



CasaSito Annual Report 2022

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Dear friends and collaborators of CasaSito,
Education is an essential engine for the development of a society. Besides providing knowledge, it enriches values, spirit and our culture. At CasaSito we focus on creating a bridge between our scholars and their dreams. We give them the opportunity to develop academic, social and artistic skills so that they can improve themselves and build life projects.

Silke Wahl



Guatemala at a Glance

Three years after the start of the COVID pandemic in 2020, Guatemala is slowly recovering from the shock. The number of Covid-19 infections gradually decreased and little by little, life returned to normal. Yet the country continues to have an extremely low minimum wage compared to the rising cost of living. The lack of economic opportunities and high inequalities within the country are forcing many to depend on remittances from abroad that have reached record levels in recent years.

In addition, poverty and climatic disasters have generated high rates of chronic malnutrition in the country. Especially in rural areas, there are still many vulnerable families facing difficult financial, housing and nutritional problems whose situation was worsened by Hurricanes ETA and IOTA and Hurricane Julia.

These problems have exacerbated the migration of Guatemalans to the US, especially the younger population in rural areas seeking to find better job and educational opportunities abroad.

Most of the public and private schools reopened their doors during the third quarter of 2022 and students finally returned to face-to-face classes. But principals, teachers, and students continue to struggle with mental health issues, misbehavior, violence, and disruptions to learning. Students from rural areas have been especially affected.

However, overall, 2022 was once again a year full of many positive impacts for our scholars who were very happy to return to face-to-face classes and activities and for their families who were able to gradually improve their living conditions.



Our Youth Development Program (YDP)

In 2022, we supported 108 scholars from Junior High and High School, and University from the departments of Alta Verapaz (55), Quiche (3) and Sacatepéquez (50).

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Geographic Area</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>
Junior High (35)	Rural (29)	Women(54)	Indigenous (57)
High School (52)	Semi-rural (39)	Men(54)	Ladino (51)
University (21)	Urban (40)		NOTE: This is based on how scholars choose to identify themselves



Program Snapshots 2022

This year was a year of challenges, adaptation to new schedules, school systems and difficult family situations, such as lack of employment, economic instability and in some cases family conflicts. Nevertheless, we are very satisfied with the success achieved:

1. We supported 108 students and their families.
2. We impacted 45 communities.
3. The retention rate within the program was 99%; only one scholar withdrew from the program.
4. We offered 12 extracurricular activities, of which three were facilitated by our current university scholars and two former scholars.
5. We offered 13 workshops for scholars and 9 for parents, making a total of 22 workshops.
6. 888 hours were offered for monitoring and educational coaching.
7. 100% of our population successfully passed the school year and were promoted to the next grade.



Extracurricular Activities

The extracurricular activities in the areas of Sacatepéquez and Alta Verapaz allowed the scholars to have educational support in the areas of English, Mathematics, Accounting and Spanish. This was important since they did not receive face-to-face classes in the school throughout the year. It helped them to resolve doubts with the facilitators within the clubs. Likewise, the art, theater, ultimate frisbee and sports clubs provided spaces for physical and emotional recreation. It allowed them to explore themselves and express their emotions through art and movement, especially in a season where the pandemic meant there was no opportunity to create close bonds with people outside of the family. The debate club was a space that allowed the scholars to develop awareness of social realities, activate critical thinking, argue their opinions and respect the diversity of thoughts. The mentoring was a preparation space for the work area in which they developed skills to write a resume, prepare for an interview and adequately express their strengths and abilities. La Primavera del Ixcán opened the music club for children and young people from the community who wanted to participate.



Comprehensive Accompaniment

Psychological Support:

Taking into account the bad mental health situation caused by the pandemic, this year CasaSito focused on enhancing spaces for emotional support. 31 cases were attended, and 586 hours were invested. Some of the problems addressed were depressive disorder, grief resolution, conflicts within the family, low self-esteem, anxiety, panic, and eating disorders. This year we had the support of San Carlos University with 2 interns for care in Alta Verapaz and Rafael Landívar University with 2 interns for the Sacatepéquez area.



Case of success:

Rosario Leal is a first-year student of Professional Nursing, a young lady who has known how to fight for what she wants, despite economic and family difficulties. She has set out to graduate with honors. Within her school and the association, she has been characterized as an enthusiastic, charismatic, responsible and committed young woman. Despite her long day of studies and work activities, she is very participative in the activities of the association. Through the dialogue within the coaching sessions, she expresses feeling happy about her choice of academic career and results. In the monthly coaching sessions, she finds a way to express herself and renew the energy to move forward.

Coaching:

In 2022, 888 hours were invested to serve this space of trust that fulfilled the mission of providing support to each of the young people who expressed having family and school difficulties. We are satisfied to establish significant links with the scholars that allowed an empathetic and responsible communication.

