

# **GUATEMALA STOVE PROJECT**

## **Annual Report**

**April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023**



**Guatemala Stove Project**  
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## ABOUT US

The Guatemala Stove Project (GSP) is a non-profit, non-denominational, non-governmental organization dedicated to helping indigenous Maya people of the western highlands of Guatemala. This grassroots Canadian volunteer-driven organization is now entering its 24th year of operation. Our primary mandate is to improve living conditions for families by funding the building of improved cookstoves. GSP also provides educational bursaries, microloans and funding for emergencies.

We partner with three Guatemalan organizations; CEDEC (Centro de Estudios Para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación), AMI (Asociación de Mujeres Ixchel) and AMMID (Asociación Maya Mam de Investigación y Desarrollo) through which we provide support to indigenous communities.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FOUR PROGRAMS

### 1. MASONRY COOKSTOVES



Forty percent of the world's population continue to cook over an open fire using, for example wood, charcoal, coal and crop residue with an estimated 64% of Guatemala women cooking indoors in this manner. Toxic smoke from these fires contributes to a wide range of respiratory and cardiac problems, chronic illness and premature deaths. The harm caused by cooking over open fires extends beyond the home and community causing deforestation and soil erosion and playing a key role in the earth's climate crisis by contributing to greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide.

In March 2023, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres issued a strong warning that immediate action must be taken to avert a climate crisis with rising global temperatures and critical levels of GHG. Clean cooking is an essential part of the solution to combating climate change.

Throughout the year we send funds as available to our partners on a rotating basis. All materials are sourced locally and local masons are hired which supports the Guatemalan economy. Family cookstoves cost \$350 and the larger school cookstoves cost \$600. These improved cookstoves which burn fuels more efficiently using half the amount of fuel help reduce toxic pollutants. As well, the cookstove chimney vents smoke outdoors. The reduction in carbon dioxide emissions is significant with an average reduction of two to three tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year or 20 to 30 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> over the ten-year lifespan of the average family cookstove, a bit more CO<sub>2</sub> than the average Canadian creates in a year (19 tons).

In this fiscal year, GSP funded construction of 300 family cookstoves — 100 with CEDEC and 150 with AMI — all in communities in Santa Maria Chiquimula and 50 with AMMID in the communities around Comitancillo.

In 2020, GSP began an initiative building school cookstoves as well as family cookstoves. This was to help address the extremely high levels of malnutrition found in children which contribute to delayed or stunted growth and development, inability to concentrate in school and poor school performance. The Guatemalan

School Feeding Law of 2017 now provides six Quetzales (USD 82 cents) for school meals per child per school day. This year GSP funded construction of eight school cookstoves — four with CEDEC, two with AMI and two with AMMID. Staff commented that “the ‘plancha” is so much more efficient and hygienic. There’s a lot of need among the families and the cookstove is a big help to mothers preparing and cooking the mid-morning snacks for the children.”

**To date, a total of 7,868 family cookstoves and 48 school stoves have been constructed for a total of 7,916 cookstoves.**



## 2. MICROLOANS

The microloan program Creditos Verdes with AMMID has grown since 2012 and after sending \$2,876 in January 2023 the total is close to \$34,500. AMMID members have been most appreciative of these microloans which help them achieve some degree of economic security. There are strict criteria for qualifying for a loan, AMMID technicians provide support, training and supervision and follow up is done to ensure funds are well spent. The initial loan is about \$150 and over time may increase to \$2,000 for those members in good standing. The interest rate is reduced to 11% when green initiatives are carried out such as soil conservation, planting of medicinal plants and reforestation with saplings which help to mitigate the effects of global warming.

### 3. EDUCATIONAL BURSARIES

The Educational Bursary Program with AMMID began in 2014 with the aim of helping girls attend middle and high school as many are denied this opportunity due to limited family economic resources. Educating girls will promote self-esteem, provide more job opportunities and build stronger and healthier families and communities. In January 2023, \$14,984 was sent to AMMID to pay for school tuition, school supplies, school uniforms, school transportation, salary for Jovita Guzman the education coordinator and administrative expenses. An educational bursary for one year of middle school costs \$650 and it costs \$750 for high school.

This year, there are 12 returning students and three new students with six girls receiving support from the Wilma Wilkinson Memorial Fund. The students are in grade 7 (1), grade 8 (3), grade 9 (3), grade 10 (4), and grade 11 (4). Last year the students were mentored by Jovita who met bi-monthly with students and families, held classes on topics such as personal health, leadership and work habits and reported regularly to GSP on the progress of the girls.



