



2018
Annual Report



LIMITLESS

H O R I Z O N S I X I L

Transforming a community through education



Dear friends and supporters,

One of the first words that comes to mind when I think of our work in Chajul is “community.” This is not only a strong value in the local culture, but has also been central to the history of Limitless Horizons Ixil as a grassroots organization. When Pedro and I first founded Limitless Horizons Ixil 14 years ago, **it never would have been possible without our strong community of support, both in Chajul and back home.** Since then, **our local capacity and international community have both grown exponentially and our impact in Chajul has grown alongside it!**

I’m proud to share this annual report with you, which highlights the ways in which **your contributions have increased access to education and opportunities in Chajul.** Together, our combined resources and knowledge, and most importantly **our shared sense of dedication to the indigenous people of Chajul,** are helping aid the community while it continues to recover from the devastating 36-year civil war.

I’ve lost count of how many times families and youth have shared with me **how touched they are that that caring individuals, often who live so far away and may have never met them or seen Chajul, can be so incredibly generous.** I couldn’t agree more, and I am so grateful that you have chosen to be a part of our inner circle of support. It is thanks to your time, generosity, and advocacy that we are able to achieve our mission and bring life-changing opportunities to the community of Chajul!

Yours in the mission,

Katie Morrow

Katie Morrow
Founder and Executive Director
Limitless Horizons Ixil

Youth Development Program

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72 Scholars
in Middle &
High School

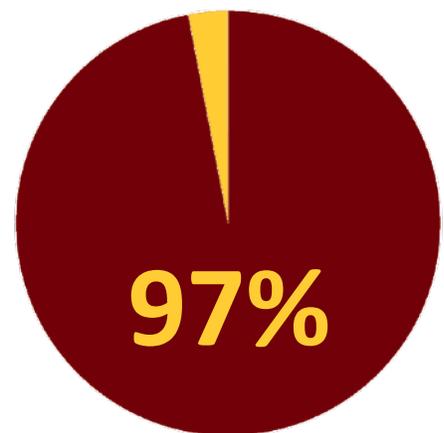
345 Hours
of Academic
Enrichment
Classes

96 Hours
of Computer
Classes

In a community where just 16% of youth graduate middle school and 5% complete high school, we are proud to share that in 2018,

100%

of our 14 middle schoolers and 7 high schoolers in their final year graduated!



For the second year in a row, **97% of our 72 scholars** successfully completed the school year.

Academic Enrichment Classes

Limitless Horizons Ixil provides weekly academic enrichment classes in the subjects our scholars find most challenging. Each scholar participated in a total of **345 hours of English, math, Spanish, accounting, and physics** classes in 2018 beyond regular school hours, which are only 4 hours per day.

Intensive Spanish Classes

In November, our 7th and 8th graders participated in **140 hours of intensive Spanish language classes**. Spanish is the language of school instruction in Guatemala, while our scholars often only speak Ixil at home, so these classes prepare them for success by enabling them to understand class content.

Mentorship & Guidance

Throughout the year, **scholars received support in selecting courses, searching and applying for scholarships, and defining and achieving their academic goals**. Our local Guatemalan staff made **43 home visits** and met privately with scholars' parents to discuss their child's course of study, **making sure they had the tools they needed to support their child's progress**. Graduating scholars also received **trainings on applying for jobs and scholarships, and developing interview and CV writing skills**.

Psychological Support

Scholars and their family members participated in **68 individual therapy sessions with our new staff psychologist**, who supported them through difficult family and personal situations.

Collaboration with Local Middle School

To increase the quality of instruction at partner school San Gaspar Middle School, we **supplied their teachers with library cards, teacher trainings, and materials**. We also paid salaries for qualified teachers to lead English, math, and computer classes.

Graduation Ceremony

In November, we held a special graduation ceremony for our **14 graduating middle schoolers and 7 graduating high schoolers**. There were speeches, games, music, choreographed dances, and a meal to commemorate the day.

