WALKING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Completed with financing Dining For Women

And with the support of Maya Educational Foundation

December 2014
Executive Summary

Oxlajuj Batz’ facilitates women in recognizing opportunities to grow. And, the empowerment of women is a long-term process. It has to move beyond the individual and be shared at the collective level. Women come to the OB Center to learn how to organize, create, design and dream bigger. They support each other in producing and marketing their products through the OB Store in Panajachel. OB’s work succeeds when the communities can generate enough income to improve their living conditions and the women know enough to improve their position in society. To transform their reality, women have to increase their capacity to take decisions, feel free to determine their own development and speak clearly about political subjects.

Higher income leads to improving self-esteem. At year’s end the positive changes included a sense of collective power and expanded leadership specifically in retail management and the democratic administration of the association. The results achieved were significant for advancing the welfare of women and their families but gender gap issues are stubborn.

The long path to sustainability requires increasingly stronger participation of women in the economic field, opening new areas of coordination to forward community programs and identifying potential cooperative enterprises.

We have come a long way on this path thanks to the support of Dining For Women and the reliable assistance of Maya Education Foundation. We cannot thank you enough for your support during the year 2014.

The following document reports on the activities carried out during July to December 2014 period.

Panajachel, 30 de diciembre de 2014.
HIGHLIGHTS

1. Meetings for business and training workshops with 20 leaders on production processes for high end markets, management of fair trade shop, strategic planning, exploring cultural roots, among others.
2. Community Workshops on plan membership, women's health, replication of the production processes workshop, classes on the economy of women, how to do community craft focused on rescuing the cultural roots.
3. Counseling and support groups to develop their skills and organizational and production skills.
5. Three exchanges of experiences with different women.
7. Fair trade shop staffed and managed by Mayan women.
8. New product design and manufacturing cutting workshops with groups of women.
Objective 1: Implement a membership training that includes processes for developing and strengthening organizational skills.

**Membership and Integration A.1.1. Plan Groups. Artisans attended to the General Assembly to define sustainability strategies.**

In July of this year community visits promoted the benefits and responsibilities of the groups enrolled in the membership in the plan.

The women met again about the benefits offered by OB. The scheduled trainings for group and product development, how to increase sales at the store and to exchange of experiences etc., The groups paid a minimum fee, contributing to a small fund delivering programs for women.

These photos show facilitators in meetings with women of different communities to promoting the membership plan.

Through the visits to groups of women artisans, OB collected membership dues and credited these to the microcredit account which is accruing interest as the income of the organization increases.

Workshop on Introduction to strategic planning

In July, in Panajachel, a one-day workshop on "Introduction to strategic planning" was held with 17 women leaders artisan groups of 6 departments of Guatemala present. It aimed to strengthening the knowledge of basic planning concepts and main elements necessary in an organizational strategic plan.

The meeting was facilitated by a person with experience in planning, education and working with Mayan women to increased their knowledge and ability to define a vision, mission, strategic objectives, action plan and budget. We will continue updating the organizational strategic plan 2015-2020.

Workshops on the process and development of organizational strategic plan

Encouraged and informed the women leaders on strategic planning of a nonprofit organization.
Five workshops were held for 5 consecutive days, from 4-8 August 2014, facilitated by a consultant in strategic planning, who used a participatory methodology to move the participants through theory to practice. (12) women leaders representing active communities of Oxlajuj Batz’.

Workshops in Strategic Planning

Analysis of the status and position of women artisans living in society, SWOT analysis focused on scenarios identifying the strengths, weaknesses, threats and organizational opportunities. This provided the basis for the detailed work of defining the mission, vision, strategic objectives, lines of action and budget, foreseeing the future and walk Oxlajuj Batz’ the period 2015-2020.
The main result was the active participation and contributions from women leaders in the workshops and updating the outdated strategic plan of the organization. Now we have distinguished clear lines of work based on the needs and demands of Mayan women artisans.

Photos of different workshops in progress.
Workshop Introduction to Cultural Heirlooms the fabrics of the ancestral Mayas:

The workshop was held on 22 and 23 October, and was facilitated by an artist and painter of San Marcos La Laguna Solola department, with experience in rescuing culture through genuine works of art.

This aimed to introduce women to the idea of the rescue and rethinking of ancestral cultural symbolism and principles enshrined in the clothes of the Kaqchikel, and tzutujil Quiche Mayan people.

(13) Women leaders representing (7) communities came to increase their knowledge about cultural patterns embodied in ancient fabrics. They dialogued about the major arts of their ancestors, Mayan Cosmo-vision. And the women reaffirmed the value and importance of honoring the roots and repurposing them in the current context. The opportunity allowed for an exchange of persona experiences, wisdom, techniques, designs, symbolism that is recreated in the collective history of every people and is carried by every woman.