### 4. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

This past year GSP sent emergency funds to CEDEC and AMI for a number of health conditions. Six children and two adults benefitted from a variety of needed medical supplies, medications, consultations, transportation and meals for families attending clinic and hospital appointments. Clara Colop/AMI and Ishim Yac/CEDEC provided coordination with health facilities such as HELPS International performing surgeries, follow-up family visits and emotional support and guidance for families.

Recipients were as follows:

- Jeanette Cinderella (1 yr) repair of cleft lip
- Juan Jose (2 yrs) and Griselda Clavelina (12 yrs) repair of cleft palates
- Ashly Llanelly (4.5 yrs) extensive plastic surgery for webbed digits of hands and feet
- Roberta Garcia (9 yrs), Rosita Lux (32 yrs) and Santiago Gonzales (35 yrs) treated for dermatological problems
- Florinda Catarina (5 yrs) consultations and X-rays revealed abnormal hip development and fitted temporarily with a specialized shoe.



*Jeanette Cinderella,  
before surgery*



*Jeanette Cinderella,  
after surgery*

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Throughout the year volunteers were busy with a variety of ongoing activities including communicating with our three Guatemalan partners, giving presentations, planning fundraising events, searching for financial/foundation support, enhancing our social media presence on Facebook and our website and holding regular volunteer meetings in person and via Zoom. This all requires teamwork for things to work smoothly plus a variety of skills and good cheer!

The foundation search committee met to identify potential donors, refine the components of the proposal and sent out requests which resulted in:

- CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) Guelph Chapter donated \$3,173 for stoves.
- Trinity Jubilee Foundation donated \$3,500 for ten stoves.

Other significant donations include:

- Perth Rotary has been a strong supporter of GSP over the years but unfortunately this service club has closed. On dispersal of funds, GSP was awarded \$10,000 thanks to the advocacy of long-time Rotarian John Hauraney.
- Child and Youth Care Students of Algonquin College, Ottawa raised \$2,002.
- LiUNA local 183 (Labourers' International Union of North America) donated \$5,000.
- GSP is fortunate to count on a cadre of ongoing regular donors many of whom donate substantial amounts.

### April 2022

- Presentation to Trinity United Church as a follow-up to their previous \$4,000 donation.
- Festival of the Maples with booth donated by Al Telfesi in front of Coutts Coffee Roastery & Café, Perth.

### MAY 2022

- A special appeal for Jeanette Cinderella raised over \$4,000.
- The first Mother of a Picnic held at Crystal Palace in Perth was a successful sold-out event with wonderful weather and great community support. Beef for the hamburgers generously donated by Jeanette and Bill Avery.

### JUNE 2022

- Centrepointe Community Garage sale, Ottawa raising funds for girls' educational bursaries.
- Marvin Vissoni documented 92 AMMID cookstoves on our behalf as volunteers were unable to visit Comitancillo for two years due to COVID restrictions.
- The Annual General Meeting was held June 12th at the Stewart Park bandshell, Perth to good turnout with some attending virtually. It was an enjoyable time to reconnect and review the past year's accomplishments. All board members agreed to another year in office. Janet Allan has completed seven years, Erika Johner six years and Rob Bowyer two years.

### JULY 2022

- Presentation was made to the South Ottawa Rotary Environmental Committee.
- Three day Stewart Park Music Festival, Perth with a roster of volunteers staffing the GSP booth.
- First transfer of funds to Guatemala using VFX financial institution. GSP previously used Knightbridge exchange.
- Death of Ron Wilkinson at 97 years. In 2020, Ron initiated the Wilma Wilkinson Memorial Fund to honour his deceased wife by supporting six girls for six years to attend high school.
- Blue Skies Music Festival where, over three days, volunteers collected beer cans and liquor bottles, crushed and sorted them prior to transport to the Smiths Falls beer store for refund.

### AUGUST 2022

- Priced at \$15, 160 calendars for 2023 quickly sold out and 100 more were ordered. These calendars serve to provide the history of GSP and portray the richness of the Maya culture and the beauty of Guatemala, as well as educate the reader about GSP programs.



