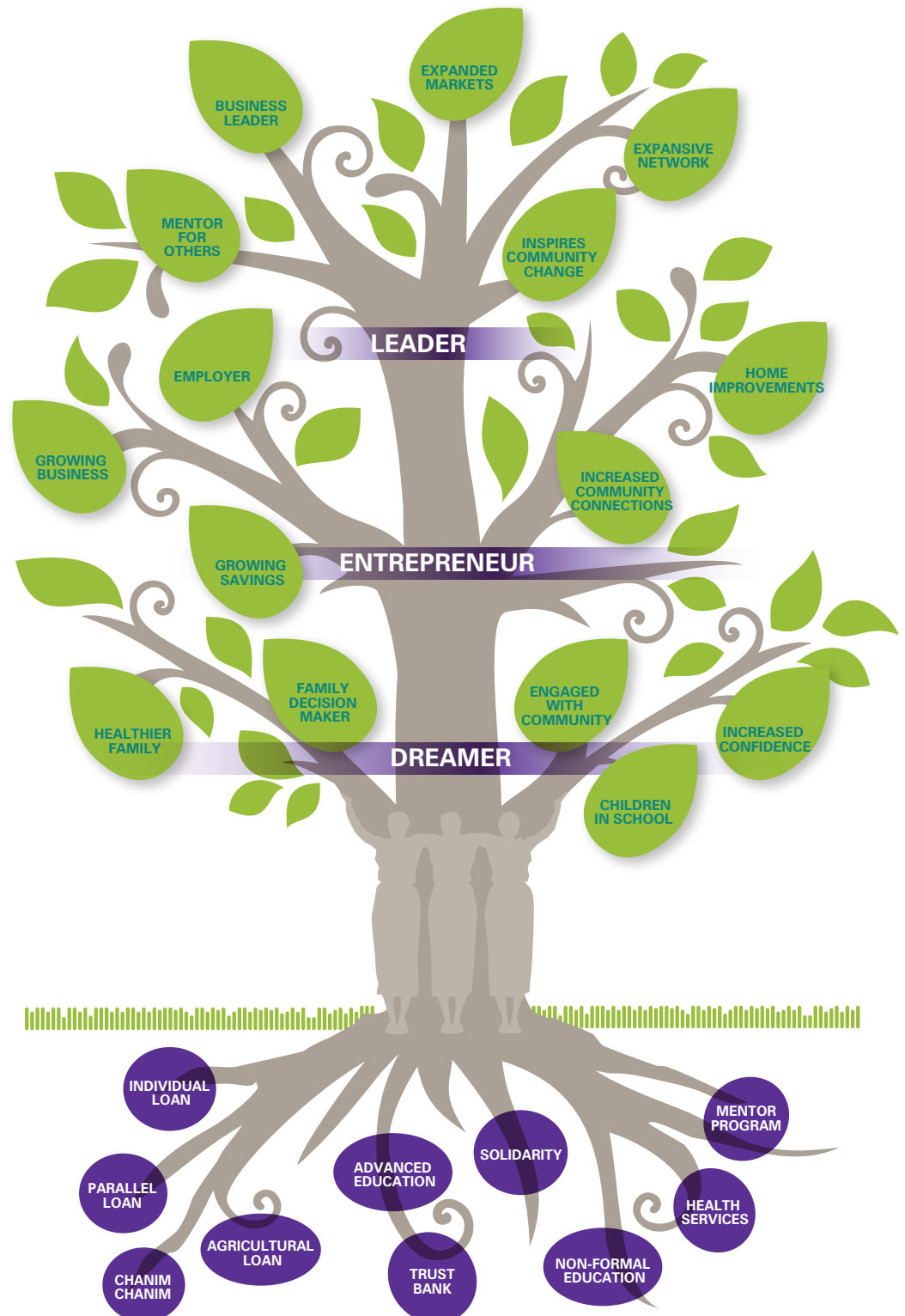
93% FOOD SECURITY



Based upon 21,083 PPI surveys collected by facilitators in 2018, which is 75% of clients served, confidence level 99% +/- 0.45% for 2014 national poverty line.*<https://cis.org/Report/Central-American-Immigrant-Population-Increased-Nearly-28Fold-1970> **<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45489.pdf>

CLIENT CONTINUUM

Our Client Continuum Strategy segments clients into three categories, Dreamer, Entrepreneur, and Leader, based on their specific level of individual development. This allows us to better understand our clients' needs, therefore giving us a framework of relevant programs and services we can offer them through our Microcredit Plus programs. Whether they are a first-time client or have been with us for a decade, we focus on creating opportunities that lead them step-by-step towards further success in their businesses and their lives. We do this through business training, health and family education, health services, customized loans, and advanced training relevant to their business.



