



**ONE EQUAL HEART**  
FOUNDATION

# Your Impact in Chiapas!

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**2022-2023**

**GRATITUDE REPORT**

# Weavers and Embroiderers Who Keep their Culture Alive



**Jolom Mayetik “Mayan Weavers”** is a cooperative made up of 260 Indigenous women who are weavers and embroiderers, organized into 13 groups from 5 municipalities in the Chiapas highlands. **They are a group of expert artisans who create high-quality garments and textiles, using backstrap looms, treadle looms, and hand-embroidery.**

A group of determined women artisans founded the cooperative in 1997 to change the exploitative and discriminatory conditions under which they sold their products.

Before they formed their cooperative, the women delivered their textiles to the National Indigenous Institute (INI), which marketed the products. **INI often delayed payment and gave it to the artisans' husbands, who rarely gave any money to the women.** The justification was that the women did not know how to read or write.

The women had the talent, the abilities, and the experience as weavers and embroiderers, but **they could not market their products to receive fair payment.** By working together in a cooperative, they were trained in women’s rights, organization, dressmaking, costs and production, administration, quality control, basic accounting, and health.

Little by little, **they developed the abilities needed to convert their art and talent into the primary economic activity** for them and for future generations in their families.



# Thanks to your support:

*“The support of One Equal Heart allows us to recover weavings that are ancient, complex and perfect. Perhaps this will be the only opportunity for our generation to leave this legacy to future generations. We have the big job of finding the meanings”.*

*Juana Pérez, from Chichelalho*

In 2022, we got to know the Jolom Mayetik representatives, the work of their members, and the impact they have had over these years on their personal lives and those of their families.

We also heard about the current challenges the cooperative faces, such as **the risk of losing ancient designs and the need to identify the meaning of those designs.**

In July 2022, we started to collaborate together. Following a process over nine months, One Equal Heart and the women of the cooperative birthed a project which they named Xkuxesel jluchetik, **“Making our Designs Come to Life”**.



Samples of ancient designs that will be revived

**Thanks to you,** the women began implementing this project in April of 2023, holding their first workshop in which they identified **133 ancient designs they are going to recover.**

This is the first time since they began their cooperative that the women created and presented a project. It is also **the first time that One Equal Heart is financing a project directly with beneficiaries** without working through a nonprofit partner.

*Magdalena Lopez, one of the founders of Jolom Mayaetik cooperative, and the group of weavers in her community, copy ancient designs as part of the project supported by One Equal Heart. donors.*



# Clean Water Means BIG Change in Rural Schools



Schoolgirls enjoy the running water in their new bathroom!



Students at La Floresta School, like most students in rural Chiapas, **lack access to safe drinking water, running water in bathrooms, sewer sanitation systems, and even handwashing facilities**—all essential for basic hygiene. These terrible conditions mean students have to leave school to go to the bathroom or relieve themselves outdoors. They get sick more often and cannot do their best at school.

## Your support makes a difference!

Principals, teachers, and 111 students from La Floresta High School worked hard to install a **91-foot long rainwater catchment system with a 1,320-gallon water tank**.

They connected the **bathrooms to water** to make them fully functional, including **handwashing stations and sewer systems**.



*After a year of work, our school has greatly changed! The children have replaced carbonated beverages with clean water, the bathrooms are working, and you don't see garbage littering the school."*

*Vicente Lopez,  
School teacher*

# You made this possible:

*“My dream was to go to Floresta High School because I live in a distant community in the municipality of Comitán, where there is no high school.*

*When classes started, however, I realized that there was no water at the school—the bathrooms were very dirty, and there wasn’t even any water to drink. **Every day I was worried about whether I would need to use the bathroom, and if I felt thirsty, whether I could bear it until school was over.***

*With the Safe Water Project, students, teachers and parents worked together to do a deep cleaning of the school. Then, **we built a water and sanitation system** to catch rainwater, disinfect it and distribute it in water dispensers in all classrooms.*

*We are finally able to drink clean water at school, use the bathrooms, and wash our hands as often as we need!*

*Participating in this project motivated me a lot to give my very best because I want my school to be a place where not only **I feel comfortable, but also new students who arrive do not have to suffer for lack of water like I had to.***

Irene López,  
4th-year student



Irene teaching her classmates correct hand washing



Another way your support makes sustainable change possible is by seeing that systems that are installed at schools work in the long term.

