



# Annual Report 2021

**Thank you for taking part  
in this journey with us  
and for being part of the  
Planting Seeds family.**



# A Year in Review

As we come to the end of another year, we want to start our annual report with an expression of gratitude and appreciation towards all of you. We know that your worlds have been turned upside down, many have lost loved ones, and others have dealt with the financial, health and emotional effects that this pandemic has brought upon us.

Despite this, you all have continued to fight with us to help meet the educational, nutritional, health, financial, and emotional needs of the families we work with. We have been able to provide a hybrid learning model with parent trainings to support in-home learning, phone data for teachers and parents to be in constant communication, and four books a month to each family in our programs. We have also been able to provide social emotional programming to combat increased levels of stress, food bags to families most affected by the pandemic and information and access to vaccinations in the communities where we work.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has disproportionately affected families in poverty, making their basic human rights even less accessible. Because of your continued support, we have been able to help families meet their needs.



In this report, we will take a deeper look into Planting Seeds' approach to development through the eyes of community collaborative member and facilitator Vivian Santiago as this approach is improving the quality of life for children and families in Guatemala. We will also review the accomplishments we achieved together and preview what lies ahead for Planting Seeds in 2022 and beyond.

We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish together the past couple of years, and equally as excited for our continued growth and what that will mean for families living in poverty in Guatemala.

We will also share many new ways to get involved with Planting Seeds, including an opportunity for Sponsorship and multiple exchange programs!

Thank you for taking part in this journey with us and as always for being part of the Planting Seeds family.

We are grateful for you, your energy, and commitment to supporting marginalized communities in Guatemala.

*Planting Seeds Team*

## LEADING FROM WITHIN

**Vivian Santiago is one of the facilitators of Motivated Women, one of the community-led development programs offered by Planting Seeds in Zone 3 in Guatemala City.**



She has been in this role since the beginning of 2020, but her involvement with PSI began in 2005, when she served as a teacher for a partner school that implemented our teaching methodology. Back then, Vivian received her training in the Planting Seeds Methodology from PSI founder Susan Schmaltz and our current Guatemala Director, Madeli Quiñonez. She worked as a preschool teacher for five years until her son was born. In 2017, Shannon Moyle, the current co-executive director of PSI, invited her to be part of the Motivated Women group, helping take care of the sons and daughters of the program participants, which allowed mothers to participate in the program while their children stayed in a safe environment. After one and a half years in that role, Shannon proposed to Vivian to become the group facilitator.

*"At the beginning, I felt nervous because I didn't have experience facilitating discussions and conversations with a group of women. However, by having the opportunity to be in this role, I realized that I'm good at facilitating groups, guiding conversations and reflecting about our common experiences."*

One of the most important aspects that this group offers to women of Zone 3 is having a support network to talk about various issues regarding their experiences as women and mothers. This year, the facilitators asked the participants which topics they were eager to talk about during the group sessions. Topics ranged from violence and abusive relationships to self-esteem, mother-children relationships, and women empowerment.

*"A couple of weeks ago, we talked about abusive relationships and violence, as well as how to improve communication with our partners. We played the broken telephone game to show how communication gets distorted. It's important as women to value ourselves, work on our self-esteem and learn how to walk away from abusive relationships. At the end of the session, we reflected on our learning and decided what we would take with us."*

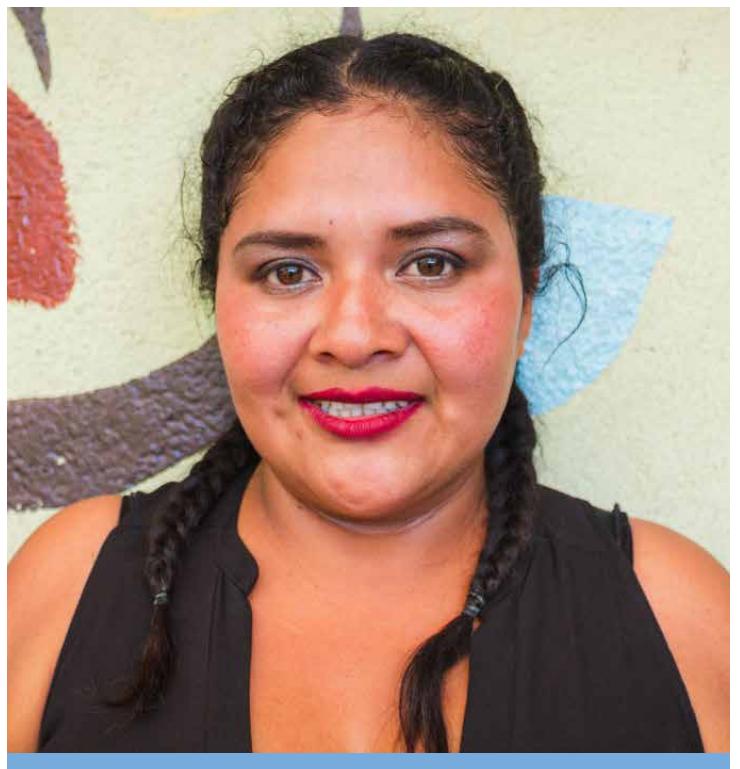
As part of our community-led development approach, we offer training to prepare facilitators to be effective leaders in our programs. For Vivian, the facilitator training has given her the skills to lead groups, learn innovative ideas and strategies to present topics and implement activities.