MARIA (LEADER)

46 years old, 6 children, 11th loan cycle

"To get up after a failure is difficult. I had an unsuccessful marriage. However, it gave me the opportunity to be brave and to move forward for the sake of my children. I found Friendship Bridge, which not only supported me with financial resources for my small craft business, but also helped me with moral support through my monthly Trust Bank meetings. Today, my business is thriving, I feel empowered, I can make my own decisions and support my community. Thanks to the growth of my business, I have been able to employ 25 people from three communities."



ELENA (ENTREPRENEUR)

35 years old, 3 children, 11th loan cycle

"Friendship Bridge helps us with funding and training so we are able to move forward and support our families and our communities. Thanks to the financing, my husband and I have been able to buy four weaving looms to make *cortes* (traditional Guatemalan skirts). Currently we both work with the foot looms and we employ three more people in our community. Because of the empowerment that I have gained through the years with Friendship Bridge, I was able to convince my husband not to travel to the United States again. He left me behind alone with the family for several years, but now we can work together to support our three daughters who are twelve, seven and one."



JELDA (DREAMER)

30 years old, 3 children, 9th loan cycle

"Friendship Bridge has helped me a lot. I used to be too shy. I was afraid to express myself because I felt that what I could say would make no sense to others, but now I know that expressing yourself is good because you can find solutions and ideas. When I started with the organization, I was a weaver, but the market is so complicated because there is a lot of competition. Thanks to Friendship Bridge funds, I was able to open and expand a convenience store; however, my neighbors copied the idea. Now I am planning to implement selling thread. I dream of being able to supply women with quality threads in my community and to have a more prosperous business."

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

LOAN PRODUCTS

TRUST BANK

This loan is offered to women who form a group called a Trust Bank (7 to 25 women). The women co-guarantee each other's loans as a form of social collateral. It is the entry loan for all clients.

"The conditions of my life are getting better because of Friendship Bridge. Financing and education have helped me to be a determined woman. I participate actively in the meetings every month where we make our payment and receive training. My group even meets here in my house, and it is very fun. Now I'm empowering myself."

MARTINA, 39 years old, 12th loan cycle



PARALLEL

This individual loan is available to existing clients who have good credit history and higher credit needs than the rest of their Trust Bank in order to grow their businesses.

"I've always been a weaver and when I joined Friendship Bridge, I not only had the opportunity to have financial resources for my textile business, but I was able to start another business. With the training I have been receiving, I have been able to grow my business. Thanks to the last two parallel loans I received, I have been able to increase and diversify my inventory. My husband helps me with the business and he is so proud of me."

MARÍA, 54 years old, 4 children, 10th loan cycle



SOLIDARITY

A group loan (3-7 clients) for more advanced clients who have graduated from the Trust Bank model and qualify for a larger loan.

"Friendship Bridge gave us the opportunity to form a Solidarity Group since our businesses are prospering and a Trust Bank loan was no longer a good fit for us. When I started, I was only a weaver and with time, I was able to start raising chickens. With my profits, I supported my husband in purchasing sewing machines and now we are also dedicated to tailoring. Our five children are studying and we hope to support them so they can go far with their education."

JOSEFA, 38 years old, 5 children, 12th loan cycle



INDIVIDUAL LOAN



A larger, longer-term loan product specifically designed for clients who have graduated from their Trust Bank and identified as Leaders on our Client Continuum. This loan is offered to accelerate the growth of these clients' businesses as a step in preparing them to access the formal banking sector.

"Through an Individual Loan, I have been able to increase my business of buying and selling traditional clothing. The organization watches over our business and intellectual development and is also concerned about us having good health. That's why I really like to be part of this organization."

RUTH, 45 years old, 4 children, 13th loan cycle

30,774
LOANS WERE
DISTRIBUTED IN 2018



CHANIM-CHANIM

Meaning "very, very fast" in Kaqchikel (Mayan language), this loan gives quick access to loan capital to existing clients with a good credit history.

"This is my fourth Chanim-Chanim loan with Friendship Bridge. Thanks to the loans, I have been able to diversify my business because I have the necessary financial capital to work with. My three daughters have the opportunity to go to school. My oldest will start high school next year. I want my daughters to have better opportunities, those that I did not have."

MARTHA, 34 years old, 3 children, 14th loan cycle



PLUS SERVICES



MONTHLY EDUCATION

Monthly Non-Formal Education, offered during Trust Bank meetings, are the backbone of our *Microcredit Plus* program. These trainings cover a variety of topics on health, women's rights, family, and business.

