



LIMITLESS

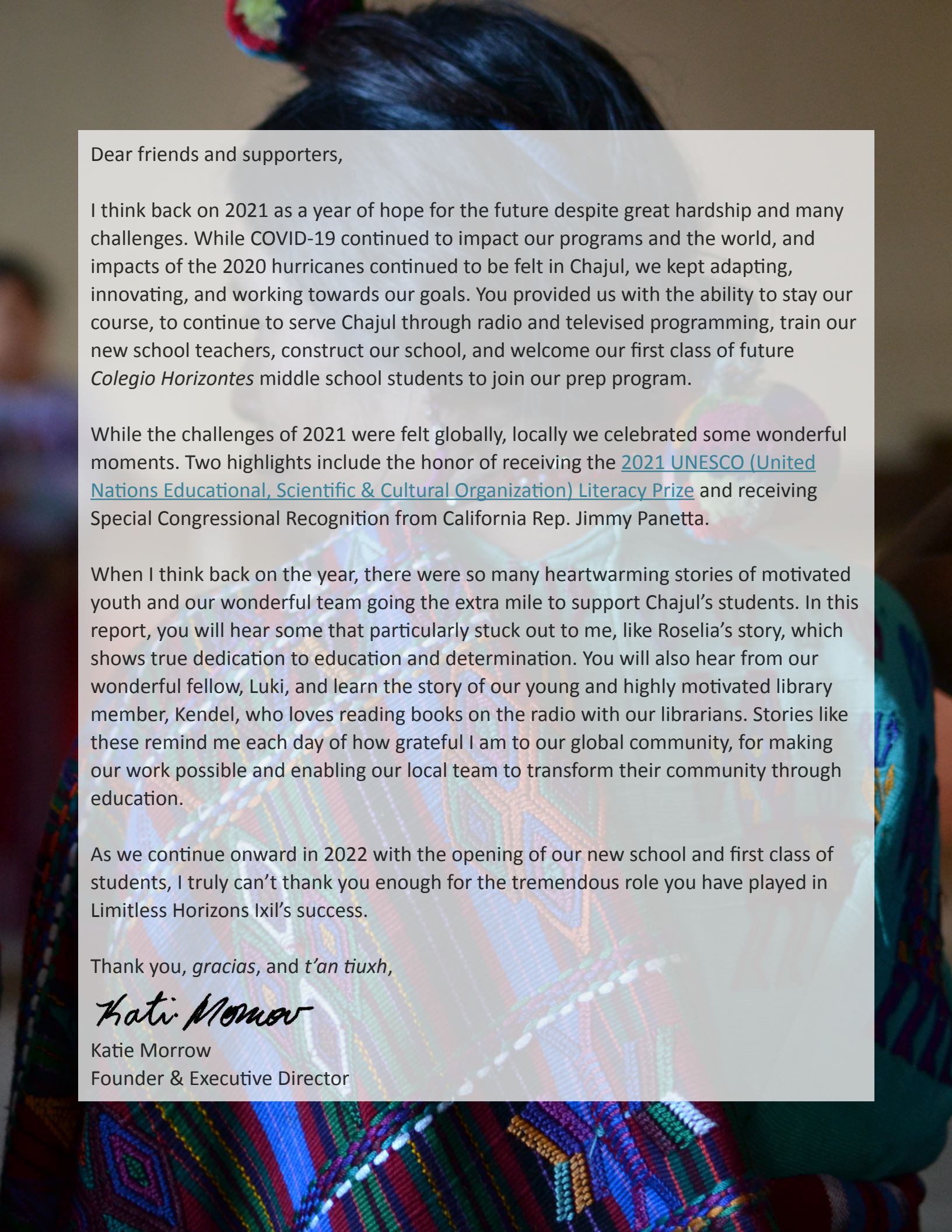
H O R I Z O N S I X I L

Transforming a community through education



2021 Annual Report

*Creating opportunities for the indigenous youth, women,
and families of Chajul to develop the academic and professional skills
needed to effect change in their lives and community*



Dear friends and supporters,

I think back on 2021 as a year of hope for the future despite great hardship and many challenges. While COVID-19 continued to impact our programs and the world, and impacts of the 2020 hurricanes continued to be felt in Chajul, we kept adapting, innovating, and working towards our goals. You provided us with the ability to stay our course, to continue to serve Chajul through radio and televised programming, train our new school teachers, construct our school, and welcome our first class of future *Colegio Horizontes* middle school students to join our prep program.

While the challenges of 2021 were felt globally, locally we celebrated some wonderful moments. Two highlights include the honor of receiving the [2021 UNESCO \(United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization\) Literacy Prize](#) and receiving Special Congressional Recognition from California Rep. Jimmy Panetta.

