



Primeros Pasos

Annual Report 2013



Mission:

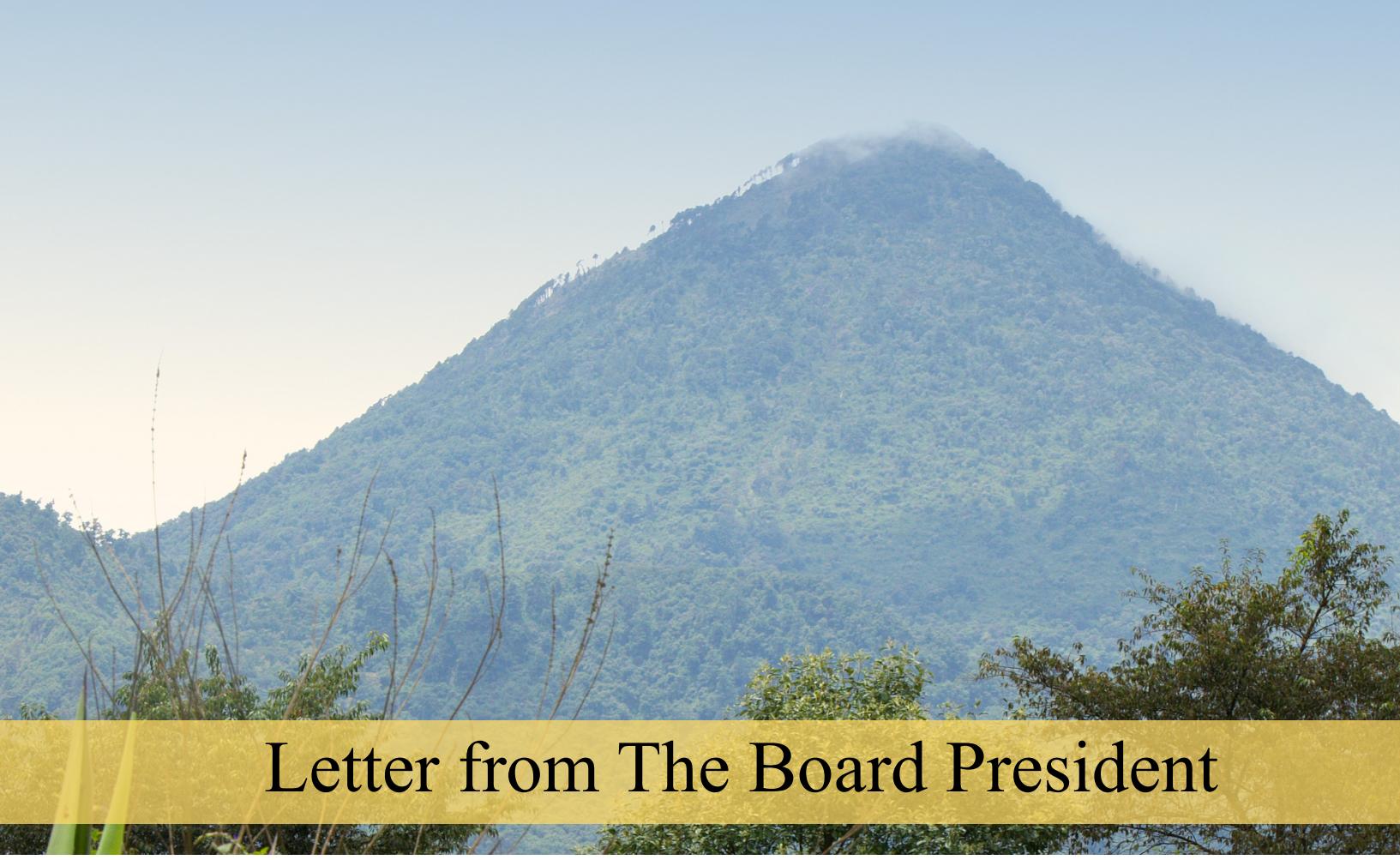
Primeros Pasos aims to improve the quality of life of the rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, through integrated health education projects and access to medical services.

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Improving lives through health care and education.

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Letter from The Board President

Dear Friends of Primeros Pasos,

We have undergone several changes since 2002 when first started our work in Guatemala. However, our mission remains the same: to bring healthcare and health literacy to the historically neglected rural communities of the Palajunoj Valley of Quetzaltenango.