"I am very grateful for the support that I have received from Friendship Bridge through the years. In our monthly education, we are advised on the good uses of the loan, and not to become over-indebted. In each training we have fun and learn from each other. I have a business of selling flowers and I have improved over time when receiving training on business management and how to manage my investment."

ANASTASIA, 41 years old, 6 children, 7th loan cycle

MENTORSHIP

Clients who are chosen to participate in this program have been identified as Leaders and Entrepreneurs in our Client Continuum Strategy. This program cultivates high potential clients for leadership, growth, entrepreneurship, and impact in their communities.

"I am very happy to have participated in the Mentorship program. The training about 'costs and prices' impacted me a lot. I used to have a shoe store and I assumed that I was making money. After the Mentorship program, I included all the costs and was shocked when I found out that I was almost making nothing. After realizing that, I changed to another business. I thank the organization for encouraging me to participate in this program; I hope that many more women invest their time in this type of program since this is essential for business."

PAOLA, 33 years old, 2 children, 9th loan cycle



ARTISAN MARKET ACCESS

Artisans participate in technical and business training designed to teach them how to make high quality, marketable products, and gain access to new local, national, and international markets.

"The training I liked the most in the program were the different measurements used in international markets. I also learned about the importance of quality control. We have discovered our incredible abilities that were asleep and now have been awoken! I now provide jobs for five other people in my community. Not all organizations open so many doors."

MARCELA, 50 years old, 5 children, 18th loan cycle



WOMEN'S AGRICULTURE CREDIT & TRAINING

Agriculture clients have access to technical training and special credit products that meet the unique needs of the agriculture sector. Learning new methods and inputs, clients will have the opportunity to access new markets and garner higher prices.

"I am a widow and fought really hard for my family. With Friendship Bridge I found a great opportunity. Before we had nothing, and the Agriculture Program helped me to produce good tomato crops. The difference the program makes here is noticeable."

Other people who are not part of Friendship Bridge have losses, but the women in my Trust Bank have succeeded as farmers."

CATARINA, 49 years old, 4 children, 7th loan cycle

HEALTH FOR LIFE

Clients receive preventive health services through this mobile health program. We expanded the program to our fourth branch in Quetzaltenango serving 3,551 clients in 2018. (See more details on p.13.)

"I receive many follow-up phone calls from the nurse and her words help keep me going. Now I look to the future more calmly and I have the strength to continue helping others who need it. I can see a ray of hope at the end of the road."

FELIPA, 40 years old, 7 children, 11th loan cycle



**THE LONGER A CLIENT IS WITH US
THE BETTER OFF SHE IS**

CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

HOW WE CONTRIBUTE TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The opportunities Friendship Bridge creates through our Microcredit Plus programs are part of a larger global initiative to create sustainable solutions to many complex and interconnected issues. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals as a means to face the world challenges related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace, and justice. The objective is to achieve these goals worldwide by 2030. Currently, Guatemala ranks 112th out of 157 countries in progress to meet these goals. We are striving to improve that ranking. Friendship Bridge programs address 9 of the 17 UN goals.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY



By offering Microcredit loans, we serve women living in poverty, allowing them to invest in their small businesses, giving them a hand-up, not a hand-out. Nearly half (44%) of all new clients who begin working with us are living below the National Poverty Line (earning less than \$3.68/day). After their 3rd loan cycle, the rate drops to 40% and continues this downward trend the longer the client is with Friendship Bridge.

2 ZERO HUNGER



According to the 2018 Global Hunger Index, Guatemala ranks 70th out of 119 countries in the world for malnutrition. 88% of Friendship Bridge clients are able to feed their families sufficiently while nearly half of Guatemala's population cannot provide three basic meals a day.



In rural Guatemala, access to healthcare is challenging due to a complex and nearly bankrupt public health program. Friendship Bridge's *Health for Life* program gives clients access to much needed preventive health services to combat the top chronic diseases among women in Guatemala – cervical cancer, diabetes and hypertension, STDs and other sexually transmitted diseases, and family planning services. 76% of clients served by our health program have had a Pap smear while the national rate is 51% (ages 15-49).*

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Guatemala is ranked 107th out of 149 countries in the Global Gender Gap index, and is in second-to-last place in Latin America. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps in economic, education, health, and political criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups. By serving 100%

women and giving our clients access to business capital, education, and health services, Friendship Bridge narrows this gap by putting opportunities in reach for women in Guatemala. Friendship Bridge is proud that 54% of our staff are female, 49% are indigenous, and 50% of our leadership team is female.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Guatemala is ranked 127th out of 189 countries in literacy rate. Our clients receive education that is provided in their indigenous language using participatory educational techniques appropriate for adult learners and appropriate for literate and non-literate audiences. These highly participatory sessions give them business, health, and family education along with

critical empowerment skills. With increased income, clients also are able to afford to send their children to school, so education is passed on to the next generation.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