## SEPTEMBER 2022

- For a fourth year, GSP worked with first year students of the Child and Youth Care Program of Algonquin College, Ottawa. Following a presentation and ongoing consultation with Liz and Janet, students successfully carried out an in-person Trivia and Bingo event. Many thanks to professors Terry Levesque and Michael Black who guided their students in developing fundraising and community support skills.
- GSP volunteers staffed a booth at the Smartnet Sustainability Showcase, TD Place-Lansdowne, Ottawa where organizations provided information on living sustainability including transitioning to a low-carbon future and/or purchasing a sustainable product. Tom was a panel speaker where he highlighted how GSP cookstoves offset carbon emissions.

## NOVEMBER 2022

- Profits from the very successful fourth online silent auction using 32auctions.com were directed to GSP programs of cookstoves, bursaries and microloans.
- The annual November Perth Fundraising Dance was held at the Perth Civitan Hall for an evening of friendship, dancing and music by the band DLUX.
- Presentations were made to Bethel United Church, Rideau Ferry and St. James Anglican Church and St. Paul's United Church, Perth.

## DECEMBER 2022

- GSP volunteers staffed a booth at the annual Fisher Park Craft Sale, Ottawa.

## JANUARY 2023

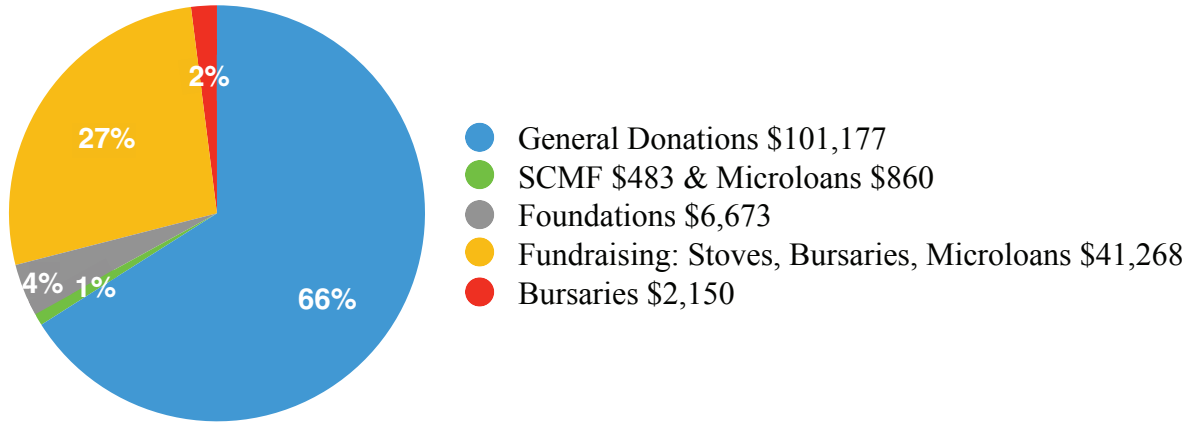
- A stove building workshop was held at Tom's property with instruction led by Paul Hauraney followed by a potluck and discussion for the February volunteer trip to Guatemala.
- Tom and Phill Brackenbury travelled to Xela/ Quetzaltenango, Guatemala and documented 150 family cookstoves and four school stoves with Clara Colop and Ishim Yac. Tom and Phill encountered several individuals with health issues and, after consultation with the board, interviewed and approved the involved individuals for emergency medical funding.
- Liz and Janet visited Comitancillo to carry out activities with AMMID. They documented 57 family stoves, three school stoves and visited the homes of eleven individuals who had received microloans and six students with bursaries. They attended the annual GSP luncheon for the 15 bursary students, parents, some AMMID board members and the coordinator Ruben Feliciano. Students and parents expressed their heartfelt appreciation for this opportunity of further education and sent prayers and thanks to Canadian donors and as one father wrote "que Dios le bendiga y protege, cuidense mucho. Saludos a sus demas compañeros en Canada."