**Thanks to you,** Cántaro Azul is monitoring the infrastructure and water and sanitation services operations in 24 rural schools where water and sanitation systems were installed during the last 7 years.

**This means 4,800 children and adolescents** will continue to access clean water and sanitation services in their schools.

# Women Build and Grow Their Economic Autonomy



Women meet for bookkeeping

In the second year of the 3-year project “Women Making Decisions for Equity and Family Wellbeing”, **80 women of the 150 are participating in 7 savings and loan cooperatives** (2 more cooperatives than last year), with a total of \$2,560 in savings and \$1,355 available to make micro-loans.

The money they save and earn **is a big change in their lives** because they can meet urgent family needs for expenses such as medicines, food, and clothing.

Indigenous women throughout Chiapas face considerable challenges in accessing money, and most don't even have opportunities to earn money.

**Thanks to you**, 132 Tselal women from 15 communities (that's 44 more women than last year) have established and **learned to manage community vegetable gardens** that produce more than enough food to not only improve the diet of their families, but also to sell at local markets.

This year there was a drought that affected all the crops, but in spite of this, **vegetable production was quite good, and women strategically planted new crops** that have high market demand, such as peas, potatoes and green beans.

127 Tselal women are selling their vegetables in their villages and at community markets. For 37 women, this is **their first year and first time** they have money of their own!

4,134 chayotes

2,985 bunches of radishes

1,911 bunches of cilantro

2,384 bunches of chives

1,516 lb of green beans

2,731 lb of mushrooms

180 lb of peas



*“I am part of the Chabec’ Lumil group of women and we have organized together to produce vegetables, mushrooms and bread. I am working to earn income for my family to make progress. I am a single mother and life is very hard. By participating in this project, I have lost my fear and now I feel like a prepared, empowered woman with the ability to organize other women and be an example to my family.”*

Delicia López Aguilar



Women in their community vegetable garden

Project implemented by Centro de Formación Integral para Promotores Indígenas (CEFIPI)

<http://www.mb.org.mx/>

# Indigenous Women Advance Their Rights

*“Since I was a child they told me that only men could go to meetings or to work in the city. I had no relationships with other women; all I did was take care of my family’s animals.*

*Now, I am very happy to participate in this project, **learn about self-esteem, how to conquer fear, and about the rights we have as women**, including the right to socialize with other women. I have grown as a person!*

*The group has appointed me secretary and I am in charge of re-creating the workshops for women in other communities. Thanks to this opportunity, I am practicing writing, speaking in public, and encouraging women to become organized and work together.”*

Antonia Jimenez from Cololte’el



Indigenous women in Chiapas live under the compounded triple oppressions of extreme poverty, gender inequality, and racial discrimination. Therefore, **transforming livelihoods should go hand in hand with social transformation**, and in Indigenous communities this begins when women recognize and exercise their rights.

**Thanks to your support**, our partner organizations are developing capacities to build gender equity and women’s rights in the communities where they work.

**50 Tsoltzil women took a great leap forward** in learning about their rights of equity, equality, and participation and how to exercise them in their daily lives to help them reduce violence. They took the initiative of setting up a community space for their trainings on gender topics, and now they are getting ready to create a park with trees and flowers for themselves and the children. **As they learned about their rights, these women became agents of change!**



**150 Tzeltal women** who work in their productive initiatives have been participating regularly for the last 2 years in workshops on gender equity and women’s rights. During this time, **a group of 10 women trained as gender equity facilitators** and now they are the ones who work with the project’s technical team, carrying out the trainings and guiding the women to break down the barriers of exclusion.