As the population is growing, resources are becoming more limited. Therefore, it is increasingly important to educate farmers on responsible uses of land resources. Our *Women's Agriculture Credit & Training* program works with our farmer clients to teach them modern techniques of sustainable farming practices. They

learn about water conservation and producing higher yields from our agronomists, giving them the tools to make responsible choices in agricultural production.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



According to Microfinance Opportunities Financial Diaries research of more than 100 countries, Guatemala is in 2nd-to-last place for women's participation in decisions over the use of money in the household.** However, 94% of Friendship Bridge clients say they participate with their spouses in the decision-making of how to use business revenue. Longer-term clients participate at a higher rate than newer clients.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



92% of all farms in Guatemala are family or community farms. Through our *Women's Agriculture Credit & Training* program, we work specifically with farmers on risk mitigation for natural disasters, such as drought, flooding, and hail, which Guatemala faces with increasing frequency and severity.

By providing not only the financial means for clients to become entrepreneurs but also the education to be successful in their businesses, we are promoting the economic growth in a country with one of the highest disparities between rich and poor in Latin America, 54% of people living in poverty, and 23% living in extreme poverty. While Guatemala continues to slide into further poverty, we see our clients' finances and livelihoods improving.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



*ENSMI 2014-15 report, pg. 522 http://www.ine.gob.gt/imagenes/2017/encuestas/ensmi2014_2015.pdf

**<http://wee.oxfam.org/profiles/blog/show?id=6126512%3ABlogPost%3A35100>



FINANCIALS 2018

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2018 AND 2017 (all amounts in USD)

ASSETS	2018	2017
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	471,705	857,233
Investments	2,522,916	2,204,505
Loans receivable, net	7,887,108	7,384,976
Loan interest receivable	228,525	216,907
Grants and pledges receivable	-	2,500
Prepaid expenses and other assets	143,274	215,747
Total current assets	11,253,528	10,881,868

Property and Equipment		
Furniture and equipment	110,349	116,241
Computers and related equipment	265,223	239,616
Vehicles	97,541	60,074
Leasehold improvements	40,914	41,528
Less: accumulated depreciation and amortization	(410,426)	(402,637)
Net Property and Equipment	103,601	54,822

Noncurrent Assets		
Loans receivable, net	82,156	72,890
Security deposits	17,236	17,583
Total noncurrent assets	99,392	90,473

TOTAL ASSETS	11,456,521	11,027,163
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LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	2018	2017
Current Liabilities		
Loans payable	891,982	2,235,941
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,124,037	1,131,470
Total current liabilities	2,016,019	3,367,411

Noncurrent Liabilities		
Loans payable	3,930,000	2,280,000
Total liabilities	5,946,019	5,647,411

Net Assets		
Unrestricted	5,360,499	5,206,297
Restricted	150,003	173,455
Total net assets	5,510,502	5,379,752

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	11,456,521	11,027,163
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AUDIT, CREDIT, AND FINANCE COMMITTEE ADVISORS

Tyler Clark
Chief Operating Officer,
Fine Dried Foods
International, Inc.

Amy Kuark
Vice President Investor
Relations - The Western
Union Company

Mark Coffey
President and Chief
Investment Officer,
Global Partnerships

Paolo Leiva
Management Control
and Financial Planning
Manager, Energuate

Steve Ellis
Founder & President,
Colorado Capital
Management

Humberto Olavarria
Partner, Inspecciones
Globales

Valorie Hall
Director of Global
Finance Operations,
Heifer International

Sousan Urroz-Korori
Founding Member of
the Board at Boulder
Institute of Microfinance

Jackie Johnson, AWM
RBC Wealth
Management
Investment Group

Carmela Weber
Founder, Falletti Weber
Consulting Group

Charlotte Wells
Retired Director of
Compliance, Supreme
Lending



FINANCIALS 2018

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS DECEMBER 31, 2018 AND 2017

	2018	2017
Sources of Revenue		
Loan interest and fees	4,216,237	3,720,009
Grants and contributions (including gifts in kind)	1,135,523	1,205,680
Fundraising events and sales	119,935	129,608
Interest and investment income	112,043	132,832
Total revenue	5,583,738	5,188,129

Expenses		
PROGRAM SERVICES		
Financial Services	2,281,231	1,992,439
Plus Services	2,172,891	1,970,972
Nurses Education Program*	24,013	20,295
Total program services	4,478,135	3,983,706

SUPPORT SERVICES		
General and Administrative	389,242	222,667
Fundraising	143,422	488,126
Total support services	532,664	710,793