I am thrilled to report that 2013 achieved ongoing fulfillment of our mission during a successful year marked by further growth and innovation. Our clinic and multiple health education programs continued to provide quality, affordable medical care and health education to men, women, and children from communities throughout the valley. Our Women's Health Education program thrived in its sophomore year of its three-year curriculum. Likewise, our Nutrition Recuperation Program for pregnant women, malnourished children and their respective mothers proved to make advancements in its second year, sealing two grants from the foundation One Day's Wages as well as from Habitat for Humanity Guatemala. Finally, we continued our scholarships program for gifted and talented children in the Valley who would otherwise be unable to attend school.

To our supporters – donors, volunteers and advocates all over the world – we extend to you all our deepest gratitude. Know that your support is impactful as it is truly life-saving and life-enabling. It is seen in every child who survives severe malnutrition due to Primeros Pasos interventions, and every person treated for a debilitating condition in the Primeros Pasos clinic. I hope this report conveys the weight of your impact.

Sincerely,



Juan Pablo Echeverría Pereira

Why Guatemala?

While Guatemala boasts the largest economy in Central America, the country trails its neighbors in almost every social and economic index. In 1954, a U.S. sponsored coup initiated a civil war in Guatemala that lasted over thirty years. The ramifications of this conflict are still being felt by the country and have led to critical shortages in health care professionals, medicine, and health centers throughout the country. Guatemala's human development index— a composite measure of life expectancy, income, and education— is the lowest of any other country in the region.

The Primeros Pasos Clinic is located in the rural Palajunoj Valley, home to more than 15,000 indigenous Mayan people. In 2013, the Valley was served by only one government health post, which employed one doctor and one nurse and had no lab or diagnostic technology. Without the means to travel further, many residents in the Valley are left without many options to access health care. As a result, the two primary causes of mortality in the region— respiratory infections and diarrhea— are both highly treatable. Malnutrition is also a very serious problem: the chronic malnutrition rate in Guatemala for children under five is 48%, higher than any other country in Central America. For rural areas like the Palajunoj Valley, malnutrition rates are even higher.

Primeros Pasos aims to improve the quality of life of the rural communities in the Palajunoj Valley through integrated health education programs and access to medical services. We are the only comprehensive and affordable source of local health care in the area, offering medical, dental, and lab services to both adults and children, and providing health education classes year-round to participating schools and community groups.

Guatemala Statistics

- **53%** of the overall population, and **71.5%** of the rural population live in extreme poverty
- **32 out of every 1,000** children die before the age of 5
- **110 out of ever 100,000** mothers die giving birth, the second highest maternal mortality rate in Latin America, behind Haiti. Indigenous women in Guatemala are three times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than non-indigenous women
- **48%** of children under the age of 5 and **80%** of indigenous children under 5 are chronically malnourished

Source: UN Stats, UNICEF

2013 Highlights

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- **2,322 children** received healthcare and education through the Healthy Schools Program
 - **3,478 patients** received consultations and treatments in our clinic
 - **1,500 patients** were treated by the Flying Doctor's Mobile Clinic
 - **242 women** attended Stairs to Good Health Program workshops and events
 - **50 mothers** received nutritional support through the Nutritional Recuperation Program



Medical and Dental Program

Since the Primeros Pasos Clinic first opened its doors in 2002, our Medical and Dental Programs have provided the only source of high quality health care to the residents of the Palajunoj Valley. Though the Guatemalan government operates Health Outposts in the Valley, these stations are poorly staffed and stocked and contain no equipment for medical testing.

The Primeros Pasos clinic strives to make up for this deficit by providing healthcare services that Valley residents can trust. We are staffed by an experienced resident doctor and a team of fourth year Guatemalan medical students completing their rotations. Our labs can process fecal, blood, and urine samples, allowing us to diagnose and cure common illnesses, such as parasitic infections. Our consultations, procedures, and prescriptions are offered free to the children of Palajunoj Valley Schools, and at a nominal cost to other Valley residents.