Women prepare signs for the women's day march

# Families Graduated from the Sustainable Livelihoods Program



Bachen and Suytic are Tsotsil communities in the mountains of the Chiapas highlands, where the poorest of Mexico's poor live. Families have to devote 3-4 hours a day in search of water that is not even safe to drink. **Life is especially hard on women and children** because the men of the family leave for approximately 8 months every year to work in the northern states of Mexico. The men leave a little bit of money with their families that only lasts 2 or 3 months. This means that women and children spend most of the year doing anything they can just to eat and survive.

**Thanks to you, over the past 3 years with our partner CISERP, 90 families worked to create the basic conditions for a respectable, healthy, and cooperative life:**



30 rainwater 4,800-gallon catchment systems were installed close to their homes, so **now families have 7 gallons of water a day**, in comparison to 1.5 gallons in the past.



90% of the families know how to prepare more nutritious food and **practice healthy habits** of personal hygiene for themselves and their children.



29 families installed 1,000-square-foot-gardens and learned to manage them, **producing at least 900 pounds** of 6 types of vegetables per year.



28 families built 1,000-square-foot chicken coops with at least 20 birds, half of which are producing an average of **8 eggs per day**.



All of the families increased the meals they eat **from 2 to 3 per day** and have decreased their consumption of carbonated beverages from once a day to twice a week.



At the beginning of the project, there was a high level of mistrust among families. But as they worked on the project, they learned to **communicate, cooperate, and make joint decisions**.

*"Before, I was living with my in-laws and we couldn't move to our plot of land and have our own house because there was no water. We have built the tank and now have water. Now I can wash my clothes and cook meals. I am so happy! I'm also planting vegetables and serving better food to my child. I want to keep working and continue learning."*

Edilia Méndez, from Suytic





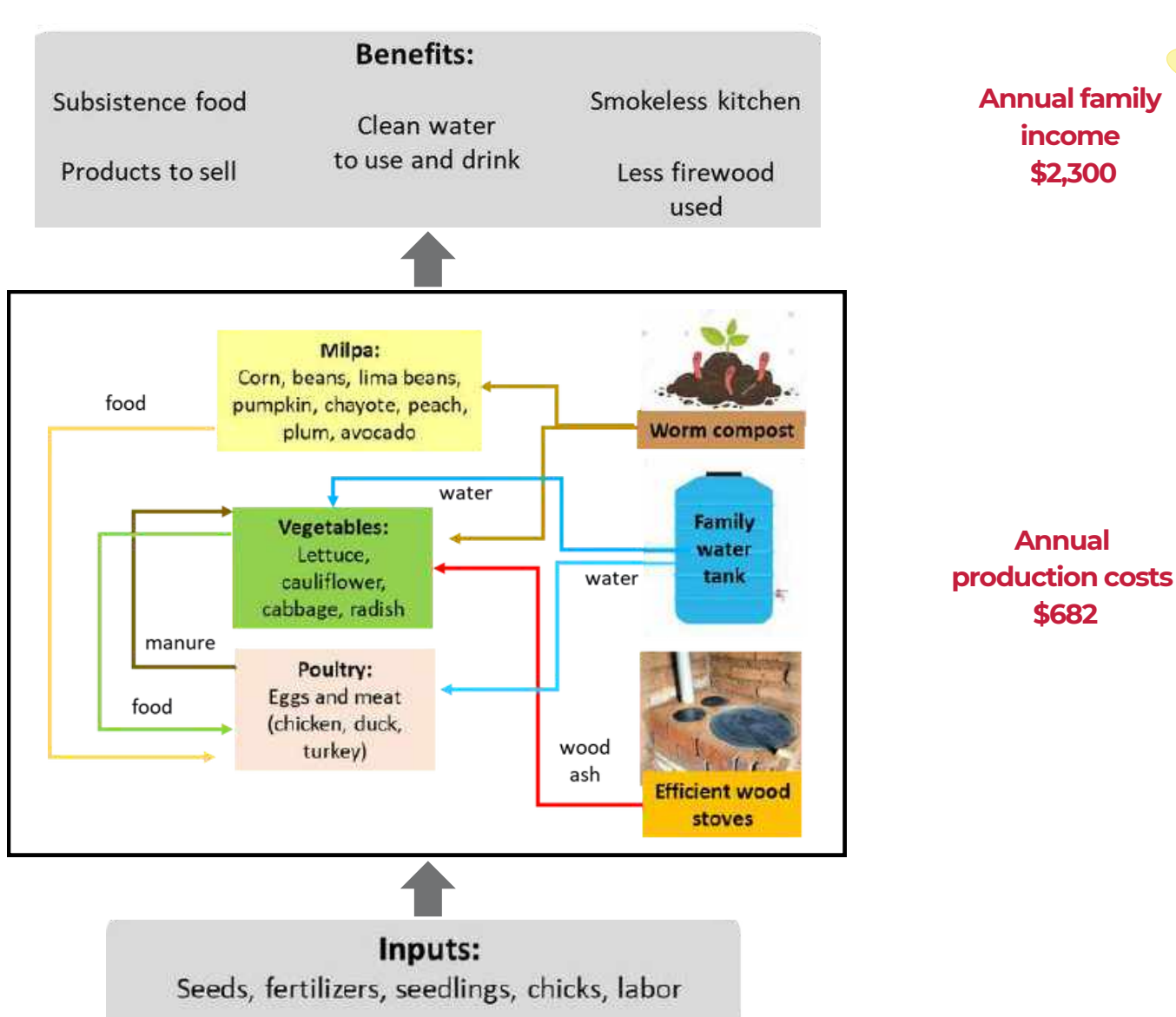
# You made this possible:

For 3 years, our partner **CISERP** has used an **integrated family production model** that links what is grown in a traditional “milpa” or family cornfield (corn, beans and squash), backyard vegetable gardens, and raising chickens, with accessible techniques such as making compost from worm castings, using efficient wood stoves with chimneys, and operating family water tanks.

**To implement this system costs approximately \$682 per family**, but this investment generates for each family about **\$2,300 in income, doubling the money they had before the project!** Families also have additional benefits, such as nutritious food, clean water to use and drink, and a smoke-free kitchen.

Thanks to the successful implementation of this model, **in 3 years, 90 Bachen and Suytic families have successfully improved their standard of living and graduated from the program as families with sustainable livelihoods.**

## Integrated family production model



# Tselal Radio Grows a Stronger Communication Platform



Amalia Hernandez,  
Radio Director on the air

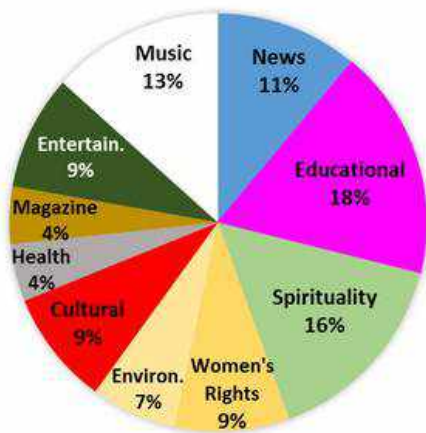
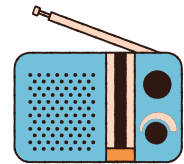


**Tselal Radio Ach' Lequic'op** continues to provide accurate, relevant information to educate, connect, and inform local people in their own native language in hundreds of Indigenous communities in the region.

The 2 news programs created a year ago have been consolidated as **the region's primary news source for Tselal families**. In one year, the radio team and volunteer reporters have produced 198 news bulletins, broadcasting 621 local and 366 state news reports!

Tselal communities in Chiapas are spread out and geographically isolated. People have difficulty getting news and information and their access to media is very limited.