*"Being trained is essential when you think you don't know anything or when you think you cannot do it. The training has helped me grow. I am a very different person to the woman I was nine years ago. I used to be very shy and nervous, and I was afraid of public speaking. Today, I stand up with confidence and trust in myself."*

Besides being one of the facilitators of Motivated Women, Vivian is a leader of her district. She is part of PSI Community Collaborative, a leadership body that has been key to developing the community center in Zone 3.

*"People from the community know me as a teacher and a leader. Sometimes, it isn't easy to be accepted if you are not from the community, but my neighbors respect me because I'm from here. In the collaborative, we have helped with various initiatives, from fundraising for the community center, calling community meetings and getting the community voice into the project."*

Through the collaborative, Vivian has also helped with several initiatives. Last year during the pandemic, she helped to provide food bags to families in need. This year, she assisted in a vaccination drive organized by the network of organizations in Zone 3, Vivian went door by door to give information about the Covid vaccine and listened to community concerns, providing

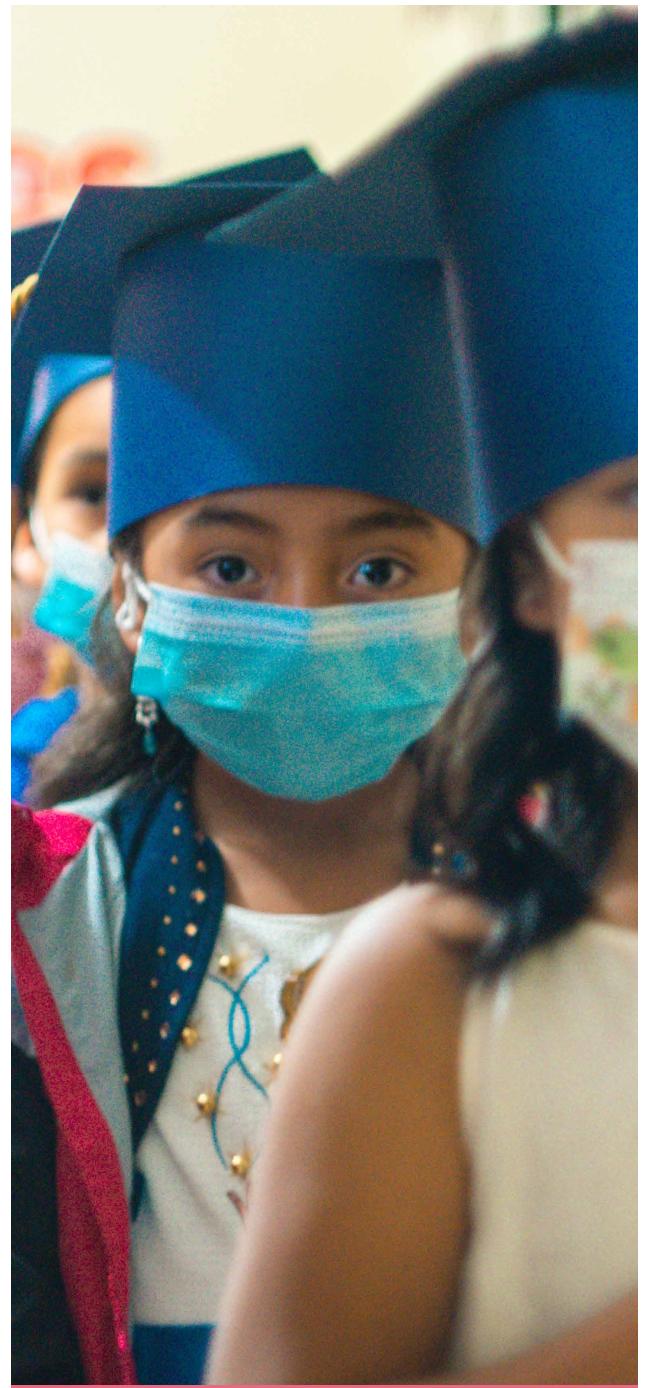


context to help break the myths surrounding the vaccine. Besides all her involvement and activism through PSI, she keeps finding ways to help others in her community. In her free time, Vivian helps children in her neighborhood develop reading skills and before the pandemic, she taught literacy skills to adults. Vivian enjoys including her son in helping others because she knows that it is important that he learns from her example. Vivian has many dreams for the future, and she is excited to know that in a blink of an eye, the community center will be in front of us.

*"I want to keep collaborating with Planting Seeds. I hope that the Motivated Women group grows, that women can tell themselves their story of transformation. I'm excited to have the community center as a space for me to teach others and drive change in my community."*

# PSI LONG-TERM IMPACT STUDY LEADS TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

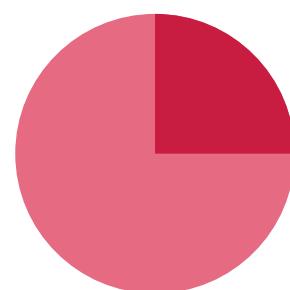
When our students graduate from Planting Seeds preschools, we hope that the educational foundation received in their early years stays with them throughout their lives. As 90% of a children's brain develops in their first five years of life, high quality early education programs are essential to set children up for success for the rest of their lives. For PSI it is essential to monitor and evaluate our programs continually because, in this way, we can ensure that we are providing the necessary support for our communities and that the programs we offer make a difference in the long