Medical Program Impact

This year, Primeros Pasos has continued to provided high quality and low cost care to the residents of the Palajunoj Valley. In total, 3478 walk-in patients received consultations and treatments at the clinic. The most common morbidities recorded were upper respiratory infections, intestinal parasites, tonsillitis, and warts in children and urinary tract infections, hypertension, diabetes, and digestive problems in adults. While communicable diseases like upper respiratory infections and intestinal parasites are highly treatable, they persist among the most common causes of child mortality in Guatemala. Due to the time and cost of transportation out of the Valley, most residents can not afford to seek treatment in Quetzaltenango's public hospital. The treatments that Primeros Pasos provides for these illnesses are essential to the health the Palajunoj Valley communities.



The Primeros Pasos Clinic also provides a safe place for women to receive family planning consultations. The average birthrate for indigenous Guatemalan families such as those in the Palajunoj Valley is 6.2 children per family and many women express a desire for family planning, but lack access to services. In 2013, we provided contraceptives to 119 women, who most frequently opted for the hormone injection or the oral contraceptive pill. We are proud to provide trustworthy family planning and women's health care services.



We are also excited to share that in 2013, Primeros Pasos held its first annual Health Fair in collaboration with the Flying Doctors, a group of general physicians, gynecologists, optometrists, chiropractors, pediatricians, traumatologists, and physical therapists from the United States, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Medical consults were Q30 for adults (3.85 USD) and Q10 for children (1.28 USD), and included treatments, laboratory tests, and medications. Throughout the course of the week, they provided quality care to approximately 1,500 patients from the

Palajunoj Valley and Xela. We are excited about our partnership with this talented group of medical specialists, and look forward to hosting events with them in the future.

In sum, 2013 was successful year for Primeros Pasos Medical and Dental Programs. The effects of our consults extend beyond the walls of the clinic; our medical services improve the health and quality of life in the communities of the Palajunoj Valley year round.

Source: World Health Organization 2012



Healthy Schools Program

Our Healthy Schools Program lies at the heart of Primeros Pasos's mission to increase health literacy and access in the Palajunoj Valley. Every year, we conduct mobile clinics and provide age-appropriate health education workshops in all 10 schools in the Valley as well as several community nurseries. This year, the Primeros Pasos medical and dental staff saw 2,322 students through our Healthy Schools clinics and 143 young children in nurseries. All students were tested for parasites in the Primeros Pasos Lab, received free medical consultations and dental care, and returned home with required medications, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and soap.

Primeros Pasos recognizes the importance of a holistic approach towards improving children's health. At each of our mobile clinics, we provide age-appropriate health education on various topics related to health and wellbeing. Students participate in engaging workshops on basic nutrition, hygiene, self-esteem, sexual health, the environment, and more. We are continuing to work on evaluating, improving, and expanding our Health Education Program for 2014.

Healthy Schools Program Impact

The World Health Organization recommends periodic deworming for all children living in highly

endemic areas, along with health and hygiene education, and provision of adequate sanitation where possible. In 2013, 61.9% of tested children were found to have at least one intestinal parasite. If left untreated, these parasites can impair the nutrition status of individuals and cause physical and cognitive impairments. Following the WHO guidelines, Primeros Pasos aims to reduce parasitic infection rates with the three-pronged approach of a) providing free anti-parasitic medications to affected primary



school children, b) Preventative Education: giving interactive workshops on sanitation and hygiene to all students, and c) increasing sanitation infrastructure in schools.

Though rates of parasitic infection remain high, Primeros Pasos continues to see progress. In 2013, Primeros Pasos presented comprehension on proper hygiene and sanitation at all 10 schools of the Valley. Since 2004, we have increased the proportion of students who brought viable stool samples from 41.1% to 56.7%, allowing us to better diagnose parasitic infections.

The problems that face the health of the Palajunoj Valley are complex and can be difficult to solve due to the lack of safe water and sanitation infrastructure. According to UNICEF, 40% of infections are caused by lack of proper sanitation at school rather than in the home. In March 2013, Primeros Pasos collaborated with students from Vanderbilt to build five hand washing stations at schools in the Valley, to allow students to apply their knowledge of personal hygiene.





