



MAIA
her infinite impact

MAIA's Response to COVID 19 Impact Report 2021

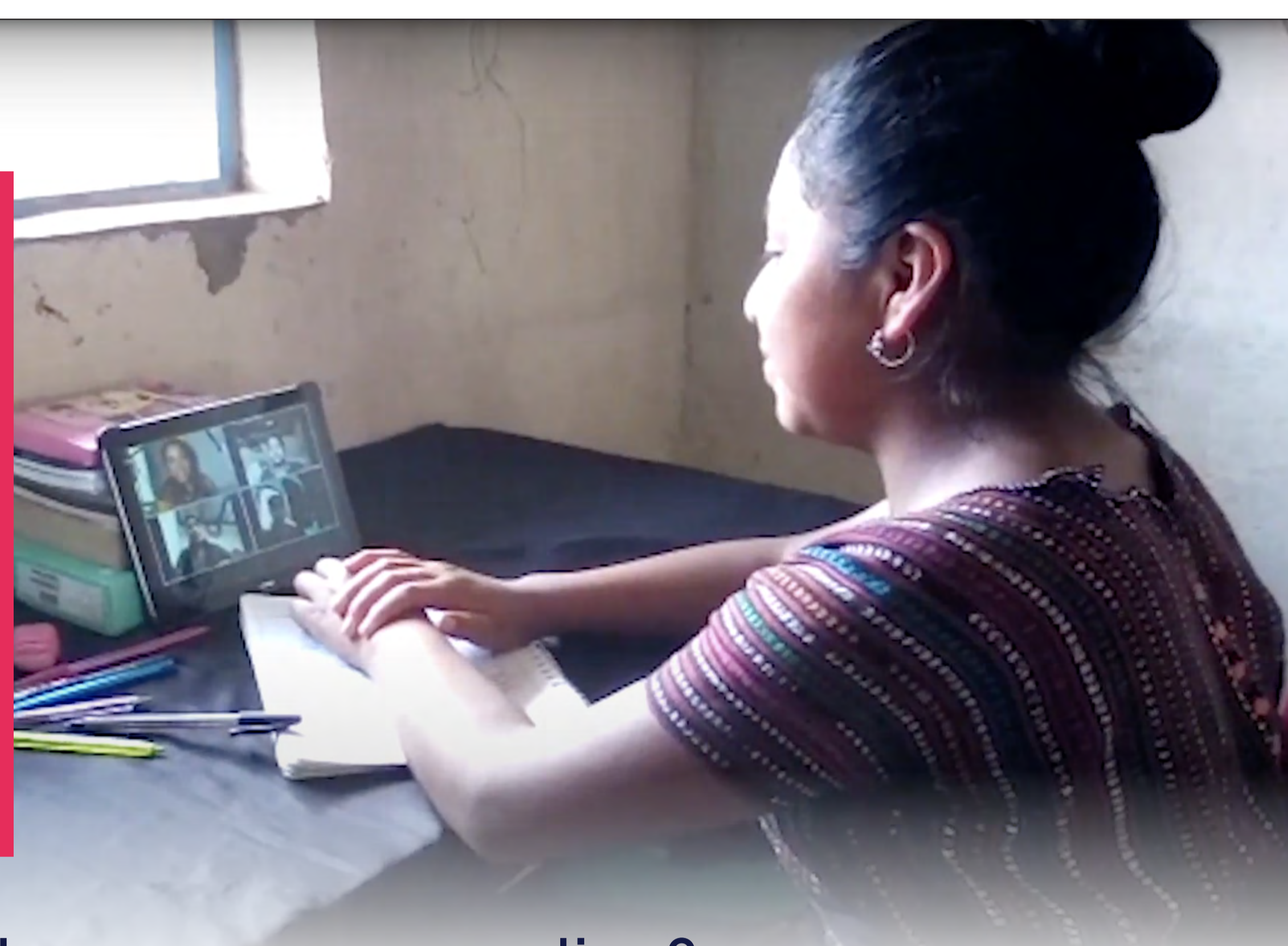


This pandemic often makes us feel like we are playing a really difficult strategy game where the rules change from week to week and we must design yet another quick response. After 20 months of school closures, social distancing, and constantly changing regulations, we must face the fact that the **pandemic isn't going anywhere anytime soon, especially in rural Guatemala.**

We have celebrated a lot of achievements during this time, but we would be remiss if we didn't also take some time to share the challenges we have been facing.

CHALLENGE 1

How do we operate a school amid a dysfunctional pandemic response, especially when the government of Guatemala is among the few countries in the world that has not allowed a return to in-person schooling since March 2020?



What does this mean for MAIA?

- Prior to the pandemic, learning among Girl Pioneers was on pace to meet MAIA's ambitious objectives. Amid all the disruption, we are not on pace anymore. Just over 25 percent have fallen behind. MAIA educators and mentors are working closely with students and their families to improve their standing. However, we are also preparing for the largest withdrawal rate we will hopefully ever experience.
- Even though we have provided tablets and data-loaded SIM cards to all 238 Girl Pioneers, over 20 percent of students live in areas where there is limited or no cellphone data and have difficulty connecting to their virtual classes.

How are we responding?

- Trying to find more instruction time with students pushes families and staff in ways that can be counterproductive. We are exploring less reactive solutions to be more proactive and thoughtful in the way we address the challenges above.
- We are getting creative with scheduling, small groups, and unconventional learning opportunities to maximize safe, in-person engagement. Students who are behind will have the option to participate in summer school to improve their grades.



CHALLENGE 2

COVID-19 is running the clock on progress backwards in countries like Guatemala. Education, economic progress, gender equality, and access to transformational opportunities have been drastically reduced. Some reports state that progress in Latin America has been set back 20+ years.

What does this mean for MAIA?

- 40 percent of families in MAIA are living in extreme poverty due to the impacts of the pandemic and stay-at-home orders. In 2020, 40 percent of MAIA parents lost their jobs and another 43 percent had their hours cut back.
- Without school, adolescent girls confront higher degrees of danger. During the pandemic, two MAIA Girl Pioneers became pregnant, our highest number ever.

How are we responding?

- We are doubling down on mentorship. In-person home visits resumed in early 2021 and are critical for keeping families focused on longer-term goals in spite of immediate challenges.
- Girl Pioneers in high school will participate in a weeklong workshop focused on leadership and sexual and reproductive health to ensure they are able to make informed decisions about their bodies.

CHALLENGE 3

The pandemic's indefinite endpoint has taken a toll on our team's wellness. Staff retention remains very high, but resiliency levels are low.



What does this mean for MAIA?

- After 20+ months of running a school amid daily uncertainty and several of MAIA's team members, Girl Pioneers, and families contracting COVID-19 this year, the team's stress levels are at an all-time high.
- Rural Maya Guatemala has a difficult history and understandable mistrust of government interventions (like vaccines), resulting in low vaccination rates in communities in which MAIA works.

How are we responding?

- We are creating safer environments in which 100 percent of MAIA staff members are vaccinated. Moving forward, MAIA will pilot new, creative, and comprehensive ways to sustain staff.
- MAIA is leveraging its relationships with families and local communities to increase vaccination rates among parents and eligible students. As of the end of October, 167 parents and 42 Girl Pioneers have been vaccinated.

We are profoundly grateful for our team and a global network of support that has enabled us to maintain our focus on the health, education, and well-being of the Girl Pioneers and their families this whole time. We appreciate your trust and encouragement as we continue to navigate these challenging times while supporting Girl Pioneers to achieve their infinite impact.