Family and School Visits

Family visits:

We carried out a total of 34 family visits in Sacatepéquez and 93 visits in Alta Verapaz in 2022. During these visits, the team analyzed the socioeconomic situation of the families, monitored special cases, and evaluated the use of the scholarship. We also accompanied some of our donors and delivered material donations such as beds, mattresses, blankets, water filters etc. to improve their living conditions and visited and interviewed new applicants for 2023.

In Primavera del Ixcán, 6 family visits were carried out in order to evaluate the use of the scholarship, as well as update their socioeconomic situation. In addition, an impact study was carried out with former scholars (2013-2021) from both Alta Verapaz and Primavera del Ixcán, where it was possible to show that the experience obtained within the association is sustainable over time, transforming behaviors, attitudes and social practices that have contributed to improving their living conditions from an educational, emotional, and social point of view.



School visits:

In 2022, two school visits per year were carried out in Sacatepéquez (a total of 44 visits) and Alta Verapaz (a total of 26 visits). In Primavera del Ixcán, a meeting was held with community leaders in which they expressed concern about high dropout rates, migration, and suicide in the youth community since the start of the pandemic.



Poem: “To CasaSito”

by Maleno Mixteco Pashel (ex scholar of CasaSito)

The paths are uncertain
And time wise master
that leaves traces and space,
in awakened hearts

There are found moments
There are others who have
already died
There are others that lasted
absent in the days

On one of those days,
In some of those years
I felt more strange fears
And cold flames of fire

On those desolate nights
In those cruel days that
extinguished my suns
You were up to my dreams.

CasaSito that lives in my soul,
that embeds yourself in my skin,
In every step, you are faithful
And you keep me calm.

You are so small physically
And so big in my life,
You are still a guiding light
To a permanent memory.

My house, you are a teacher
Of faithful humble lives,
Of some already married,
Others on their way to glory.

How I miss you CasaSito
For this reason, these letters to all the
stars that you have formed slowly
In a beautiful Guatemala.

My light at the end of the dark.
My light after the night.
My light, my path, my future.
Thank you CasaSito

Teacher Development Program (TDP)

The second cycle of the Teacher Development Program had the participation of 11 teachers, from the areas of Sacatepéquez, Chimaltenango, Alta Verapaz and Primavera del Ixcán, directly impacting 9 schools and benefiting 120 students who participated in the debate club led by each teacher. The training process for teachers lasted 5 months (January to May). The implementation in each school was from June to September, where each teacher opened a debate club for the benefit of his/her students at different school levels.



The Teacher Development Program offered teachers the following services:

- Monthly school visits
- Complementary workshops for teachers
- Circles of confidence aimed at students participating in the clubs
- Monitoring and accompaniment in the application phase of the debate technique by our coordinator

Impact of the Teacher Development Program (TDP)

Impact data of the program:

100% of the scholars learned how to apply the debate technique.

100% of the scholars strengthened and developed skills to hold a debate such as:

- public speaking,
- ability of oral and corporal expression,

- ability to investigate,
- decision making skills
- analysis and synthesis skills,
- ability to interpret,
- ability to refute
- ability to listen responsibly and
- ability to communicate assertively.

La Universidad San Carlos de Guatemala granted a special certificate to the participating teachers in the debate program that gives them official recognition and lends credibility to the program.



Technical workshops for parents

In Alta Verapaz, we initiated a program that focused on providing skills and knowledge to empower mothers who were able to manage their own income by learning a technical skill. Two modules were carried out for 11 participating mothers.

During the sessions they learned to make 5 recipes of typical sweets (tamarind sweets, “cocadas”, “nuégados”, “canillitas”, sweet peanuts), while in another module the participants made jams of different flavors and different types of pickles.

Part of the impact of this program is that 80% of the mothers who participated started a small business, preparing their own products based on orders. Another success is that they feel productive, satisfied and independent, and can contribute to the family economy.



A message of gratitude

The personal experience as a CasaSito scholar was very special and fundamental in every area of my personal life. Each experience and knowledge obtained in the workshops and extracurricular activities were very important in my personal and academic development. I lived very difficult experiences in my life like cancer that killed my mother and kidney failure that killed my brother. Miss Sisi, Miriam and Cristy have always shown their empathy, professionalism and love at all stages of the loss of my loved ones. I will always be very grateful to them for everything they did with me in my process of overcoming those difficult experiences. Going to the psychological appointments with Sisi were fundamental and seeing the positive result in each appointment was incredible. Building good mental health and developing resilience for every difficulty in my human and professional life has been part of my overall success.



For each goal and dream achieved in my life, I always thank God for having given me the opportunity to meet very special people in my development and Casasito is kept in the depths of my heart. Also having the opportunity to be a teacher of the English language program with the scholars was very special to me because I was able to share knowledge and experiences through the classes. Many of the scholars acquired knowledge of the English language and that was very significant to me. I am sure that this knowledge is helping them in the University, jobs or daily life.