## FEBRUARY 2023

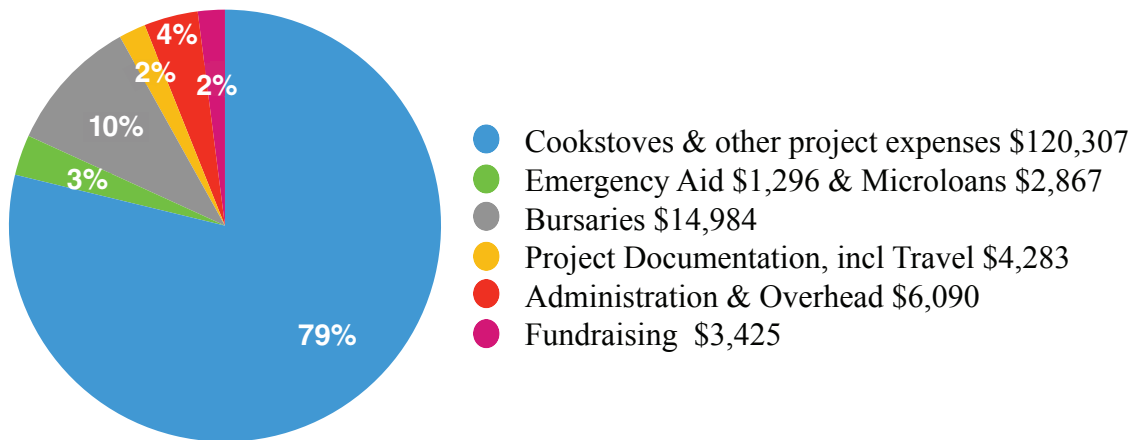
- Tom and Livio Persi documented an additional 75 family stoves and four school stoves built with AMI and CEDEC, some of which were funded in the previous fiscal year.
- The COVID-19 pandemic halted any possibilities of bringing volunteers to Guatemala over the past two years. This February the volunteer stove building trip resumed with trip planning co-ordinated by Phill in Canada and Ishim Yac of CEDEC in Guatemala. A group of 13 volunteers, many return travellers from previous years, met up in Xela and spent five days building stoves in Mayan homes. They worked with Guatemalan masons, interacted with families learning about their lifestyles and asked numerous questions of Ishim and Clara. Tom commented that conditions in Guatemala have improved greatly since his trip last year.
- The group traveled to the small, remote village of Panimaquim for a day to bring school supplies and celebrate the various projects GSP has completed there and which have improved the lives of all its residents (school, school cookstove, water delivery system and cistern, hen house).
- This year several volunteers were honoured to attend a special Quinceañera birthday celebration for Maria Ishim, the daughter of one of our partners. Hopefully, GSP will continue to lead these exposure trips and inspire a new generation of committed volunteers who will raise funds for more stoves, bursaries and microloans. There is so much more work to do!

Financial Review  
April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023 Unaudited

TOTAL INCOME \$152,611



TOTAL EXPENSES \$153,252



Opening Balance \$25,803  
Net Income for the fiscal year -\$641  
Closing Balance \$25,162  
Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$26,702

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION



*Chefs Bob, Paul and Bill at Mother of a Picnic*



*Al at GSP booth, Stewart Park*



*Phill, Tom and Ken at Blue Skies*

We would like to thank the many volunteers who work behind the scenes to keep us running as an organization. Special thanks to:

- Liz Ballantyne Jackson chairs the Foundation Search committee and produces newsletters
- Pierre Fortier (curator of photos), Judy Field (design and production), Liz Ballantyne Jackson (writer), Janet Allan (writer) and Rita Redner (editor/advisor) produce the GSP calendar
- Paul Hauraney assists with banking and presentations
- Terri Henderson maintains our financial spreadsheet and tracks debits and credits
- Rita Redner facilitates the GSP Zoom meetings
- Eric Scheuneman manages our stove database, processes income tax receipts and mails thank you certificates to donors.

We are able to provide support to the communities of the western highlands in Guatemala as a result of the leadership of Ishim Yac (CEDEC), Clara Colop (AMI) and Rubén Feliciano (AMMID).

Tom Clarke continues in his 24th year as coordinator of GSP. Thank you, Tom, for your vision and your continued dedication.

The Board of Directors consists of Rob Bowyer, Erika Johner and Janet Allan who meet regularly, take on many tasks and oversee GSP operations.

**Thank you to all our volunteers and donors.  
Our work depends on your generosity.**

**For more information, please visit our website at [guatemalastoveproject.org](http://guatemalastoveproject.org) and our Facebook page at [GuatemalaStoveProject](https://www.facebook.com/GuatemalaStoveProject)**



*Quinceañera of Maria Ishim*



*Corn culture*



*Panamaquim vista*



*February 2023 Stove Building Trip volunteers*



*Bill, third from left, receiving LiUNA donation*