



Members of our Positive Masculinities program participate in a nutrition workshop in the community of Paquixic.

NUTRITION & EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

EVOLVES TO DEEPEN IMPACT

By Norma Baján,
ABPD Executive Director

Nutrition and empowerment training sessions are a central component of the integrated development approach ALDEA implements with ABPD in Guatemala, working alongside our water and sanitation, agriculture, and family planning programs to support families in improving their health and well-being.

After careful evaluation and input from local staff and community members, this year ABPD and ALDEA have implemented changes to these programs to deepen our impact and better monitor participants' progress.

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Summer 2024

NUTRITION & EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM EVOLVES TO DEEPEN IMPACT

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These are our most significant recent achievements:

- **Establishing a new curriculum** to guide staff and community promoters (women chosen by their peers to lead development programs) as they train participants about improving children's nutrition;
- **Improving the indicators and systems we use to monitor and evaluate children's nutrition status** in a more timely and efficient manner. This includes collecting baseline data on *all* participating children, rather than a representative sample;
- **Investing in professional development for all ABPD staff, drawing on expertise from our peer organizations.** Our partners at Proyecto CAN (Cooking, Agriculture, Nutrition) have provided resources to help the staff educate program participants about the importance of a diverse diet and how to prepare an array of nutritious recipes using local, easily accessible ingredients. Trainers from Wuqu' Kawoq Maya Health Alliance have shown us how to use GMCD, the first internationally standardized monitoring method for child development, which will allow us to compare our program participants' progress against global datasets. Finally, we have learned new techniques for leading positive masculinities training for men in our programs from ASOGEN.

- **Expanding our team to better support families.** We have recently expanded our nutrition and empowerment team from two fieldworkers to four. This will increase the level of one-on-one support we can provide to program participants, offer staff more opportunities to build rapport with families, and enhance the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation activities. A larger field team also allows us to deepen program impacts by doubling the number of home visits and nutrition workshops we offer.

In addition to these areas where we have identified and made improvements, we also have observed and built on our programs' areas of strength. These include: providing supplements (vitamins and zinc for treating diarrhea) for young children to help ensure they grow healthy and strong; offering laying hens for egg production, which increase the availability of protein sources in the community; and seeing positive emotional changes in mothers after going through our trainings and building their confidence in providing good nutrition for their children.

Our nutrition and empowerment team are heading into the coming year with more support, equipped with new tools, knowledge, and clear objectives. We are excited to improve program outcomes, deepen our impact in our partner communities, and continue building strong partnerships with like-minded organizations.

ABPD Staff present the Wheel of Practices for Better Living, a tool which highlights 19 household activities known to prevent chronic malnutrition during a child's first 1,000 days of life.





Hilda and her daughter Anyi collect eggs from their laying hens at their home in our partner community of Santa Isabel.

SUCCESS STORIES: HILDA SALOJ TUY

By ABPD Staff

Hilda is a mother with two children who began working with us in 2023. Her daughter Anyi is 1 year and 7 months old. When Hilda began our program, she was unsure how to provide her daughter with proper nutrition. Her son, a little older than Anyi, was already showing signs of stunted growth and she was worried that the same would happen to her daughter.

Hilda's worries began to fade once she joined a group of mothers participating in ABPD and ALDEA's programs. This group served as a resource for learning how to ensure her children receive adequate nutrition and as a place to find mutual support among women with similar experiences. Over time, Hilda learned how to provide appropriate meals for her children during each stage of their development and how to maintain a safe and hygienic environment in her home. Today, Anyi is well nourished and is growing at a healthy rate for her age. Hilda is confident that her participation in ABPD and ALDEA's programs is well worth it and can see her hard work paying off.

ALDEA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES

By Gabby Andersen, Grace Cooney, Megan Powell, Julia Sultz, & Olivia Thomspn
ALDEA YPC Members | 2023-2024 Cohort

Participating in the second cohort of ALDEA's Young Professionals Council (YPC) has provided us with a unique opportunity to learn about the challenges facing primarily indigenous Guatemalan communities and how ALDEA and their partners at ABPD work directly with local community leaders to address them. Since early 2023, our group has gained a lot from this incredible experience while also working to rally support and resources for ALDEA's various projects.

A highlight of YPC participation for many of us was having the amazing opportunity to travel to Antigua, Guatemala, for one of the bi-annual ALDEA/ABPD board meetings. Making the trip to Guatemala not only allowed us to immerse ourselves in the country's vibrant culture, but also provided a deeper understanding of the needs and social inequalities present. Visiting a community actively participating in ALDEA programs showed us first hand how community members are empowered through ALDEA's programs and how the funds ALDEA raises are being allocated and producing tangible results.

Understanding ALDEA's evolution has also added depth to the YPC experience. Exploring the rich history of ALDEA as an organization, learning how it has adapted and grown to better address the needs of the communities it serves, and hearing about its future goals has been profoundly enlightening and inspiring. It has been wonderful to both learn and be a part of an organization that is so deeply grounded in its mission and impact.

In addition to learning about the program in Guatemala, YPC members have also had the opportunity to explore the world of nonprofit board work. We met monthly with the two ALDEA Board members serving as YPC leaders and learned about a variety of topics. Each of us also worked directly with a mentor who is a current ALDEA or ABPD Board member or ALDEA Advisor, and we took turns participating in the ALDEA Donor Relations and Governance Committees to learn how they function. We are also working on planning a fundraiser to close out our 18th-month YPC internship term.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of being involved in the YPC has been the sense of community it fosters. Working alongside other YPC and ALDEA Board members who share a passion for making a difference in Mayan communities creates a supportive environment where everyone's efforts are valued. Being connected to a mentor who can share their insights on working with ALDEA as well as their personal life experiences and career advice has proven incredibly enriching for all YPC members.