Other Celebrations

At the conclusion of the first and second semesters, staff took scholars on **field trips to outdoor recreation parks** for swimming, games, and bonding activities. Throughout the year there were **3 good grades celebrations** to reward scholars with high marks, encouraging them to keep up the good work. Scholars heard motivational speeches and shared a special lunch together. In May, there was a **Mother's Day celebration** to honor our scholars' mothers for all their hard work and dedication.





Throughout the year, **scholars participated in 25 workshops on key social and professional development topics.** Recognizing the importance of family support to our scholars' success, Limitless Horizons Ixil also offered **7 workshops for their parents** on important topics such as "Communicating with your Adolescent," "Parenting with Love," and domestic violence.

Scholar Spotlight: Angélica



When Angélica was a child, she had two dreams: to get an education and to make a difference in the world. As one of eight children in a family of extremely limited financial means, she knew from an early age that it wouldn't be easy to achieve her dreams. During elementary school, Angélica endured ridicule from her peers for a hand injury, and discouragement from her family who told her she shouldn't study because she was a girl. **Despite these significant obstacles, Angélica was determined to succeed.**

When she was accepted into to Limitless Horizons Ixil's Youth Development Program and provided a scholarship and support to continue her education, Angélica felt she was being given a ticket to her dreams. She brought incredible passion and a steadfast dedication to her goals, and Limitless Horizons Ixil provided the tools to help her achieve them. This past November, Angélica graduated from high school with honors and is now researching university programs and scholarship opportunities!

Through workshops and mentoring, Angélica developed a clearer vision for how to apply her skills and passions. Her dream of making a difference in the world is now focused on building a brighter future for her own community. Angélica envisions herself as an agent of change and has her sights set on being a leader in Chajul. She told us:

***“I want to be the difference in Chajul.
I want to broaden my mind and create new
opportunities for myself and my community.”***

Katie Morrow
Directora Ejecutiva

Isabel Vocónica Yat Tiu
Directora General



Our new Emerging Leaders Program offers expanded workforce development services to over 200 scholars and graduates in their post-secondary school transitions. All alumni benefit from extensive career counseling, university application support, professional and job seeking skills development, vocational trainings, entrepreneurship support, and the opportunity to be part of our growing peer-to-peer alumni network of support.

5 alumnae in our fellowship program also gained 1,200 hours of paid work experience and received mentoring and support, field trips, and 80 hours of educational activities and professional development workshops on topics such as public speaking, budgeting, team collaboration, and more.

Our Work to (L)earn initiative gives alumni and older scholars an opportunity to gain part-time work experience and earn some income. Altogether our scholars and alumni contributed **925 hours of support** to our programs by assisting with and learning from tasks in our community center, library, and artisan programs.

Staff also began efforts to more closely monitor indicators of alumni success. The total number of **Limitless Horizons Ixil alumni to graduate from university is now 7, including 5 women!** Fewer than 1% of people in Chajul ever attain such a high degree of education.

**200 Scholars &
Alumni**

**5 Paid
Fellowships**

**12 University
Scholarships**



Early pregnancy and marriage can significantly limit a girl's potential opportunities. Girls who wait until they are done with school and are financially stable are also much more likely to finish their studies and make healthy choices for themselves and their families. **Our programs are designed to empower girls and women reach their goals,** and we encourage scholars to hold off on starting families until they are ready.

81% of our female graduates waited until they were 23 to have children, compared to only

16% of our scholars' mothers.