Thanks to Casasito I was able to obtain, recognize and value my skills and abilities, which opened the doors to various job opportunities such as Imagininguate where I made presentations to bring service teams from the US to Guatemala for the construction of homes and sponsorships. When hearing people mention Casasito, the good memories and processes in my years automatically come to my mind.

All of you touch and transform lives in the Guatemalan society. Keep going with your great impact on the youth who need it so much today. Personally, I will never have the right words to thank you for everything you did. I always carry them with me, even if I don't see them constantly and I ALWAYS WISH THEM THE BEST.

Thank you very much for helping me in my difficult moments and transforming my integral life to another level.

By Alexis Orlando Vásquez García

Our Social Fund

Through its Social Fund, CasaSito was able to support 18 scholars and their families with a donation of beds, mattresses, adequate bedding and quilts, water filters, and basic food packages. In total, 117 people benefited from the support provided.

Material, financial and emotional support provided parents with the resources to better support their children in their education and, as a consequence, lessen the emotional distress of children.

Families expressed that they feel less stressed and being able to cover some of their basic needs, and knowing that someone cares, encourages them to seek positive changes in the future. The scholars highlighted that they feel more productive and can concentrate better in school since they received a suitable bed.



The CasaSito Family 2022:



Sacatepéquez: 61 scholars

- 12 Junior High
- 28 High School
- 10 University
- 11 teachers
- Psychological support
- Workshops for scholars and parents
- 6 extracurricular activities: Art, English, Debate, Mathematics, Frisbee y Theatre of the Oppressed

Alta Verapaz: 66 scholars

- 23 Junior High
- 24 High School
- 8 University
- 11 Technical workshop scholarships for partents
- Psychological support
- Workshops for scholars and parents
- 8 extracurricular activities: Art, English, Spanish language, Debate, Mathematics, IT, Accounting and Sports



La Primavera del Ixcán: 3 scholarss

- 3 University
- Music Club
- Teacher workshops

Our Team 2022

Sacatepéquez

Lourdes González , Regional Director
Miriam Valle, Coordinator YDP
Cristina Rivera, Coordinator TDP
Beda González, Psychoeducational Coordinator
Silke Wahl, Development Consultant
Carolina Aragon, Office Assistant and Accountant
Romeo Luna, Work Student
Vilma Corina González, Maintenance

Alta Verapaz and Quiché

José Marcos de la Cruz, Regional Director
Ana Gaddy Estelí Caal Mus, Coordinator YDP
Lisbeth Amarilis Bac Sierra, Social Coordinator
Alma Gabriela Coy Cú , Work Student
Leticia Corzantes, Maintenance



Board of Directors, Guatemala

Silke Wahl, President
Paula Castellanos, Vice President
Alice Lee So Fong, Treasurer
Manuela Rosales, Secretary
Desirée Iturbide, Active Member



Board of Directors, USA

Greg Schwendinger, President
Alice So Fong Lee, Director
Eric Behrs, Secretary



Challenges, achievements and goals for 2023 (1)

2022 was a year of many satisfactions, joy, achievements and challenges that were faced, but at the same time we did not stop dreaming and setting goals to build a better future for our population.

One of the challenges we faced was the increase in the cost of living in general, which was evidenced in the increase in transportation, the increase in the cost of the basic food basket, and access to health, taking into account that we are struggling with the consequences of a post pandemic, where families are still trying to stabilize the economy and the stress that they experience every day.

A challenge for our population was the transition from online to face-to-face classes and activities which was observed in the emotional effect that the pandemic had on young people and our teaching population, since it was difficult for them to establish interpersonal relationships. Therefore, our team began to promote activities that encourage teamwork as well as good personal relationships. Among them: Science Fair, a visit to the Van Gogh Museum, the final of the debate club, the interschool debate festival, a Disc Golf Tournament, family coexistence as a closing of workshops and afternoons of confidence for the teachers.



Challenges, achievements and goals for 2023 (2)

On the other hand, the Rainy Season caused flooding in different departments. This situation affected various activities, for example, in Alta Verapaz it was difficult to carry out the sports club, because the activities were carried out outdoors, in Sacatepéquez the street in front of the office was flooded after heavy rains and the entrance to the facilities was blocked wherefore the scholars could not enter or leave.

Attempts were made during this time of year to carry out extracurricular activities in a hybrid way.

The CasaSito team feels honored to have achieved a collaboration with the Luis von Ahn Foundation that supports local community leaders and various non-profit organizations that work to improve the lives of Guatemalans. Through this collaboration we were able to meet and connect with other associations that work for the same goal, making a difference in Guatemala.

We close the year with dreams and goals to achieve, one of which is to strengthen our psychoeducational processes to offer a better service to the population and increase financial support for our scholars in order to help them with financial difficulties, as well as to renew our strategic plan for the coming 5 years.



Donors, volunteers and friends