The workshop was practical, women developed a poem and small history that shapes her life and comes from her culture. The dug in and drew designs that will be expressed in cloth. In this activity, women with design skills were chosen to attend and later disseminate the content.
Workshop on product designs featuring cultural elements

Here is the formation process looking at the Maya Cultural Roots in fabrics. The activity was held on November 10. We worked with only 7 women leaders who were selected for design skills and ability to transmit a design either through drawing and weaving.

The process produced many original designs and drawings. The next step is to translate them into the fabrics through embroidery techniques and with recycled fabric, natural dyes etc. The women now value and are interested in their cultural roots and the idea of reflecting them in their designs.
A.1.3. Community Replicas and workshops

Community visits were planned in July with the participation of leaders. Needs were identified and prioritized in order to develop a participatory diagnosis through workshops and surveys. We needed to understand and analyze the conditions of health, education, economy, entrepreneurship and organization within each group and over six departments of Guatemala. Following up on this, in September, syllabi for three one day workshops in health, economics and organization were developed to distribute and analyze the survey.

From the second week of September, thru October and so far thru November there have been 14 community workshops in seven communities ((2) in each community) They also surveyed 88 women about their personal data, educational levels, living conditions, family data, education data for their children, health status, medicinal plant gardens, family planning, skills and economic activities, income, expenses, making decisions, motivations in the group, etc.

The result of the workshops is that women identified major problems around the emotional, mental and physical health. They inventoried the services available in the community and municipality, and ranked the quality of services, the major illnesses suffered, etc. Collectively they have identified alternative solutions.

During the workshops in economics women identified strengths and weaknesses in production, quality, types, quantity, production process, markets, customers, the positioning of the products for market cycles of introduction, growth, maturity and decline. There were modules on advocacy and communication strategies.

One of the findings of this diagnostic was that in the last five years, OB has doubled the income of the artisans. However the triumph of that is dampened by the fact that even with this improvement the women are still making less than 18% of the minimum wage of Guatemala.

The OB methodology enhances the community participation. The health initiative has the active participation of 80 women, who became aware of the importance of caring for the physical and mental health.

Oxaluj B’atz’ has updated the profiles of women keying on the life situation of individuals in their communities and documenting the conditions and women’s positions. Reports will be made to each community.

Developing strategy for the coming years based on the needs and demands of women
In December 2014, we made community visits a day each and gave workshops on organization. Six groups of women artisans (Chimaltenango, San Antonio, Patanatic - Panajachel, Quiejel, Solola Moral and Chuacruz) were visited to diagnose their level of development, their organization and ability to incorporate elemental cultural roots of the Mayan people.

The work was participatory and dynamic and presented a tutorial of adult education and popular education, group work.

Morales – La Esperanza

Photos of the first workshops diagnosing Health of Women Artisans

SWOT analysis was performed an we classed groups for four stages of development (Birth, growth, well developed and mature).

OB identified two groups in stage one Birth and Germination (Los Morales and San Antonio Suchitepéquez) are newborn with few women artisans groups, does not have a functional board, have very little income, for that reason they were placed in stage one. In stage two of growth is Patanatic - a strong group, deepening its offerings, promoting independent actions and they are starting to bear fruit but are still vulnerable to negative forces.. In stage three- Well Developed- are three groups located within them Quiejel, Chimaltenango and Solola Chuacruz; their skills are strong, have had many successful results in the area of business, good organization and have strengthened the capacities of women, endured threats. There are no groups with the top level of maturity. So far not one group is capable of producing a large amount of viable and permanent consistently successful results.
At the end of the workshops the women's groups and activities of living close of business on New Year's Eve, also motivating for 2015.

Chimaltenango – Grupo Corazón de Mujer
Sololá Chuacruz – Grupo Waqxaqí Kan

Totonicapán – Grupo Maya Kiché
Patanatic – Grupo las Rosas

Oxlajuj B’atz’

Oxlajuj B’atz’

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Photos of second workshop on Economy and Entrepreneurship

Chimaltenango – Grupo Corazón de Mujer

San Antonio Suchitepéquez – Grupo Nuevo Amanecer
Totonicapán – Grupo Maya Kiché

Chichicastenango Quiejel – Grupo de Chuwilá

Oxlajú B’atz’
El grupo en Morales – Sololá

El grupo de Quiejel – Chichicastenango
Grupo de Chuacruz – Sololá
Grupo de San Antonio Suchitepéquez

Grupo de Corazón de Mujer de Chimaltenango
A.1.4. Exchange of Experiences

Exchange with Ruth y Nohemí de Chichicastenango

In August, an exchange of experience was conducted with a group who has contributed to advancing social change and the marketing of handicrafted products nationally and internationally. Within this framework OB identified Ruth and Naomi from Chichicastenango born from conflict and who helped widows after the war.