When I think back on the year, there were so many heartwarming stories of motivated youth and our wonderful team going the extra mile to support Chajul's students. In this report, you will hear some that particularly stuck out to me, like Roselia's story, which shows true dedication to education and determination. You will also hear from our wonderful fellow, Luki, and learn the story of our young and highly motivated library member, Kendel, who loves reading books on the radio with our librarians. Stories like these remind me each day of how grateful I am to our global community, for making our work possible and enabling our local team to transform their community through education.

As we continue onward in 2022 with the opening of our new school and first class of students, I truly can't thank you enough for the tremendous role you have played in Limitless Horizons Ixil's success.

Thank you, *gracias*, and *t'an tiuxh*,

Katie Morrow

Katie Morrow

Founder & Executive Director

A New School for Chajul: *Colegio Horizontes*

We are absolutely thrilled that after several years of research, planning, and prep work (including a year-long construction pause due to COVID-19), that our team was able to make immense progress on our school in 2021. We received 64 scholar applications and our team invited half to start in our prep classes in July.



Prep Program & First Class of *Colegio Horizontes* Students

Through written assessments, interviews, and home visits with youth and families, we selected a group of 30 students who participated in 41 prep classes from July through November. This time was a valuable way to start building the warm, student-centered culture of *Colegio Horizontes*' approach to education, as well as to provide life skills and mentoring. The prep classes' academic enrichment focused on math and Spanish language, communication, and reading, which were all critically important given how long students had been out of school due to the pandemic, in addition to the low level of education they'd had even when classes were fully in session.

Upon completion of our prep program, students became much more confident and communicative in chiming in with their questions and ideas, curious about topics covered in class, and eager to learn from one another. 24 students (17 girls and 7 boys) went on to become our inaugural class of students, beginning 7th grade at *Colegio Horizontes* in January 2022.



Meet Roselia

One of our new scholars Roselia showed tremendous resilience and dedication to her education throughout the prep program. She lives with her biological father and her stepmother, who has not fully accepted Roselia and her siblings as part of their new family. Sadly, her mother abandoned her and her younger brothers, ages 8, 6, and 2 months, so Roselia now takes care of them. Despite lower scores upon entry to the prep program, she worked hard in classes and was among our top students by October, ready to start at *Colegio Horizontes*! Roselia wants to become a lawyer so she can help defend people who need it, especially against violence.



Professional Development

Our group of 8 educators (all from the Ixil region, 88% indigenous, & 63% female) engaged in intensive professional development to learn critical-thinking and interactive teaching techniques. Topics covered included gender equity, girls empowerment, storytelling, and empowered voice. Professional development has been a key part of developing *Colegio Horizontes*' style of holistic education and the prep classes were a fantastic way to put professional development lessons into action and continue improving along the way. Educators taught 184 hours of student prep classes, including extra classes they identified that students needed in Spanish and reading. Our educators also participate in virtual coaching with dedicated international volunteer content coaches who provide subject-area expertise!

We worked with our long-term partner MAIA, which runs a similar school in another part of Guatemala, to build off of their curriculum and assessments, and their colleagues have also helped train our team members. Additionally, School Director Odilia and Assistant Director Zuli took a leadership course with CIRCULA, deepening their skills to be even stronger leaders.

School Construction & Startup Funds

Our team of 25 Ixil workers led by a local engineer restarted construction in February after nearly a year's pause due to the pandemic. They made massive progress with the main building being almost finished at the end of the year, and the second building also underway. We are grateful for the immense support of our partners Building Goodness Foundation and Design Develop LLC who designed the school and oversaw construction. 2021's highlights included getting over 50% of the way through the construction process and installing the roof on the main building!

We made significant strides in raising our school startup funds, with the launch of the public campaign in July. We premiered our [school video](#), and successfully raised the funds for two matching campaigns, one for a \$15,000 matching grant from One Day's Wages, and a second for a \$40,000 match from one of our generous donors. By the end of 2021 we were closing in on our campaign goal, setting us up to cross the finish line in 2022!



Youth Development & Emerging Leaders Programs

30 high school scholars and 74 alumni received ongoing support in our Youth Development and Emerging Leaders programs in 2021. As *Colegio Horizontes* grows to encompass the supports provided by our Youth Development Program it will be phased out and we will focus on our Emerging Leaders Program for graduates. We are proud of our current Youth Development Program high schoolers and committed to supporting them to finish their degrees!

For most of the 2021 school year, scholars' learning was completely remote with a few students attending classes in a hybrid model. Despite the challenging circumstances, 100% of our high schoolers reported that our services helped them continue studying and not drop out of school, despite higher than usual dropout rates in general due to the immense challenges of pandemic-era learning and the economic issues facing youth and families across Guatemala.

