

Organizational Summary for Institutional Partners



MAIA



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About us

→ Who we are

We are MAIA, an organization led by Indigenous women for Indigenous girls in Guatemala.

We are maximizing and amplifying the transformative power of women to create a society of equity and opportunity. Led by Indigenous women, we are built around the question: How far can she go? By providing access to quality education, health and nutrition services, leadership training, and post-secondary skills and support, we equip girls and their families with the knowledge and support they need to reach their full potential. Learn more about where we are going in our [2025-2029 Strategic Plan](#).

→ When we were founded

We were registered in the US as a 501c3 in 2007 (EIN: 68-0652444) and in Guatemala as an Asociación in 2010 (NIT: 6896913-9).

→ Why we were founded

We were founded to support young Indigenous women in reaching their full potential through access to quality education and opportunities.

→ What are our goals

Four long-term goals drive our programs, and each is measured to ensure every young woman in our program is on a path to reaching her full potential:

- **Lifelong Learning** – Our graduates complete an average of 15 years of education.
- **Economic Autonomy** – Our graduates secure formal jobs with stability and independence, earning salaries above the national average.
- **A Family on Her Own Terms** – Our graduates delay marriage and motherhood until after the age of 25, choosing to achieve a stable situation to support their families.
- **Empowered to Empower** – MAIA graduates are leaders and reach their full potential.



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Program

→ Who are our beneficiaries

We call our program participants **Girl Pioneers** because they are forging a new path. They are often the first women in their families to continue their education beyond primary school. Girl Pioneers and their families are Indigenous Maya Kaqchikel, Maya K'iche', and Maya Tz'utujil, and come from over 47 rural highland villages in the department of Sololá. The majority of Girl Pioneer families live at or below the poverty level. Their parents have an average of 3 years of formal education and work predominantly in agriculture and the informal economy.

→ Why do we serve Indigenous girls and women

In Guatemala, young Indigenous women confront highly challenging social and structural obstacles. Statistics show that 57% of Indigenous girls become mothers before they are 20 years of age. Three out of 10 are forced into early marriage, and only 2 out of 10 graduate from high school, fewer than 3% enter university, and fewer than 11% are formally employed. As a result, over 70% live in poverty, despite their potential. Conventional thinking in rural Guatemala is often ruled by machismo and the notion that girls should remain at home.

At MAIA, we seek to expand educational opportunities for Indigenous girls, who historically have had less access to education and personal and professional development in Guatemala. Therefore, as an organization, we give priority to women, which is in line with our mission to reduce inequality gaps.

→ How many participants do we serve

We serve approximately 450 young women each year, and their families, representing nearly 2,800 individuals.

→ How do we select the participants

To select Girl Pioneers, we consider economic need, academic achievement, motivation, family engagement, and proximity to the MAIA Impact School. This one-year selection process includes community mapping and engagement, socioeconomic studies, and interviews with girls, their families, and school leaders.

We begin the selection process when girls are in primary school (5th grade). They are often the first in their families to continue their education beyond primary school.



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→ **What are our programs**

- **Impulso Program** — Girls receive the academic and socioemotional support they need to successfully transition from primary to secondary school, addressing the learning gaps caused by an underfunded and inequitable education system in Guatemala. Each year, approximately 60–75 girls participate in the Impulso Program before transitioning into the MAIA Impact School. They attend public primary school in the morning (6th grade) and attend the MAIA Impact School in the afternoon for academic and socioemotional reinforcement. The program also provides a daily nutritious meal, home visits from mentors, and access to on-site health services to ensure strong support during this critical stage.
- **The MAIA Impact School** — Girls who complete the Impulso Program, MAIA's 6th-grade preparatory program, continue their education at the Impact School, the only secondary school of its scale in Central America designed to connect young women with the opportunities of the 21st century. The academic model combines Maya culture with a well-rounded curriculum that prepares students for higher education and formal employment. The full-day program includes STEAM learning, digital literacy, and practical skills training. Each year, approximately 250 students attend our school, where they receive two nutritious meals a day, school supplies, access to on-site health services, and socioemotional education that helps build their confidence and resilience.
- **Post-Secondary Success Program** — MAIA graduates are supported as they take their next steps into higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, or other leadership opportunities. Graduates receive one-on-one coaching in career planning, workplace skills, and financial literacy. They also gain real-world experience through internships and mentorship, which helps them succeed in university and beyond. The program features a peer-to-peer alumni network and a university support fund that offers financial and professional opportunities to young women who are often the first in their families to reach this milestone.