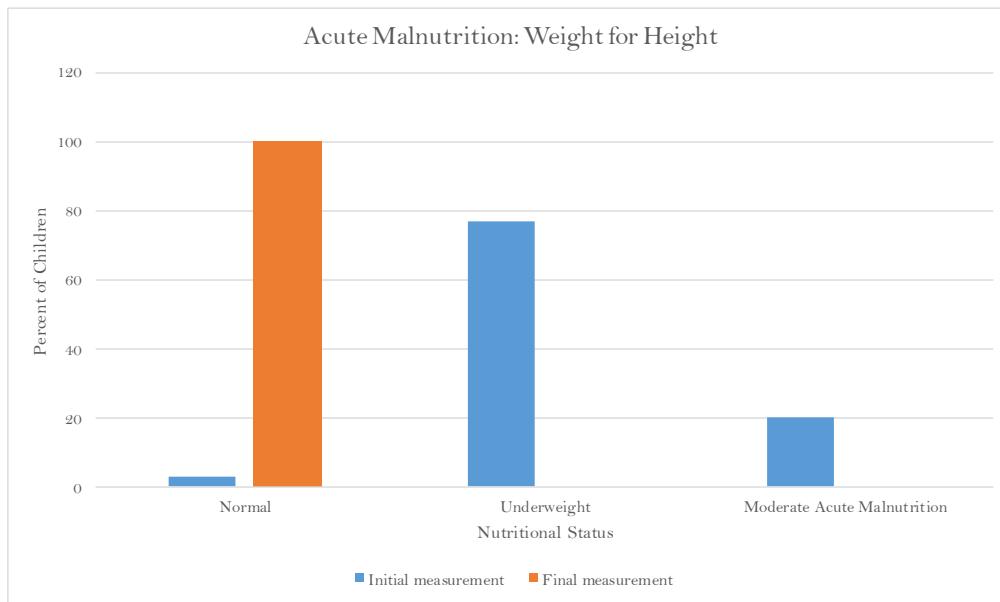
Nutritional Recuperation Program

At Primeros Pasos, we believe in holistic health and preventative care. The most critical time in a child's development is the first 1,000 days from conception to their second birthday. During this critical period, often-overlooked malnutrition can have lifelong impacts on a child's physical and mental health. For this reason, Primeros Pasos's Nutritional Recuperation Program focuses on recovering the nutritional status of children under two years of age. Our program works to combat childhood malnutrition both by providing direct nutritional assistance and addressing the social and infrastructural issues that impede a healthy life. We assess children's nutritional states throughout the program and provide them as well as their mothers with free clinic visits, culturally sensitive educational workshops and cooking classes, and direct nutritional assistance such as prenatal vitamins and high-protein meal supplements. The nutritional foundation that our program builds gives children a healthy start and benefits that last a lifetime.