Of our Emerging Leaders, 11 were in college during the 2021 academic year, and 2 were selected for Limitless Horizons Ixil fellowships. We held 3 workshops and events, and Assistant Director Zuli called our Emerging Leaders 3 times throughout the year to check in.

2021 Highlights

Academic & Food Support

Youth participated in 98 hours of virtual math and Spanish classes with *Colegio Horizontes* teachers Berenice and Juan Enrique. We provided internet data plans so that scholars could log on for their online classes via cell phone. As the effects of the pandemic and 2020's massive hurricanes continued to impact families' crop yield and food security, we distributed monthly food and hygiene baskets to our families—309 in total.

Workshops & Psychologist Support

Our psychologist led scholars in 14 hours of workshops, including ones about managing stress and resilience. Scholars also participated in a workshop about family planning and menstruation with our partner WINGS Guatemala. The session helped girls make informed decisions about their bodies and boys understand more about their female peers and family members. Our psychologist also held one-on-one counseling with youth who needed individualized support during this tough year.



Graduation & Job Interview Prep

In December, we celebrated the high school graduation of 9 of our scholars! They met for a socially distanced meal and received certificates, gifts, and many congratulations from our team. The graduates also participated in a workshop with our Managing Director Verónica and Assistant Director Zuli about creating a resume and preparing for job interviews. We can't wait to see what these inspiring young leaders do next and how they continue to strengthen their community.

Luki's Story

Teresa Lucrecia, commonly known around Limitless Horizons Ixil as Luki, is one of our Youth Development Program graduates. Upon high school graduation, students become part of our Emerging Leaders Program, which includes the opportunity to apply for a few select fellowships with our team. Luki, a 2021 fellow, shares her story:

I was thrilled when I was chosen for the Limitless Horizons Ixil fellowship. It wasn't the same as just attending classes at school, the fellowship was the best support I could have possibly gotten as a Youth Development Program graduate because it gave me the opportunity to learn, without fear of making mistakes. Being the administration fellow taught me so much, and now there are things I consider easy—like writing a check. Some things like this really intimidated me before, but being with the Limitless Horizons Ixil team helped me overcome some of my fears and insecurities during my fellowship. I was patiently supported and motivated, which helped me discover my strengths.

My parents are so proud of me for graduating from high school, and they supported my decision to take this fellowship, which has truly changed my life. Wherever I go on to work, I now feel more confident because life doesn't scare me now that I know I can do many things and I am able to learn many more. I will continue to put my values into practice, and I am no longer afraid to make mistakes because I know I am not perfect, but the important thing is to try and to take risks in life in order to seek a better future. The Assistant Director Zuli taught me resilience, and I now will always say that I am resilient because I know I can overcome any adversity put in my path.

Last year I attended a workshop on floristry and I learned how to make flower arrangements. I loved this workshop and it made me consider starting my own business as a florist. In Chajul, there is no place where they sell flower arrangements, and I want to be the first to do so. I want to continue to learn the trade and start my own business.

I am proud to be an Emerging Leader and prior Limitless Horizons Ixil fellow. I hope to always support Limitless Horizons Ixil's team and continue to learn from them.



Saber Sin Límites (Limitless Knowledge) Community Library

We were honored to be awarded the [2021 UNESCO \(United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization\) Literacy Prize!](#)

Limitless Horizons Ixil was one of six laureates from around the globe to receive the prize, in honor of our innovative approach to literacy programming during the pandemic, which also came with a financial award to support our programs. We also received Special Congressional Recognition from California Rep. Jimmy Panetta. Our team, particularly those working in Chajul who don't often see their work highlighted, was extremely motivated by and excited to be honored with this international level of recognition.

Throughout the year, Chajul's youth benefited from the library's math, science, and English classes, as well as reading club, research time, and book lending in limited size socially distanced and masked groups.

100% of our library members said the library helps them to succeed in school!



A reflection from the library:

*"I feel happy being here. **When the lockdown closed our schools, I felt sad and it was difficult to learn.** I had classes on my phone and now I have classes in person, but only twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. **But even when I can't go to school, I can come to the library.** I like coming to story hour and reading. I enjoy reading lots of new things, like Julia and the Snow, the book I just finished!"*

- Margarita, age 10

Radio Story Hours

We were excited to continue recording bilingual Spanish–Ixil story hours that are broadcasted out to all residents of Chajul and its surrounding villages (population 48,000). The vast majority of families actively listen to the radio, so these reach far beyond our library members who traditionally can visit the library in person.

40 bilingual Spanish–Ixil stories on radio story hours.
Broadcasts were played for 230 hours total.