term. To measure our impact, we conduct 1st-grade readiness evaluations and track down former students to record their grades every year. Our studies show that in a country where over 1 out of 5 students fail first grade, over 97% of Planting Seeds students have passed since 2014. This year, we conducted a long-term longitudinal study to evaluate our impact over our students' lifetime in the Sacala preschool, which was established in 2001. We interviewed 132 students of 3 different age ranges, 67 who studied in Planting Seeds and 65 who did not. The numbers show that even though Planting Seeds students come from families with lower incomes, they are more successful in their academic lives than students that attended other schools in the area. PSI graduates are more likely to stay in school, graduate high school and be more responsible with their studies. We also noticed that students that studied at Planting Seeds for a longer period of time have more long-term success in their academic lives. The difference that 1-3 years of high-quality education makes during their early years is enormous.



## Households with stable incomes

### Non-PSI Families

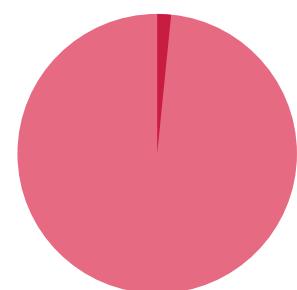
Stable income 26%



Families without  
Full-Time  
Employment 74%

### PSI Families

Stable income 1.5%

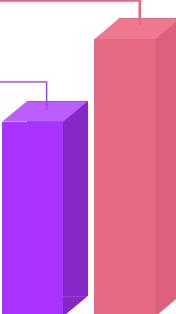


Families without  
Full-Time  
Employment 98.5%

## **Students that are top of their class**

**PSI Graduates 44%**

**26% Non-PSI Graduates**



The results of this study is informing our work moving forward, as we are planning to expand the services that the preschools offer to support children in the community graduate high school. Norma Atz and Merida Yucuté, the teachers of Sacala shared with us that lack of financial resources, lack of interest in education and lack of parental support are key reasons why students drop out of school. Norma mentioned that many people in the community see education as a waste of time and money. Given the circumstances of extreme poverty, the long-term benefits of education are often overshadowed by the immediate needs that can be solved if children start working early in their lives.

In addition, Merida, who besides being a teacher is also a former PSI student, says that there isn't

access to books in the community, and that many teenagers struggle with reading and literacy skills, which makes it harder for them to want to keep studying, as they often feel inadequate to pursue higher levels of education. For these reasons PSI has begun implementing parent trainings and book lending programs, with the goal of expanding our preschools to be community libraries as well. It is essential to work with both parents and students to ensure that families understand the importance of education across generations, and that they have the resources needed to be able to develop to their fullest potential.