- **The Socioemotional Mentorship and Family Engagement Program** — We work with our students and their families in the Impulso Program and Impact School to strengthen their social and emotional well-being, leadership skills, reproductive health knowledge, and vocal empowerment, enabling them to lead choice-filled lives. An on-site nurse and nutrition team provide preventative health services, nutrition guidance, hygiene kits, and referrals to medical providers as needed. A dedicated team of program mentors—Indigenous women from the same communities—lead weekly sessions with the girls to build soft skills and provide personalized support. They also make monthly home visits to involve the whole family and ensure that each girl's education is a shared commitment.
- **Local Leadership Development Program** — At MAIA, we are committed to transforming education in rural Guatemala by enhancing both the quality of teaching and the capabilities of educators, mentors, and local leaders. Through a combination of internal and external skills training, we empower those who guide the next generation of Girl Pioneers. Within our organization, we provide ongoing professional development and capacity building for all staff, forming a new generation of local empowered leaders. Our professional development for MAIA educators and mentors integrates innovative, girl-centred, and culturally relevant practices. Beyond MAIA, we extend our impact by sharing effective approaches with public school teachers, community leaders, and partner organizations through collaborative training and advocacy initiatives. As co-founders of networks such as Eduk'at, Ellas al Frente, and VOCES, we are scaling evidence-based approaches that generate a ripple effect—expanding opportunities for Indigenous girls and strengthening Guatemala's education system as a whole.



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Impact

Since our founding, we have supported over 850 girls and young women across more than 47 villages.

88%

of Girl Pioneers scored proficiency in national math and reading exams.

vs fewer than **13%** in math and **35%** in reading nationally.

57%

of MAIA graduates are formally employed.

vs fewer than **11%** nationally.

59%

of MAIA graduates are attending university.

vs fewer than **3%** nationally.

→ How do we measure impact

We are a data-driven model that highlights the talent of Indigenous girls and women while adapting to local needs. We strongly emphasize monitoring and evaluation systems and data-informed decision-making, centered on the girls and their families, so that our programming remains responsive to their evolving needs and enables continual adjustments and innovations. Our Monitoring and Evaluation team tracks impact against our four long-term goals while assessing academic and socioemotional growth using quantitative and qualitative indicators and analyses gathered through surveys, formative tools, and focus groups with Girl Pioneers and their parents.



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→ **Where does our impact reach**

We have been recognized internationally for our innovative, locally led approach to advancing girls' education and leadership. We were named one of the top innovations in Latin America by **HundrED** and selected as a featured partner of the Obama Foundation's Girls Opportunity Alliance for our work increasing girls' participation in education and society. We were also recognized by T4 Education as one of the world's top 10 schools in overcoming adversity and received the Collective Actions Award from Vital Voices for empowering young women.

Girl Pioneer voices are also being elevated locally and globally. In Guatemala, national media have highlighted Girl Pioneers for their success in national science Olympiads. Internationally, their stories and leadership have been featured by outlets such as the BBC, German media, and academic podcasts, including Georgetown University.

Financial

→ **What is our combined US + Guatemala budget for 2026**

\$2,783,750

→ **Who are some of our top major donors**

Obama Foundation, Luis Von Ahn Foundation, The Ward Foundation, Terre des Hommes, C.G. Charitable Foundation, For a Better World Foundation, Harvey Family Foundation.

→ **What is our level of organizational reserves**

In accordance with regulations set by our Board of Directors, we maintain at least 6 months of reserves.

→ **Important financial resources**

- IRS 990 (FY2025)
- US Financial Audit (FY2025) / Guatemala Financial Audit (FY2024)
--> pending completion of FY2025 Guatemala audit



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Human resources

→ Why do we focus on local leadership

Local leadership is at the heart of our model. Guided by the belief “if she can see it, she can be it,” MAIA is designed and led by individuals from the same communities we serve, ensuring decisions are rooted in lived experience and local context.

→ How many staff do we have, and what does the staff body look like

Throughout the year, we maintain a team of approximately 92 staff members. Over 95% are from the communities we serve, and nearly 30% are graduates of our program.