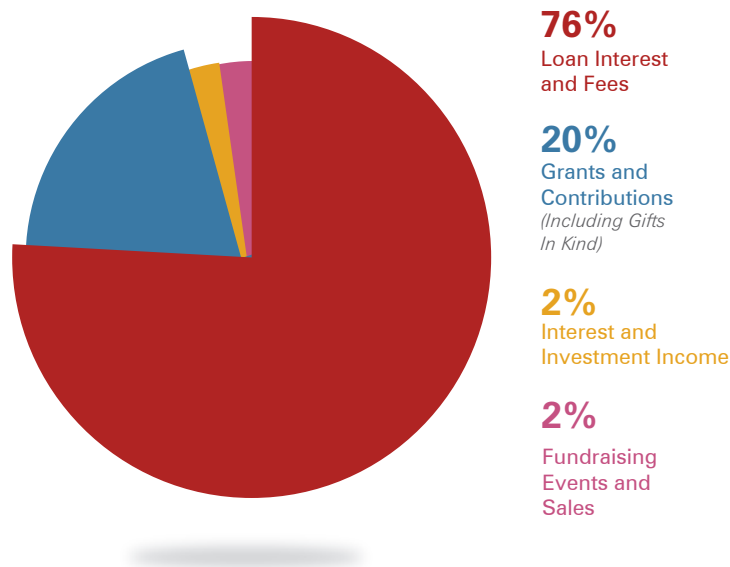
Total expenses	5,010,799	4,694,499
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Other Items		
Currency gain (loss)	(442,189)	170,355
Changes in net assets	130,750	663,985

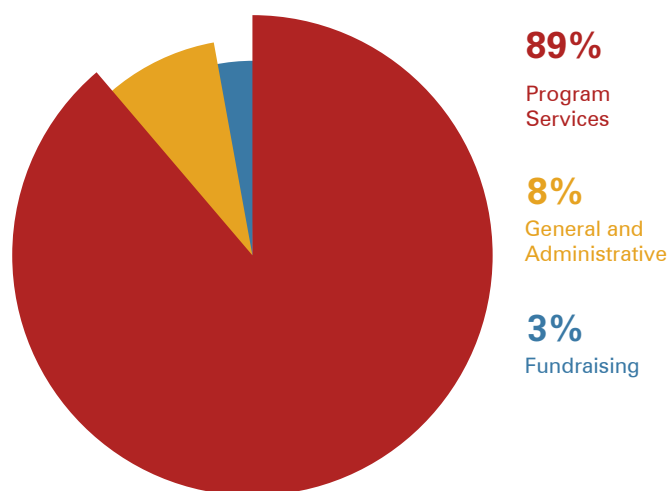
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	5,379,752	4,715,767
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	5,510,502	5,379,752

* The Nurses Education Program is a continuation of Friendship Bridge's initial development activities in Vietnam, providing faculty support and training for a graduate level nurses education program. The program has been independently managed by volunteers and is no longer a program of Friendship Bridge. Friendship Bridge serves as its fiscal sponsor.

SOURCES OF REVENUE



USE OF FUNDS



ARTISAN PROGRAM



The *Artisan Market Access Program* has shown impressive growth and impact since it launched as a pilot. In 2018, Friendship Bridge decided to invest in the future of the program, and hired a full-time Artisan Program Manager, Maya Colop-Morales. Maya, along with América Chiyal (coordinator of the *Artisan Market Access Program*), will expand the program giving new opportunities to more clients through advanced training and access to new markets.

Maya is Guatemalan and grew up in the communities where our clients live. She was able to study in the US before pursuing higher education studying design and textiles in London, Florence, and New York City. Her love for textiles and her education inspired her to return to Guatemala where she launched a social enterprise in 2011, Ketzali Accessories, working with local artists. Desiring to do more, in 2015, she started consulting with several brands and NGOs, including Friendship Bridge, educating hundreds of women and entrepreneurs about artisanal products, costing, production, and wholesale distribution at the international level.



CHECK OUT OUR NEW ONLINE SHOP!

HANDMADEBYFRIENDSHIPBRIDGE.ORG

Q&A WITH MAYA

1. What inspires you to work for Friendship Bridge?

The opportunity to lead the Artisan Market Access Program came to me at a moment in my career when I was looking to create an even greater impact in my work. Growing up in Guatemala, I always knew I wanted to start my own business working with handwoven textiles. After studying textile design in New York City and gaining experience in the fashion industry, I returned to Guatemala. Through working directly with artisans, I saw firsthand the challenges female artisans faced that their male counterparts did not. I now get to be a part of helping these women reach their full potential in their businesses and can reach even more women.