As we move forward, we will be offering nutrition programs, reproductive health services and community libraries to better address community needs. We will continue listening to the community and using their knowledge to guide the programming in each area we work. We will continue working hard to make a bigger difference in the lives of the most marginalized children in Guatemala, because our impact study shows that early childhood education is key to growing brighter futures.



## **Children under 14 that are still in school**





# Financial Review

Total as of 10/01/2021

## Expenses

\$ 131,393.37

### Capital Campaign

\$ 5,981.13

### Emergency Relief

\$ 10,316.16

### Program Expenses

\$ 20,702.66

### Administration

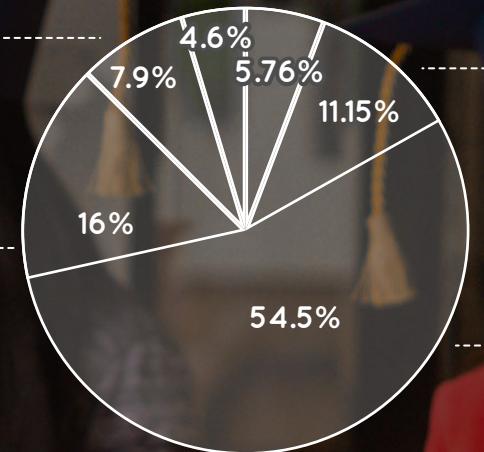
\$ 7,618.90

### Fundraising

\$ 15,272.73

### Program Salaries

\$ 71,501.79



## Program Numbers

### Preschools

San Lucas	49
Sacala	17
Tioxya	7
Esperanza Renovada	50
REKKO	44
Iniciativa Guatemala	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>

### Community Programs

Fathers Nurturing	12
Motivated Women	11
Go Girls/Ballet	19
Breakdance	16
English	83
After School	20
Library	20
Colaborative	12
Futbol KY	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>273</b>

Overall Total: 454

## Revenue

Friends Circles/Fundraising Events	\$ 38,927.97
COVID Adaptation	\$ 25,042.67
Capital Campaign	\$ 87,092.07
Monthly Donors	\$ 38,988.87
Exchange Programs	\$ 925.42
Misc.	\$ 1,162.70
Grants	\$ 4,596.77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 196,736.48</b>

### Additional Support

### Total

Books Lent to students and families	+2,000
Teachers trained in the Methodology	25
Community Trained Facilitators	12
Organizations Participating in PS led Collaboration Network	12
Parents Trained in in-home learning	271

# Accomplishments in 2021!



## Accountability and collaboration to get people vaccinated:

Through the network of organizations that Planting Seeds has led since 2018, we were collectively able to fully vaccinate 648 people. We hosted an emergency network meeting to build and execute an outreach plan to educate as many community members as possible about the vaccine.



## Book Lending:

Every Planting Seeds school implemented our book lending program, lending four books a month to every family in our schools. This was complemented by the creating little readers training, helping parents learn how to read to their children.

## Canadian Charitable Status

We received Canadian Charitable status!!!!

## New Website and Logo

We have been working on a new website and logo!  
We will launch the website and show the new logo early next year.

## Effectively implemented in person Community Programs:

Families in the regions where we work have been very overwhelmed by the Pandemic. For the mental health of all our community participants, we opened up all of our family strengthening programs in small groups, respecting necessary safety protocols. Implementing retroactive surveys, participants stated that these programs helped their well being, provided them with a support network, and allowed them to grow as human beings.



## Personalized Parent Trainings:

We held monthly trainings in all PSI preschools for parents in small 4 person groups, focused on building skills in providing proper stimulation for their children. Our workshops modeled the skill and allowed parents multiple opportunities to practice so they could effectively implement activities at home. Trainings offered were: creating educational routines, discipline with love, creating little readers, being an educational guide for your child, and how to effectively stimulate your children in all moments of the day.

# BIG PLANS FOR 2022

**Despite the Pandemic, Planting Seeds continues to grow, enriching the preschools we already work with and building new partnerships to add more Planting Seeds schools throughout the country.**

## New Planting Seeds School with the Municipality of Pastores:

We are so excited to share that we have entered a partnership with the municipality of Pastores. Their municipal school of over 60 students will become a Planting Seeds preschool in 2022! We hope this partnership will open the door to working with many more Municipal schools moving forward.

