



# WOMEN'S JUSTICE INITIATIVE (WJI)

## AT A GLANCE

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### THE MISSION

The Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) improves the lives of indigenous Guatemala women and girls through education, access to legal services, and gender-based violence prevention.

### WJI'S APPROACH

WJI works in rural communities where women face extreme poverty, high rates of gender inequality and gender-based violence, and have little or no access to resources. Social services are concentrated in cities and rarely reach indigenous women living in rural areas. Due to lack of access to resources and extreme poverty, indigenous women are more vulnerable to violence, inequality, and discrimination.

WJI empowers women by expanding their access to justice through a three-tiered program of women's rights training, leadership development, and greater access to legal resources. WJI implements its work in twenty Mayan communities in the municipality of Patzún, Chimaltenango.



### Women's Rights Education Program

The Women's Rights Education Program is a six-month legal literacy and empowerment course that educates women on asserting and protecting their rights. Through the program women receive training on issues that affect many of them, including domestic violence, sexual and reproductive rights, and property rights and inheritance. The program provides skill-building workshops, focusing on leadership, decision-making, and communication skills. By increasing women's legal literacy and building their leadership capacity, WJI provides participants with the tools to better protect their rights and improve their lives.

### Community Advocates Program

The Community Advocates Program is a leadership development initiative. WJI selects graduates of its Women's Rights Education Program to serve in leadership positions in their communities as Community Advocates. The Advocates participate in a twelve-month training program that combines comprehensive human rights education with leadership development. Through the program these women become leaders, women's rights educators, and mentors to their peers.



### Legal Services Program

The Legal Services Program provides free legal services directly to women in need by bringing lawyers to their communities and by providing bilingual Mayan-Spanish resources. In doing so, WJI greatly expands women's access to the legal system. The program advises clients on a range of legal issues, including domestic violence, property rights, inheritance, and family law.

### Adolescent Girls Program

The Adolescent Girls Program works with girls, parents, and community leaders to develop strategic approaches to combating child marriage. Through a yearlong Girls Empowerment, Rights, and Leadership course, WJI provides girls with the necessary skills and knowledge to advocate for themselves within their families and communities. In addition to working with girls, WJI targets parents and community leaders, who are gatekeepers to early marriage. With WJI's assistance they develop Community Response Plans and commit to ending child marriage in their families and communities.