2. What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I love spending time with each of the women who are part of our trainings and developing a relationship with them. Getting to know them, their dreams and struggles, and seeing their talents grow is truly the most rewarding part.

3. What are your goals for the Artisan Market Access Program and the clients?

I would love to see the Artisan Program continue to be self-sustaining. We rely directly on product sales to support our trainings! Being able to provide a path for these women to earn income while building their skillset in the program is incredible, and even better is seeing them graduate the program with the ability to sell independently to new markets. To keep updated on our Artisan Market Access Program and its growth, please follow our social media accounts @handmadebyfriendshipbridge.

2018 ARTISAN MARKET ACCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Majority of our *Artisan Market Access* clients increased their income by over

 **20%**



220
product samples were submitted by clients for the Spring/Summer 2019 Collection.



Sales through Friendship Bridge increased by 24% to

\$80,569
through events, online, and through Friendship Circles.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

The Agricultural Credit and Training program is designed to address challenges of female farmers living in some of the most affected areas of gender inequality and climate change. These areas are now part of the Extended Dry Corridor in Guatemala.

This is a sector that other microfinance organizations often avoid, due to the increased risk of lending to farmers. The program offers specially tailored financial products and in-the-field trainings to increase production and generate higher yields from their crops. Clients learn about new farming techniques and inputs resulting in increased income and empowerment.

In-house agronomists introduce modern farming techniques to improve our clients' crops, especially against climate change. They work closely with clients to identify the various agriculture risks and then introduce new techniques and technology. 60% of clients who have received the trainings have modified their traditional methods and adopted modern ways of farming. In addition, they better understand their production costs and how to run their business more effectively.



Abner Gerson Rosales,
Agriculture Program Coordinator

WOMEN'S AGRICULTURE CREDIT AND TRAINING 2018 HIGHLIGHTS



Disbursed over
\$575,000
in loans.



25

new demonstration plots
were planted in 2018 which
were used to teach clients
modern and improved
farming techniques.



Served
1,039

agriculture
families since
the program
started.

"One of the problems we deal with is climate change. What we do is identify the agriculture risk and teach clients how to cope with it through demonstration plots. In addition, we are helping our clients to learn controlled drip irrigation to have efficient use of water, especially in drier areas like Quiché and Huehuetenango."

Abner Gerson Rosales,
Friendship Bridge Agriculture
Program Coordinator



HEALTH PROGRAM

Good health is the foundation for a successful business and life. Through surveys and interviews, our clients tell us that health barriers are often the reason they are unable to achieve success in their businesses. The public healthcare system in Guatemala is rife with corruption, discrimination, and inequalities leaving the majority of women living in rural Guatemala with few health care options. Misconceptions about health care, language barriers, distance, and cost too often prevent women from receiving basic health services. Statistically, the most prevalent health issues in Guatemala are preventable, such as diabetes, cervical cancer, and hypertension. In response to this disparity in the health care system, we launched our *Health for Life* program in 2015. Through a partnership with Maya Health Alliance, we are able to bring preventive health services directly to our clients' communities through mobile clinics. Highly trained and culturally sensitive doctors and nurses deliver preventive care services, recognize symptoms, offer counseling on fears, misconceptions, and health issues, and engage in treatment and follow-up with the clients. If more complex cases are discovered, clients are provided patient navigation and advocacy services.



SERVICES OFFERED



IN 2018

We expanded our *Health for Life* program to our 4th branch in Quetzaltenango.

3,551

clients were served in 2018.

6,199

clients served since the program began in 2015.



FAMILY PLANNING PILOT

The issue of family planning in Guatemala is complicated. The majority of impoverished women living in rural Guatemala do not have access nor knowledge of family planning options. In a 2015 national survey, 64% of Guatemalan women reported that they did not want to have children in the next two years, yet only 10% had access to birth control. 43% of indigenous Guatemalan women are unaware that family planning methods even exist. Giving women the control over how many children they wish to have is a strong step towards empowerment and making better family choices for the future.

In 2018, in partnership with the Linked Foundation, Friendship Bridge ran a Family Planning pilot to increase the acceptance and application of family planning methods by our clients. The goal of the pilot was to increase the utilization of family planning methods and ensure clients had the knowledge to choose best methods for themselves in the pilot region of Chimaltenango. Through this intervention with clients, we saw 44% decided to begin using family planning methods, compared to the 10% who responded that they did not have access to birth control in the 2015 survey. Due to these results, the Family Planning pilot will expand to all branches in 2019.