## Comprehensive Schools and Exciting New Partnerships:

We have entered in multiple partnerships and are expanding the services of our preschools. Each PSI preschool will eventually have a community library, a more robust and intentional nutrition program and parent education trainings. We have also entered a partnership with WINGS to provide Sexual and Reproductive health services and access to contraception for all members of the communities where we work.



## Community Center:

The construction of the new Community Center has suffered delays due to the difficulty in obtaining construction permits during the Pandemic. We hope to begin the initial stages of construction next year and have the Inauguration for the Community Center before August of 2022.



**And as stated in the story above, we will use our long term study in Sacala to determine additional services needed to ensure all Planting Seeds graduates have what they need to reach their maximum potential.**

# Thank you!

Thank you to all our supporters, donors and friends circles in Canada, the USA and Guatemala whose commitment to Planting Seeds International throughout the years has allowed us to grow our impact in some of the most vulnerable communities.

It's heartwarming to witness the generosity of all the people who give their resources, time and dedication to ensure that new generations of Planting Seeds students get a high quality education, and that their families and communities also have an opportunity to grow a brighter future.

## Foundations and Grants

We want to express our gratitude to the foundations and organizations that have been supporting our work throughout the years. Thanks to Joann Hartmann Family Foundation, Basilian Fathers, Acceso International and Phyllis and Perry Schwartz Foundation for their important support!

Also, we want to celebrate that this year the Luis Von Ahn Foundation partnered with Planting Seeds International to expand our impact in years to come. The Guatemalan Philanthropist, Luis Von Ahn, through his foundation is focused on directing unrestricted funds to grass roots organizations and developing their capacity to create change.

We are excited about the impact that all these partnerships will bring for Planting Seeds International!

## Friends Circles:

A shout out to all our Friends Circles, who rallied this year organizing all kinds of fun and creative events in support of PSI.

**Our friends in Ottawa and Pembroke sold comfort food, cookies, published a digital cookbook, and organized a cooking class with a professional chef! They also organized a virtual gala and a night of Mirth & Magic!**

**Our Chicago Friends Circle got us exercising with a fitness class, the 4th annual bowling event, and a holiday fundraiser.**

**The Northbrook Friends Circle put on a virtual gala with the filmmakers of "Living on One Dollar".**

**The Guatemala Friends Circle organized a Trivia Night & a holiday ornaments sale to help with our year-end fundraising efforts.**

**Our dear friend and continuous supporter, Jill Janofsky, gathered friends virtually for the second consecutive year for Trivia Nights to support Planting Seeds International.**

**Lastly, we are very thankful to all our supporters from Traverse City and Leelanau County in Michigan. They hosted gatherings to spread awareness about the work of Planting Seeds International, and formed our newest Friends Circle!**

**To all of you,  
Thank you!**

**We wouldn't be such  
a strong organization  
without your  
support!**

## Thank you to our supporters!

**The support of individual donors is vital for our sustainability. Thank you so much to all the people that take our mission to heart and that donate to our organization. Your contribution is making a difference for our communities!**



#### Make a donation

Partner with us giving monthly to our different programs:

#### Donations from USA:

[www.plantingseedsinternational.org/en/donate-now](http://www.plantingseedsinternational.org/en/donate-now)  
or send a check to Planting Seeds International,  
2860 Weller Lane, Northbrook IL, 60062



[www.plantingseedsinternational.org](http://www.plantingseedsinternational.org)

Email mishel@plantingseedsinternational.org  
for more info

## How to get involved!



#### Visit Guatemala on our Annual Education Tour

Join us for a one-week educational tour in Guatemala and get a close look at the organization's programs.



#### Become a Monthly Donor

Partner with us giving monthly to our different programs.



#### Start or Join a Friend Circle

Join an existing Friend Circle and be an active part organizing fundraisers and awareness events.



#### Become a Sponsor!

Sponsor a preschooler, a community program participant or a Planting Seeds program.

#### Connect us to preschools, schools and colleges in your community



We are starting new programs to connect students in the USA and Canada to our students and programs in Guatemala. We have the opportunity to set up ZoomPals, Change for Change programs and Dual-Exchange programs for students of different ages.

For more information, send an email to: [development@plantingseedsinternational.org](mailto:development@plantingseedsinternational.org)