



Cojolya

ASOCIACIÓN DE TEJEDORAS MAYAS

EDUCATION PROGRAM

A pillar of the Hand in Hand for Development Program



Education Program



Association Cojolya

Location

Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala

Project Segment

Education and local development

Time frame

Since 2016 - ongoing

Target Group

Children of Mayan weavers which are part of the Cojolya Association.

Funding needed

30.000 \$

The Origins

Given that many of our Mayan weavers at Cojolya are parents, we recognized the urgent need to establish an education branch within our **Mano a Mano para el Desarrollo** social program. Our research revealed significant financial barriers preventing many families in the association from accessing consistent education for their children.

In Santiago Atitlán, the Tz'utujil community has access to public and private schooling at the primary and middle school levels, along with a few private university centers. However, the **high costs of continued education** often force young people to **drop out at the primary level**. This challenge is further compounded by traditional gender norms that prioritize boys' education over girls'.

At Cojolya, we believe that **education is the cornerstone of family and community development**. That's why we are deeply committed to supporting each student's growth and success, believing that empowering young people through education will **create lasting change** for their families and contribute significantly to the well-being of our community.

Unlocking Potential: Addressing the Educational Challenges

In Santiago Atitlán, a predominantly indigenous town, educational challenges remain severe. Although school dropout rates have improved in recent years, national statistics reveal that as educational levels rise, the **number of children attending school declines**. This concerning trend aligns with broader national patterns, as Guatemala has one of the lowest literacy rates in Latin America. According to the UN, **each additional year of schooling can increase a person's income by 10%**, highlighting education as a vital pathway out of poverty.

The children of Cojolya's Mayan weavers face three key barriers to continuing their education:

1

Financial
constraints

2

Lack of
indigenous
academic
mentors and role
models

3

Limited academic
support

A contributing factor to these challenges is the **limited access to information** about the **importance of school attendance** for acquiring essential skills and fostering community dialogue, mutual understanding, and respect for cultural diversity, which often leaves the decision to attend school to the discretion of parents, guardians, or the students themselves. These obstacles are compounded by a national education system where **only eight out of ten children access primary education**, and indigenous-majority regions, such as Sololá, report enrollment rates below the national average. Consequently, these factors lead to high dropout rates, particularly among girls, because of persisting gender ideas, severely impacting their futures and hindering the development of their families and communities.



The goal of our education program is to **provide immediate financial relief to families**, ensuring access to education and supporting students to complete their essential stages of education. In the **long term**, we aim to **improve the quality of life for each family** by empowering young girls and boys to become professionals, creating **better job opportunities** and contributing to the development of our community. Through the Mano a Mano project, we offer **monthly economic support for school fees, educational materials, internet and computer access**, and mentorship, addressing all barriers to education holistically and **increasing enrollment rates** for the ones currently in our program as well as all future children.



How the Educational Program works



The educational program at Cojolya is dedicated to supporting exclusively the children of artisan members, ensuring access to quality **education from pre-primary level through to high school**, leading to an intermediate professional degree. To qualify, at least one parent must be an active member of the association. The program provides **initial financial assistance** at the start of each school year to help parents purchase school supplies and **additional monthly support** for ongoing educational materials through a local bookstore.

Each student is provided with a **special card** that allows them to identify themselves at a local bookstore, **facilitating the acquisition of necessary supplies**. Students can also access computers and internet services within the organization, allowing them to complete digital assignments without incurring extra costs. Furthermore, Cojolya offers **academic tutoring** and **group activities** to enhance learning. Currently nine students benefit from the program, including five girls and four boys.



Achievements and outlook for the future

Since launching the program, we have **successfully supported 10 to 15** children in continuing their education, enabling them to achieve both **intermediate and professional degrees**. Among them, four have completed the intermediate level, and six have graduated with professional qualifications. **We are proud to see them now thriving as accountants, teachers, and even a doctor.** Currently, two young girls are **on track to complete their studies** in the coming years.

We still need your support to continue our mission and provide more children at Cojolya with access to stable, high-quality education.

Thank you for your generosity—every donation makes a difference.



Contact

Asociación Cojolya
Calle Real, Cantón Tzanjuyu, Santiago Atitlán
Sololá, Guatemala

☎ (+502) 7721-7268

✉ info@cojolya.org.gt

🌐 <https://cojolya.org.gt>

📷 @cojolya

🤝 global giving Org #45004