Our fellows attended a series of six workshops with the local organization *Defensoría de La Mujer* (Defense of Women) on human rights, with a focus on children's rights, gender and violence. Creating space for learning and open discussion about these topics is critical for our fellows as young women, members of the community of Chajul, and future professionals. They had the opportunity to **apply the knowledge they learned** from their trainings by helping to **plan and facilitate their own workshop for our scholars' families.**

Saber Sin Límites (Limitless Knowledge) Community Library

Our library is the first and only of its kind in Chajul, providing visitors a safe study environment, literacy programming, academic support, and access to nearly 9,000 books (4,438 original titles) and other resources. The library is open to the entire community, be they 5 year olds attending story hour or 18 year olds participating in our chapter book reading club. By nurturing childhood literacy, improving Spanish language skills, and creating a culture of literacy and learning, our library provides its members and their families with educational opportunities and the means to compete for employment, lift their families out of poverty, and advocate for their community's well-being.

177 New Members

50–60 Daily Visits

4,438 Original
Titles

158 Hours of
Adventures in
Math, Science, &
English

720 Hours of
Homework Help

70 Story Hours

62 Reading Club
Sessions

24 Cultural Hours

Artisan Program

This year, **28 new artisans** joined our artisan program, so that we now have a **total of 100 artisans**, primarily scholars' mothers as well as alumni and scholars seeking extra income opportunities. These talented artisans employ traditional back-strap weaving techniques to create beautiful hand-woven artisan products. Mothers work alongside staff to develop new designs, discuss fair wages, and create works of art. Limitless Horizons Ixil purchases all products from the artisans and sells them internationally to raise necessary funds for our programs.

Together with our artisans, we created **1,842 products, including the following new product designs** in 2018:

- **7 new bracelet designs**
- **10 new necklace designs**
- **5 new earring designs**
- **Ponchos and infinity scarves**

Community Engagement Trips

Limitless Horizons Ixil hosted **five community engagement trips** in 2018! Visitors learned about the culture and history of the Ixil region, cooked and shared meals with scholars' families, visited classes and the library, and spent lots of time with staff, scholars, and library members. Limitless Horizons Ixil alumni and families led and coordinated many of these activities, earning fair wages for their work. **A highlight for some visitors was the opportunity to meet in person the youth whose education they are sponsoring.** Their service and donations of technology, school supplies, books, blankets, solar lamps, and other items **made a lasting impact on the lives of our scholars and their families.**

We also hosted a volunteer professional photographer from Photographers Without Borders who captured Limitless Horizons Ixil staff, scholars, and alumni engaged in their work. Her beautiful photographs help us bring Chajul and our work to life for supporters unable to visit!



Staff Development

Investing in Our Staff & Their Leadership Capacity

Local Guatemalan staff attended a **series of trainings with partner organization Starfish Impact School focused on teaching reading skills**. Topics included how to design classroom spaces to support independent reading, and integrating reading skills into other subjects such as math and science.

We were fortunate to host an experienced bilingual teacher from the United States in Chajul. She provided a number of **trainings on critical thinking skills and the facilitation of group discussion** for our staff and fellows, as well as for teachers at partner school, San Gaspar Middle School.

Our Guatemalan staff members are breaking ground as some of the first people from Chajul to pursue a university education and work professional jobs. They serve as role models for our scholars and library users, and we are proud to be able to provide university scholarships to support their weekend studies.



Cecilia, Artisan Program & Technology Coordinator, is studying systems engineering. She is the first woman from Chajul ever to study computer science.

David, Head Librarian, is studying agronomy with the goal of finding new ways to reduce high rates of food insecurity in Chajul.



Marina, Youth Development Program Coordinator, is studying clinical psychology. She applies her degree every day in her work with scholars and parents.

Olga, Librarian, is enrolled in a university program in education, with a special emphasis on administration.



Zuliana, Guatemalan Assistant Director, is preparing to take the Guatemalan equivalent of the bar exam.



Verónica, Managing Director, completed coursework for her master's degree in business administration.



Eymi, Operations & Community Outreach Manager, completed coursework for her bachelor's degree in business administration.



Thank you for helping us make 2018 an incredible year! Limitless Horizons Ixil was able to provide much needed academic and professional opportunities to the indigenous youth and families of Chajul thanks to the time, efforts, and generosity of our community of donors and volunteers.

We're tremendously grateful for your partnership!