"I had never done a general checkup to see my health as a woman. This has been taboo in the rural areas of Guatemala. Because of shame, we do not go to the gynecologist. Thank you Friendship Bridge for sending a female nurse to our community to do our medical check-ups. This has helped us to be more confident. With my husband, we decided to use the family planning method facilitated by Friendship Bridge. At first, I tried one method, but it didn't work well for me, and I thank the nurse for following up with me to check the side effects I was having. Thanks to her suggestion, last year I changed to another method and this is working very well. With three children, I feel happy and I would not want to have a bigger family because now I can aspire for a better future full of opportunities. I call on all women to take care of themselves and know how important their health is for the family. I think I have a good number of kids, so they can have a better future, full of opportunities that my husband and I can support."

ANA, 35 years old, 3 children, 9 loan cycles

WHAT WE LEARNED

16% of clients adopted family planning methods after their first visit with the nurse.



44% of clients adopted family planning methods after taking time to think and share information with their spouses and have follow-up meetings with the nurses.



from **10%** to **28%** In Sololá, one of the most conservative departments in Guatemala, there was an increase from 10% of family planning methods in 2017 to 28% by the end of 2018.

"With three children, I feel happy and I would not want to have a bigger family because now I can aspire for a better future full of opportunities."



SOCIAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Our commitment to Social Performance Management continues to keep us focused on our social mission and measuring our progress towards women's empowerment, poverty alleviation, and business development. We are committed to empowering not only our clients, but our employees as well, many of whom have a similar demographic profile as our clients. In total, over 35,000 client surveys were collected and analyzed throughout the year to improve program design and delivery. Also, in 2018 we conducted a SPI4 social audit with a third party to ensure our compliance with the Universal Standards of Social Performance Management. Friendship Bridge received a score of 74 which is excellent, compared to a global average of our peers of 61.

50%

FEMALE LEADERSHIP



49%

INDIGENOUS STAFF

54%

FEMALE STAFF

GREAT PLACE TO WORK CERTIFICATION

Friendship Bridge proudly achieved the Great Place To Work Certification in 2018. The organization underwent an intensive auditing process in order to receive this recognition. This certification positions the organization as one of the best places to work in Central America. This achievement commits us to continue building a culture of empowerment and trust with our staff. Since 1998, the Great Place To Work® Certification team has been the data scientists behind the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® list. Using rigorous methodology, they gather and evaluate employee feedback and recognize companies who have built high-trust, high-performance cultures. This certification is recognized in 60 countries.



CLIENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Our clients' needs and feedback inform our decision-making and the products and services we offer. As a mechanism for receiving regular feedback, our Client Advisory Committee (CAC) advises our leadership team and Board of Directors. In 2018, we expanded the reach and representation of this group of elected clients from 8 to 52 representing a larger and more diverse group of clients from each branch and loan officer.

"For me it is a great blessing to be part of Friendship Bridge, we have been treated like queens. I want to thank all the women for being part of the battle of empowerment; this is what helps us to get ahead with our families and open the minds of many more women".

CAROLINA, CAC Member



Education and Social Performance Committee

Anna De La Cruz
Research and Evaluation Consultant

Cara Forster
Independent Consultant and Social Performance Task Force Secretariat Member

Jessica Jones
Researcher of Micro and Social Entrepreneurship

Francy Milner
Professor at the LEEDS School of Business, University of Colorado

Maria Matilde Olazabal
Director of Alcance, Freedom from Hunger, Mexico

Sarah Sterling
Operations Manager, Conveners

Claire Simon
Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation Consultant

Carmen Velasco
Co-founder of Pro-Mujer and Co-Chair, Truelift Executive Committee



2018 and 2019 Client Advisory Committees

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE RESULTS



69%

OF FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE CLIENTS HAVE SAVINGS.

Of clients interviewed in 2016 and again in 2018, 9% more clients are saving. A study of similar population in Guatemala by Oxfam America estimated the savings rate at 13%, compared to our 69%.



44%

OF CLIENTS BEGAN USING FAMILY PLANNING METHODS AFTER PARTICIPATING IN OUR FAMILY PLANNING PILOT.

CLIENTS IN OUR ARTISAN MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM INCREASED THEIR INCOME BY MORE THAN

20%



15%

IMPROVEMENT AWAY FROM POVERTY

OUR MONTHLY EDUCATION SESSIONS ARE CORRELATED WITH LOWER POVERTY OVER TIME.

Clients who attended all monthly education sessions in 2017 were 7% less likely to live below the National Poverty Line than those clients who did not attend (measured from 2016 to 2018.)