We had a wonderful experience—involving (18) women representing (7) OB intervention groups. The activity began with reflection on the importance of emotional health, balance and recharging energy through the chakras. Women learned relaxation techniques and the harmonization of energies.

Their experiences with social work and organizing communities and in the production area (sewing), successfully marketing handicrafts at national/international levels were shared and appreciated.
Exchange of Experiences in Chichicastenango,

Exchange of experiences with a group of women Coban Alta Verapaz

In October, in coordination with other organizations, an exchange of experience between Oxlajuj Batz’ with the women’s organization of Coban Alta Verapaz was held in Panajachel. The women shared their experiences in production, marketing products and training processes of self-empowerment.

(26) women from both organizations contributed and benefited
Exchange of experience between the Group Tzununá Santa Cruz La Laguna and the Waqxaqi 'Kan Solola group.

In early 2014, through the Castillo Cordova Foundation and Live Better, a new integrated group of 40 women in the municipality of Santa Cruz La Laguna joined the Solola group. They have been working on handicraft products with poor quality and without major increases in market share.

OB is interested in the potential of the group and has taken the decision to work with them to strengthen their skills and abilities. We have made several community visits to them.
An exchange of experiences was promoted by the Waqxaqi group 'Kan Solola in coordination with Vivamos Mejor.

The first exchange was with community group Waqxaqi 'Kan visiting the fair trade shop Oxlajuj Batz'. This activity had the participation of 18 women who spent time learning, exchanging idea and discussing organization and production processes.

Visita de intercambio en la tienda de comercio justo en Panajachel grupo de Tzununá con Oxlajuj B'atz’
Objective 2: Development activities to generate income from Social Enterprise. Oxalajuj Batz': Promotion Center of Mayan Women and Fair Trade Shop.

**A.2.1. Celebrating March 8 International Women’s Day**

This activity has been reported in the Quarterly Report January to June 2014.

**A.2.2. Celebration August 9 International Day of Indigenous Peoples**

The activity was conducted to commemorate the day, promote recognition and full exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples in Guatemala. The event took place on August 9 in Panajachel in the new facilities Oxalajuj Batz'.

The participation of 30 women leaders of organizations of women artisans from six departments of Guatemala was achieved. 18 people Ukok't'ijal Ajpu the artistic group, composed of young musicians and dancers, celebrated the principles and worldview of the Maya people. The public attendance was more than 200 people of all nationalities.

The event was intended as a reflection on the day and included music concert and Mayan dance, dialogues on the rights of indigenous peoples within the framework of the 1996 Peace Accords. Oxalajuj Batz', provided traditional dancing, candle lit ceremony at night for peace of all peoples. The event included the ribbon cutting in the fair trade shop relocated on the tourist street Calle Santander. The activity was a success for the organization.

Through this activity, OB has managed to find volunteers, one of them, a Guatemalan, and is now supporting the group of Chimaltenango in a styling workshop and soon we hope to acquire sewing equipment.

**Baile tradicional y sones de los pueblos**

Photos of women doing a traditional dance during the eight hour celebration.
Promoting Rights of Indigenous Pueblos

Marimba and performance of Grupo de La Flor de Ajpu – Ukotz’ijal Ajpu
Candles lit for peace in the pueblo

A.2.3. TOURS a museum or exclusive shops of Guatemala

On 22 October, a tour was held in San Marcos la Laguna painting in a gallery called Nik'te created to retrieve and transmit ancestral dialogue through art. In this event the participation of 14 women one representative from each of the groups was invited.

The visit was organized to make women aware of the meaning of works of art with ancient dialogues and to teach them how to observe the work. He performed a ceremony to awaken the ancestral wisdom of women so they would come to value of their cultural roots, repurpose and transcend their current skills to craft elaborate artworks.

The visit was an introduction to the path of recovery of ancestral wisdom embodied in tissues of history.
One of the greatest achievements was that the event opened eyes and hearts to cultural values of our people. And the desire and motivation to create artworks with cultural roots is powerful.

In this tour the women had the opportunity to share and learn about the history of a young Mayan artist.

On October 17 representatives planned a meeting with the art director and production coordinator of Ixchel Museum for presentation as part of the project of repurposing ancestral tissues in order to promote women's products.

Thanks to this meeting, OB will be selling products at the museum shop and the providing information, photos and designs for fabrics with cultural patterns. This important association allows the women to develop their products incorporating languages and wisdom ancestral Mayan people.
A.2.4. Product diversification

San Juan Cotzal has been one of the groups that has best developing new product designs as spacers, bosas pineapple, wallets, purses, cosmetic bags, etc; group Patanatic new designs baskets, ties and improve nawales card design. Chimaltenango created new styles of scarves and table runners. Waqxaqi kan developed new cushions; Quiejel and San Antonio have diversified their products with Christmas themed table runners and ornaments. San Antonio Suchitepéquez is developing new flavors of chocolate.