**The station broadcasts 24/7, with a 52-program** schedule distributed over 10 subject areas.



Radio programming by topic



Tending his fields and listening the Tselal Radio

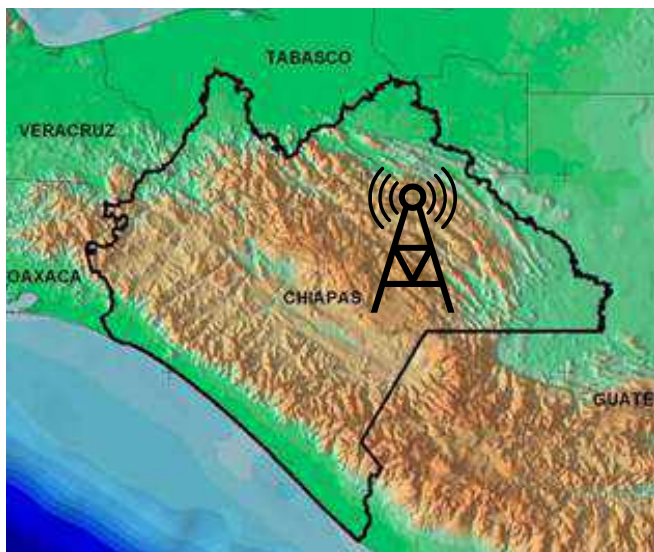
# Thanks to your support:

The women broadcasters, who run 2 special weekly programs for women, **continue to advance in development of their technical capabilities**, which includes creating programs, operating radio formats, speaking fluently into the microphone, recording as reporters, and handling emotions within the recording booth.



A group of the women broadcasters

Broadcast perimeter is now 44 sq mi.



**Thanks to you**, maintenance on the radio antenna was completed, and the transmitter was changed so the **broadcast range perimeter has grown from 25 to 44 sq mi.**

This means **the radio audience is broader, reaching not only Tseltal, but also Ch'ol and Tsotsil communities.** The radio team now has a new challenge in terms of creating intercultural programs in different languages.

*"In the 4 years I have been in radio, I have learned a lot of things and now I'm an experienced radio broadcaster.*

*As women, we are afraid to express ourselves because males have always dominated and controlled us.*

*Through our work with the radio we have opened our eyes, we are losing our fear, and we are becoming women who are sure of ourselves.*

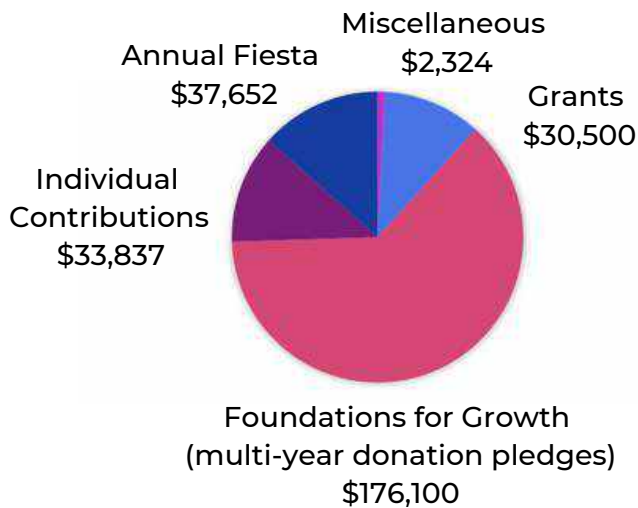
*Learning to manage teams, create content, edit audio files, and direct my program demonstrates that I am capable and gives me self-assurance."*

*Manuela Espinoza, from Icbatil*



# 2022 Financial Results

**Annual Income: \$280,413**



**Annual Expenses: \$276,315**



**Deepen Your Impact, Save the Date!**

## *Annual Fiesta 2023*

**In person!**

**Saturday, October 21st - 5:30 to 7:00 pm**





**Where:** D' la Santa  
Traditional Mexican Cuisine!  
2359 10th Ave E, Capitol Hill, Seattle

**With:** Yolanda Castro  
Keynote speaker from Chiapas

**Tickets sale starts:** Sept 18, 2023 at  
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