Library member, Kendel (11), loves to help host weekly radio story hours! Kendel likes sharing books that promote gender equality and children’s rights, as he believes that everyone should have the same opportunities. Head Librarian David reflects, ***“children like him inspire me to keep working to support youth, because they are agents of change in their families and in Chajul.”***

TV Classes

While schools were shut, *Colegio Horizontes* teachers developed 20 bilingual Ixil–Spanish TV classes to share on local TV, radio, and through social media and school networks. We recorded 10 math and 10 Spanish language classes. While most homes in the area lack internet, nearly half have TV access. Our short, engaging shows filled in learning gaps from the pandemic and motivated youth to continue in school! During a time when schools remained fully or mostly closed for in-person learning, we were proud that our team was able to bring learning into homes in this way.



Year-End Activities

When school finished for the year, 30 of our most active library members participated in approximately 50 hours of all-day library activities over the course of 3 weeks. Children were excited to join in a special reading club and story hour sessions, science activities, and a movie screening.

“I love being here! Even during the pandemic, we could check out books. I’ve learned to interact with my peers here and to be kind. I’ve even learned some English! I like learning English so I can speak with people from different places. I’ve gotten used to coming to the library every day—it’s my favorite thing to do.”

- Dora, age 11

**80 hours of
reading club**

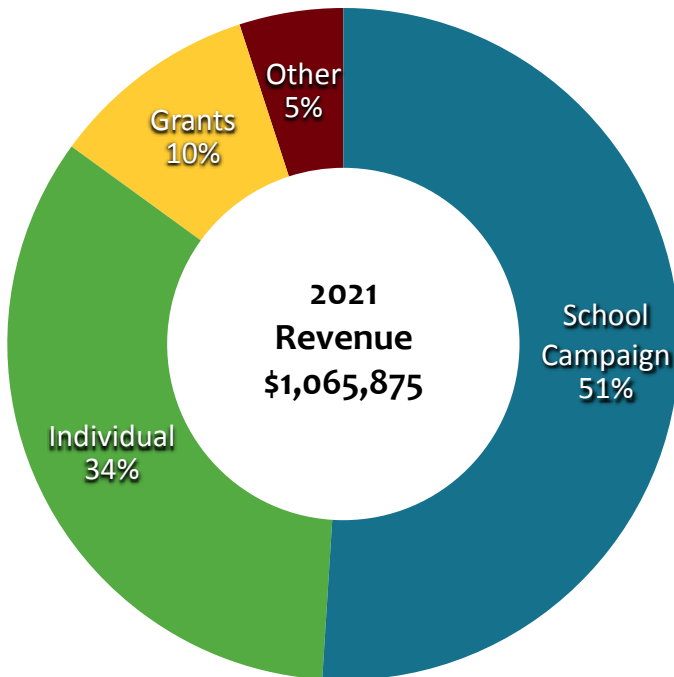
**10,763
books**

**Average age of
members: 9**

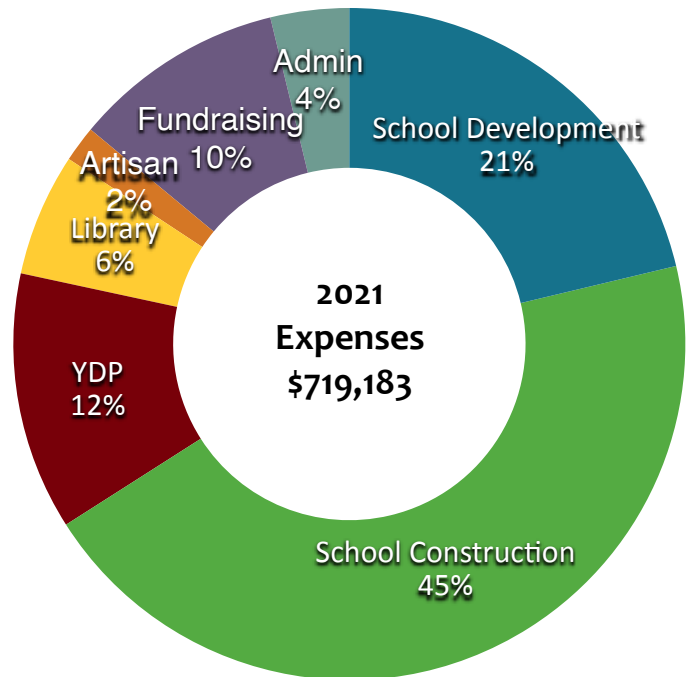
**184 active library
members (58% girls)**

Financials

Limitless Horizons Ixil is a U.S.–registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with tax ID #26-4296182. Our growing organization prides itself on financial transparency and accountability to our donors.



Revenue includes multiyear gifts that will be used for the continued school startup costs.



Thank you from all of us at Limitless Horizons Ixil!
Your support helped Chajul's youth keep learning during
the pandemic and allowed us keep our sights set on the
limitless opportunities on the horizon.



Stay Connected:



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Visit www.limitlesshorizonsixil.org or email info@limitlesshorizonsixil.org for more information.