→ How do we develop our staff

Staff receive weekly coaching with content coaches who support curriculum development, innovative classroom instruction, and individualized growth. They also receive monthly group professional development focused on pedagogy, socioemotional facilitation, leadership development, and reflective practice.

Board of directors & Governance

→ How are we governed

MAIA is governed by a single Board of Directors that oversees and represents two legal entities: MAIA USA, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and Asociación MAIA, registered in Guatemala. The U.S. Board holds renewable three-year terms, while the Guatemala Board holds renewable two-year terms.

Directors are selected based on alignment with MAIA’s mission and ability to contribute to strategic goals. All members serve on at least one committee: Executive, Finance, Fundraising, or Local (Guatemala) Support. The two legal entities are guided by a formal Memorandum of Understanding outlining roles, responsibilities, and collaborative decision-making.



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→ Who is on the board

The Board comprises 75% women, and more than 50% of members are from Guatemala, reflecting MAIA's commitment to proximate and diverse leadership. Two MAIA graduates also serve as Board members, further demonstrating this commitment.

Partnering for impact

We operate with an abundance mindset, serving as a hub for innovation and collaboration with organizations and networks to advance equity and improve the quality of education in Guatemala. We are founding members and partners of several national and international networks, some of which include:

- **Ellas al Frente:** In partnership with GirlRising, Ellas al Frente equips grassroots women-led organizations with girl-centered design skills to improve outcomes for girls in Central America.
- **VOCES for Education:** Working alongside community-led organizations and Guatemala's Ministry of Education to train educators and shape policies that improve academic outcomes for all.
- **Guatemala HUB:** As a founding member, we strengthen community cohesion by defending rights and advancing collective action.

Donor engagement

→ What a partnership looks like to us

We partner with a generous and dynamic group of stakeholders who provide the essential resources that make our work possible. Inspired by the courage of Girl Pioneers and their families, who are using their voices to enter previously inaccessible spaces, we strive to mirror this bravery.



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We are inspired by Trust-based Philanthropy and Community-Centric Fundraising frameworks, which emphasize collaboration and address power dynamics that can hinder impact, ensuring Girl Pioneers and families remain at the center of our work. We aim to strengthen partnerships by fostering transparency and shared ownership of goals. We entrust program design and leadership to a powerful, locally-led team—women from the same communities we serve—ensuring our organizational structure reflects the strength and vision of those driving change and that decision-making power lies with those with direct lived experience of the local context.

→ **What to keep in mind**

Breaking through generations of generational is not always linear, and we take steps forward while learning from the steps we take backward. We embrace a quality-over-quantity mindset. While our number of direct beneficiaries is not large, our graduates are already demonstrating their impact within their families and communities and are initiating discussions on how to build a more equitable society in Guatemala.

→ **What are some challenges that affect an impactful partnership**

As an organization led by Indigenous Maya women, we often navigate partnerships with institutions whose practices and policies are rigidly rooted in Global North cultural norms. As a rights-based organization, we center Girl Pioneers and their families. While donors are essential to our work, we intentionally avoid funding relationships that prioritize donor experience or recognition over community needs.

Finally, we find it challenging to engage in partnerships that overemphasize non-local expertise. While external experts can play a valuable role, we believe lasting impact is driven by local talent, who bring deep contextual knowledge, lived experience, and cultural understanding.



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Additional information

→ Here's where you can learn more about our actions and impact

- [Annual Report \(2025\)](#)
- [Strategic Plan \(2025-2029\)](#)

→ Here's who you can contact

- Andrea Coché Mendoza, **Chief Executive Officer**, andrea@maiaagt.org
- Jenny Dale, **US Executive Country Director**, jenny@maiaimpact.org
- Maritza Ortiz, **Director of Development**, maritza@maiaimpact.org
- Guadalupe Natareno, **Communications & Fundraising Manager**, guadalupe@maiaimpact.org

→ Here's where you can see examples of our multimedia content

- [We are MAIA](#) (institutional video)
- [When we empower women, we become stronger](#) (video)
- [The Girl Effect](#) (video)
- [Her future starts today!](#) (video)
- [Force for change](#) (video)

→ Our website and social media

Facebook

Spanish:

[MAIA impacto infinito](#)

English:

[MAIA impact](#)

Instagram

Spanish:

[MAIA - Impacto infinito](#)

English:

[MAIA Impact](#)

LinkedIn

[MAIA Impact](#)

Website

www.maiaimpact.org