ALDEA Board members and staff appreciate the perspectives our current YPC members have shared and hope their time in the program will encourage them to make nonprofit board work part of their futures! To find out more about ALDEA's Young Professionals Council, please visit our website at aldeaguatemala.org/YPC. Join @ALDEAGuatemala on Instagram and Facebook to show your support and stay updated on upcoming events and valuable resources.

YPC members Gabby Andersen (left) and Olivia Thompson (right) visit one of ALDEA's partner communities.





Program participants prepare a healthy recipe as a part of our nutrition program in the community of Paquixic.

ALDEA AND ABPD PARTNER WITH “PROJECT CAN” TO PROMOTE DIVERSE DIETS

By Norma Baján, ABPD Executive Director

In January of this year, we began working with the organization “Project CAN” (Cooking, Agriculture, Nutrition) to expand the reach of our nutrition interventions in ALDEA and ABPD’s partner communities. ABPD’s nutrition and empowerment team took part in five training sessions where they learned eight nutritious recipes and teaching methodologies they can use to train others. Additionally, CAN provided a curriculum that uses highly accessible posters, videos, and recipe books that include over twelve recipes for different stages of a child’s development: from six to eight months, and eight months onward.

Following the training sessions with CAN, the ABPD nutrition and empowerment team prepared health promoters from the community of El Rosario to implement the new curriculum that accompanies the recipe books. In this way, community members become the driving force behind sharing and preparing new, healthy recipes to diversify families’ diets and improve nutrition. We expect to extend the use of CAN’s curriculum to other ABPD & ALDEA partner communities in the months to come.

EXPLORE THE GUATEMALAN HIGHLANDS ON AN ALDEA TOUR IN 2025!

By C.J. Sultz, ALDEA Board Secretary and Tour Leader

Join us for an unforgettable experience that combines education, cultural appreciation, and social responsibility! ALDEA offers immersive tours in Guatemala, designed to introduce participants to our impactful programs while highlighting the rich history and vibrant culture of the country. Below are dates for upcoming tours in 2025:

- **February 12 – 20, 2025:** Adventure Tour
- **March 7 – 15, 2025:** Classic Tour
- **March 28 – April 5, 2025:** Women's Only Tour

Learn more and register at:

ALDEAGuatemala.org/guatemala-tours.

(And check later for information on future tours!)

On our Classic and Women's tours, guests can engage with local communities, explore historical landmarks, and gain a deeper understanding of our mission and the unique cultural tapestry of Guatemala. The adventure tour is geared towards those who would appreciate a few more physical challenges, such as climbing a volcano and kayaking. Tour fees range from \$2100 to \$2400 per-person, excluding airfare and a short list of other personal expenses. A \$500 deposit holds your place.

Spots are filling up quickly, so reserve yours today. You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to have the experience of a lifetime.

*"Since returning home, people have asked me what I liked most about my trip to Guatemala. The truth is, I don't know. It was a perfect mix of cultural immersion, breathtaking beauty, and the chance to make a difference. I came home with beautiful hand-woven items and many gifts for friends. But I also came home with warm memories of being welcomed into the homes of inspiring Mayan women. There was also the opportunity to relax by the volcanoes surrounding stunning Lake Atitlan, walk the cobbled streets, eat delicious Guatemalan foods (and even make our own tortillas), and watch women teach their children to weave textiles of art. Finally, there was the opportunity to meet a group of people who wanted to take a trip while making a positive impact. **So, what do I tell people when they ask me what I liked most about my trip? I tell them they need to go themselves because it is too big to share in words alone.**"*

- Danielle Gordon, 2024 Tour Participant

2023 Tour participants pose for a photo in the town of San Juan La Laguna on the banks of the picturesque Lake Atitlán.



Make a difference for generations to come by including ALDEA in your will or estate plan.

To learn more, visit aldeaguatemala.org and click "Get Involved," or contact us at (929) 274-3098 or aldea@aldeaguatemala.org



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Your generous donation will help transform lives. Give now at ALDEAGuatemala.org/donate.

Below are some examples* of the impact your gift can have:

- **\$1,600** can support a family through our full, three-year integrated development program.
- **\$1,000** can provide clean drinking water, a gray water filter, a sanitary latrine, and a vented, efficient cookstove to help a household stay healthy.
- **\$300** can buy a dairy goat (along with the vitamins, basic medicines, and shelter it needs) so young children can benefit from its nutritious milk.
- **\$100** can support nutrition training sessions addressing topics like breastfeeding, appropriate weaning foods, food safety, and recipes made with fresh garden produce.
- **\$50** can provide empowerment training for women and youth to become change agents and emerging leaders in their communities.

* Gifts made to ALDEA contribute to our entire mission, and we apply your donations where they are needed most to support our long-term goals. These estimates are approximate as prices and exchange rates are constantly changing.

We are experiencing unprecedented delays with receiving mail via USPS, potentially affecting contributions from recent months.

If you haven't received a confirmation for a mailed donation, please contact our Operations and Communications Manager at shea@aldeaguatemala.org to verify its status. Your support is essential, and we want to ensure all donations are acknowledged.

To avoid delays and enhance security, consider making out an “electronic check” on our website’s donation page. Just select “EFT” as the payment type on our form. This method is quick, reliable, and ensures prompt receipt of your donation.

Thank you for your understanding and continued generosity. If you have any questions, please reach out.

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