ANNUAL REPORT
2016
INICIATIVA GUATEMALA
Our second year in Guatemala connected us to even more incredible locals that work with youth-at-risk. We entered 2015 with a very clear goal to help our partners learn from their programs and improve their services.

We learned that the real battle occurs when children leave our programs at the end of the day. Many of them have broken relationships in their family or lack adult supervision because their parents need to work. The myriad of challenges they face every day cause them to turn to drugs, sex, gangs and bad friendships in an attempt to fill the void. Yet I also witnessed hope and change in those very same lives. Our partners are working to restore family relationships, and thanks to our supporters we have been able to make a difference.

We helped provide children with an education, we helped our partners restore family bonds, we helped staff identify problems before they caused a child to choose the street, and we helped directors network to find solutions for their programs.

Iniciativa discovered that its partners need more support to monitor their programs and address the challenges faced every day. We enter 2016 encouraged by our progress and anxious to keep improving services for youth-at-risk.

Joyfully,

Greg Lowden
Executive Director
OUR ORGANIZATION

AT-RISK AREAS OF GUATEMALA
We work in the metropolitan areas of Guatemala that struggle with poverty and conflict.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
We focus on building programs that provide youth-at-risk with new opportunities.

LOCAL PARTNERS
We operate our programs through local organizations to ensure our support is culturally sensitive.
Iniciativa works as a teammate alongside local community organizations to make youth development better. We have learned that organizations need resources, knowledge and metrics to make youth and family programs more effective. We focus on meeting those needs.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
We assist partners with planning and we fund programs that are critical for youth development and the stability of vulnerable families.

CONSULTING
We help solve problems related to logistics and methodology, while staying abreast of best practices and what other organizations are doing.

M & E
We help directors and staff design and execute monitoring & evaluation plans, and review results to understand program effectiveness and learning objectives.

Making Youth Development Better
EDUCATION

50
Helped educate 50 children

150
Improved a school for 150 children

98%
In 2015, 98% of students passed their grade.

73%
The average grade was 73%.

“"I like the way they treat me with patience, and how they teach me."” – Luna
MONITORING & EVALUATION

We found that student grades are extremely volatile throughout the academic year, often fluctuating by more than 15 points between report card averages. Our team is designing an education system that will allow school administrators to quickly identify where students are struggling. We can then provide them with tutoring tailored for their needs.
FAMILY RESTORATION

Many parents that have spent their life in Guatemala’s urban slums have suffered some form of abusive relationship or abandonment when they were children. Often times these childhood wounds cause parents to inadvertently damage the relationship with their own children, pushing kids to flee to the street in search of love, but in all the wrong ways. Most kids become youth-at-risk of drugs, misconduct and gangs. In 2015, we launched a pilot program with Guatemaltecos Extraordinarios to work inside of families to heal damaging wounds, and reunify parents with their children.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Iniciativa worked with its local partners to understand how family counseling translates into better grades, better emotional stability, and better behavior. This is a new and exciting area for our work that will involve intensive research during 2016 and 2017 to develop a model that works in Guatemala’s at-risk communities.
53% of children whose grades dropped significantly had a simultaneous family problem.

100 parents and children received counseling to heal wounds and rekindle family bonds.

74% of children reduced the amount of time they spend on the street exposed to danger.

15 children left the street to resume their education.

“She told me for the first time that she loved me... and I loved it. I loved it so much!” — anonymous youth
Helped mentor 25 teenagers.

“I completely forgot who I was and where I’m going. I was on the brink of abandoning my studies, my job, everything. Until two days ago, my mentor at the organization called me and told me ‘you’re strong and I know you’ve been through worse situations and you’ve made it out. You can. I know that you can.’ These words so simple were such a push. I decided to value myself, I decided to love myself and grasp God’s hand to leave the abyss that I found myself in.” – teenager in mentor program
Many children turn to vices when coping with difficult life circumstances. Our partners help them turn away from those vices by facing their wounds so that they can heal and move forward with their life. Youth mentorship is designed to build resilience and emotional stability in each child so that they can make positive life choices instead of bad ones.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Iniciativa is helping its partners research how their youth mentorship programs develop a more resilient mentality in youth so that they can overcome traumatic experiences. This process involves studying the background of each child and analyzing the various risk factors and protective factors in their lives, as well as the choices they make over time. The goal is to develop a robust model that can work across Guatemala City.
SCHOLARSHIP

24% - only 24% of teenagers in Guatemala receive a high school education.

5% - the ministry of education spends less than 5% of its budget on affordable high school education.

7 - the number of high school scholarships that Iniciativa awarded so that teenagers could continue their studies.
Iniciativa discovered that most teenagers don’t have the money to pay for high school education, so we began a rigorous scholarship program to provide access to tuition, books and supplies so that youth with academic ambitions can pursue their dream.

**SOLUTION FOCUSED**

Iniciativa is networking with local organizations to identify cost-effective alternatives that provide children with quality education and skills that will make them competitive in the job market. A scalable solution is needed to provide a brighter future to the thousands of children that do not have resources to finish their education.
**Economic Development**

555

Iniciativa awarded $555 as seed money for a sustainable development business called Gronn.

9187

Gronn sold $9,187 worth of up cycled glasses during 2015.

6

Gronn employed six women from marginalized communities where people struggle with poverty and discrimination.

2

Gronn has connected with 2 of Iniciativa’s community partners to create employment opportunity for women.
Gronn was founded by four social entrepreneurs who wanted to respond to the environmental and social challenges faced in Guatemala City. The company reuses discarded glass bottles to make drinking glasses for restaurants, businesses and homes. The business strives to reduce waste and simultaneously tackle unemployment by hiring women from marginalized communities.

NETWORKING

Iniciativa helped connect Gronn to two of its community partners - Guatemaltecos Extraordinarios and AMG Guatemala - to identify women with marginalized families who need employment. Both community partners have supported Gronn’s efforts with space for a workshop and storage for raw materials. Gronn has successfully made sales to large businesses and is currently planning to stock retail stores with its upcycled glasses.
FINANCES

We raised more than $60k for our work in 2015.

That includes $45k towards programs for youth development in Guatemala City and $15k towards operations.

We sent over $29k to our local partners to add more staff so that youth programs have better capacity and quality.

We invested $16k in advisory support to help our partners improve services with increased monitoring and evaluation, so that programs continually improve.
WE BUILT CAPACITY FOR PROGRAMS THAT HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

- **39%** COUNSELING
- **34%** EDUCATION
- **18%** CHILD CARE
- **7%** MENTORSHIP
- **2%** INCOME GENERATION