After the training in cultural heritage has inspired all groups to try out new products. OB expects to bring new products to market based on ancestral dialogues.

In September and November OB encouraged groups to create Christmas products, the store gave the relevant instructions to each group. The result was improved delivery and better quality products were presented this holiday season among the top products were scarves, table ornaments and variety of home decorations and more.
A.2.5. Promoting a Cultural Center and Fair Trade Shop

Moving the Store

The store location on the main shopping street has been good for sales. Sales have increased 16% Year over year during the last half. Four volunteers joined us this year two are still with us. Tourist visits increased in some communities.

Participation in Expo business conference

In September this year, with the support of the Rural Economic Development Solola, (PROSOL of Canada) OB took part in a business conference at the Hotel Posada de Don Rodrigo, Panajachel. Several companies and organizations with established businesses were invited to a business conference that identified new customers and markets for craftswomen.

Participation in crafts fair

The representatives of social business promotion from Oxlajuj Batz ’participated in a craft fair in Hotel Porta del Lago, a four star hotel located in Panajachel. The fair was sponsored by the organization SAQ B'ey was held on 14 to 28 September this year.

Milestones: increased product sales, successful store promotion, expanded product line, fruitful exchange of experience with other organizations.
Participation in a second festival de RUK’U’X organized by a collective of native peoples artists nationwide.

Women participated in the Second International Art Festival RUK’U’X native peoples held in the district capital of Solola in the dates of 14 to 16 November this year.

An overview of how to prepare natural yarns and dyes, select tools and procedures for preparing and looming fabrics was provided along with the valuable work about ancestral wisdom. The event was promoted in partnership with several national and international organizations and artists from Norway, Colombia, Mexico and Nicaragua.
Workshops instructed the women on how to merchandise the store.

A volunteer with experience in designing exclusive stores spoke to the women about how to place products attractively in a shop. Her workshop was practical and her advice easily applied. The main result was fresh store design with good presentation.

The change in product placement has increased product sales. This is a source of great satisfaction to the women's groups, who currently manage the fair trade shop.
A.2.6. On-going monitoring and evaluation:

The monitoring and evaluation activities are always completed by the person responsible for the project. OB has a monitoring system form that is completed at the end of each activity. The forms are filled out and filed. We also archive methodological guides, attendance lists, minutes of activities, photos, listings assists, among others.

Facilitators also produce reports for each activity recording their activities and results. They also perform dynamic presenter evaluations with women after completion of the workshops, visits or commemorative activities.

The activities of this report are based on the monitoring and evaluation.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

The women leaders participated in the planning activities and strategic sessions on behalf of the women in their communities. The defined what their needs are, what ways of thinking, seeing and understanding and taking decisions they want to employ. Their contributions are reflected in this document. The major Achievement was updating the strategic plan of the organization from 2015 to 2020.

Strengthened the awareness of women around recovering and awakening the ancient wisdom that we possess. We affirmed cultural value and celebrated the roots of the Mayan people.

Women looked at health, education, economics and organizational information, which lead to identifying and addressing the needs of communities. Each group looked for appropriate strategies and solutions that would prove sustainable over time.

Moving the store to Santander has increased sales and helped in identifying new clients, volunteers who want to support improving the lives of women and their families.

Institutional coordination with local organizations has provided opportunities for training, exchange of experiences, product marketing etc.

Training has strengthened the skills and knowledge of women and enabled them to develop their leadership and organizational/management skills. Their self-esteem has improved. They are standing for their own
and the development of other women. They are closing gender gaps and acting as examples of change for others.

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE OBJECTIVES AND CHANGES GENERATED

The objectives set for this year, established under the program walking towards sustainability have been attained. Store administration is carried out by OB educated women artisans. The organization is more solid having an active participation in the definition of strategies, programs and projects for women.

Thanks to Dining For Women’s and Mayan Educational Foundation’s support this year, the women improved the quality and design of their products by incorporating ancestral dialogues and transcendent ideas to generate works of art.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

The main challenge is finding the way into potential (world) markets. The women are ready to produce on a larger scale but they are systematically excluded from entry because they have no bank account in the United States.

OB wants all groups to reach the mature level of development. At present there are two groups that are germinating, two groups at the level of growth and four groups ranked well developed but none have become ripe with capacity for self-management and sustainability.

ON IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The activities were developed for the stipulated time and planned for January to December of the 2014 term.

ON FINANCING PROGRAM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPENDITURE

The financial report detailing each expenditure is under separate cover