7%

Clients who participate in our Advance Training programs are more likely to improve their poverty level over time. Clients who received Advanced Training had a 15% improvement away from poverty from 2016 to 2018.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES & VOLUNTEERS

Friendship Circles are groups of dedicated volunteers across the U.S. who educate, advocate and fundraise on behalf of Friendship Bridge to support its mission to provide opportunities that empower Guatemalan women. In 2018, Friendship Circles had a historic year raising over \$240,000 to benefit our clients. Friendship Bridge also is grateful to have dozens of volunteers who provide translation, marketing, research, photography, and many other important services.

MARY STEINBRECHER EVERGREEN, CO CIRCLE MEMBER

"My introduction to Friendship Bridge began in April, 2000. I was acquainted with a few volunteers and an employee of Friendship Bridge. When I retired from teaching I interviewed for a volunteer position at Friendship Bridge. In 2001, I was fortunate to go to Guatemala on an Insight Trip. It was dazzling to see the borrowers in their beautiful handwoven and embroidered huipils. They were proud of their accomplishments, had plans for their businesses, and their families were benefiting from the program. We saw contentment and pride. I admired the resilience of Guatemalan women.



In Colorado, our Evergreen Circle has continued to grow. Our Circle Members have been working together on projects to support the mission of Friendship Bridge. One of these projects is Swittens (mittens made out of upcycled sweaters), which we began in 2011.

Nine years later, we are still sewing Swittens. We get together year-round, and I am happy to take part. The words "Friendship Bridge" mean so much more after seeing the smiling faces of the women who are our borrowers around Lake Atitlan. Thank you, Friendship Bridge, for giving me the opportunity to volunteer and make a difference."

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR 11 CIRCLES

Antelope Valley (CA)
Boulder (CO)
Bloomington (IN)
Central Coast (CA)
Evergreen (CO)
Foothills (CO)
Genesee (CO)
San Gabriel Valley (CA)
Oconomowoc (WI)
Salida (CO)
San Antonio (TX)

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2018 CIRCLE LEADERS

Roberta Bautista Armijo	Connie Holzmiller
Sharon Barrett	Megan Juba
Joanne Baum	Deborah Kramer
Sue Benishek	Constancia Leshin
Rachel Bloombaum	Rebecca Medina
Jill Brashear	Carol Nielson
Bonnie Bushaw	Sarah Patten
Carolyn Casas	Leslee Ranish
Angelica Docog	Rose Saucedo
Raquel Escatel	Carolina Vasan
Paula Hock	

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TRANSLATION VOLUNTEERS

Angie Brand	Sheila Keller
Saranya Chunduri	Constancia Leshin
Penelope Curtis	Richard Londer
Tim Jafek	Claudia Ramirez

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Wood *Co-Chair*
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CLIENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Victoria Xoc (*Chimaltenango*), *Vice-president*
Esmirna López (*San Marcos*), *Secretary*
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Rubidia Urizar (*Mazatenango*)

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Karen Larson *President and CEO*
Victor Contreras *Manager, Employee Services*
Tracie Cordeiro *Chief Financial Officer*
Brandi Mason *Vice President, Global Communications & Partnerships*
Sergio Morales *Chief Operating Officer*
Caitlin Scott *Chief Strategy Officer*

Friendship Bridge has 160 hardworking and dedicated employees in Guatemala and the US. In 2018, Friendship Bridge officially celebrated 20 years of serving women in Guatemala.



THANK YOU SUPPORTERS

\$25,000 AND UP

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Boulder Circle
Crawley Family Foundation
Evergreen Circle
Genesee Circle
Harvey Family Foundation
Inter-American Development Bank
Linked Foundation
San Antonio Circle
Walter and Ursula Eberspacher Foundation
Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation
Whole Planet Foundation
Women's Worldwide Web (W4)

\$10,000-\$24,999

Anonymous
Antelope Valley Circle
AMB Foundation
Jane Armstrong, In Memory of Judy Snyder
Central Coast Circle
Cynda Collins Arsenal
Baker Concrete
Bancker-Williams Foundation
AnnaMaria Begemann & Michael Morter
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Foothills Circle
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\$1,000-\$2,499

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**Indicates monthly donor in our Cada Mes Club.*

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MCE Social Capital
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Thank you to an additional 1,084 donors who collectively contributed over \$165,638 to further our mission.

LEGACY CIRCLE MEMBERS

Our Legacy Circle is a group of individuals who have directed a planned gift to Friendship Bridge, ensuring their impact extends beyond their lifetime.

Anonymous Members
Paula and Charlie Farrell
Felicity Hannay & James Wood
Katie Kitchen & Paul Kovach
Constancia Leshin
Marie McCreery

Francy and Lary Milner
Teresa & Brice Moczygemba
Connie Newton
Ardis Strieby *
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For additional information and about how we create opportunities that empower women to create better futures, please visit our website: friendshipbridge.org