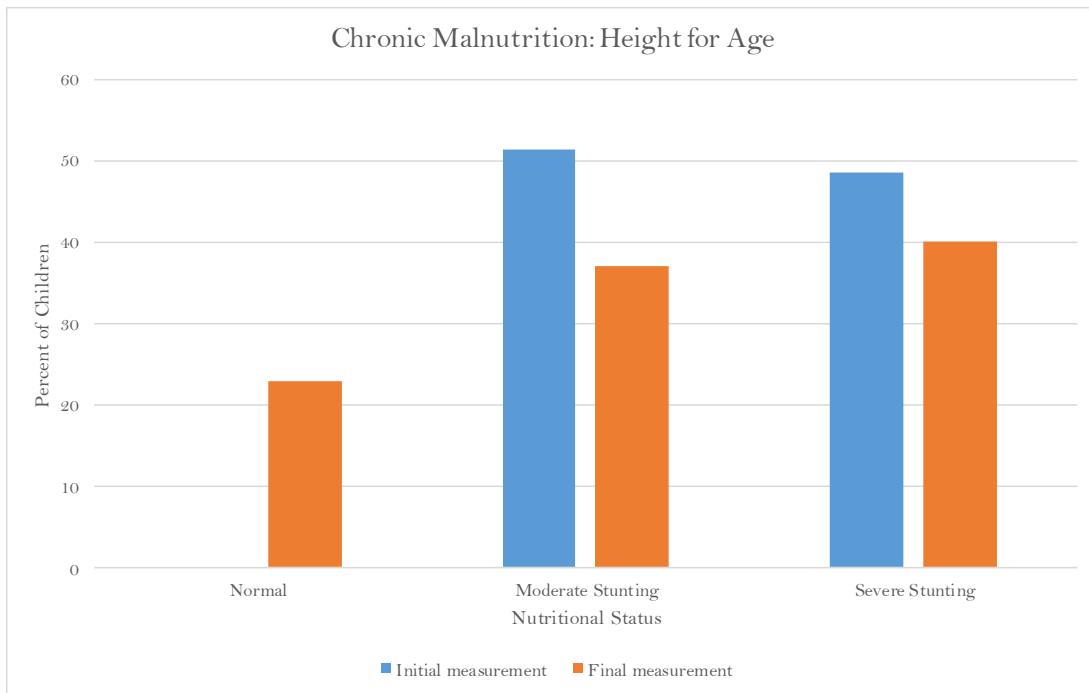


Nutrition Program Impact

In its sophomore year, we provided yearlong support for 20 pregnant mothers and 35 malnourished children under two years of age. Monthly weight and height surveillances were conducted throughout the year, and nutrition and health packages were distributed to all 50 families each month. We monitor both acute malnutrition, low weight for height, and chronic malnutrition, low height for age, to gauge the nutritional status of children enrolled in the Nutritional Recuperation Program.



At the beginning of the program, all but one child had low weight to height ratios. 27 children (77%) were underweight, and 7 children (20%) suffered from moderate acute malnutrition. By the end of the program, all 35 children had reached a normal weight for their height, indicating a successful recovery from acute malnutrition. All children born during the program maintained a normal weight for height.



Chronic malnutrition is a highly prevalent problem in Guatemala, affecting over 48% of children nationally. Generally taking effect before the age of two, chronic malnutrition can lead to both physical and mental stunting and is difficult to reverse. Typically, the height to age ratio of chronically malnourished children decreases with respect to WHO growth standards until the age of two, then remains below standards. At the beginning of the year, 18 participating children (51%) had moderate stunting and 17 children (49%) had severe stunting. By the end of the year, 8 children (23%) had reached a normal height for age, and the number of children with moderate and severe growth delays were reduced to 13 (37%) and 14 (40%) respectively. While we were unable to recuperate all children from a state of chronic malnutrition, our results from 2013 are encouraging. Without intervention, it is highly unlikely for chronically malnourished children to ever recover a normal rate of growth.

In addition, to weight and height measurements, we monitored various health metrics to evaluate the overall impact of our program on the health of the enrolled children. The proportion of children with one or more intestinal parasites declined from 88% of children during the first checkup to 43% at the final checkup, and the number of children with a common cold decreased from 57% at the first checkup to 14% during the final checkup. These statistics reflect an improvement in healthy home conditions.

Over the course of the program, we conducted 63 home visits to help mothers develop healthy households. These resources make it possible for mothers in our program to improve the sanitation and health of their homes. Final home visits confirmed increased hygienic practices in the home, including a greater proportion of clean latrines and the presence of personal hygiene. We thank **Habitat for Humanity Guatemala** for partnering with Primeros Pasos to execute our Healthy Homes Initiative, which provides potable water, smokeless stoves, sanitary latrines, water filters, and home repairs to women enrolled in the program. We also thank **One Day's Wages** for providing us with a grant which made this year's program possible. With their support, our Nutritional Recuperation Program has made great strides, and changed the nutritional path of 50 children in the Palajunoj Valley.

Sustainability of the Nutrition Program

The Nutrition Program is developed over a period of one year, thus, has been essential the consolidation of factors that intertwine within the project, among which we could highlight:

The program relies on the wide range of help of the community authorities from the very beginning. Upon observing the results of the nutritional states of the children, a demand to become a participant of the project began to arise. These participants wanted to join the project in order to attend meetings on Skill Development, workshops on diet and food preparation, as well as motivational chats.

Through the thematic development of the meetings and the given medical treatments, one can observe the transformation of the nutritional state of the majority of the children, which then created incentive for the group of women to continue participating in the project.





The Implementation of Familial Gardens

With skills in harvesting, the family diet will be improved as the quantity of vegetables in each meal of the day will be increased. Furthermore, greater harvests will generate economic incomes from selling these vegetables, and thus, providing the means to achieve a healthy daily diet of the family.



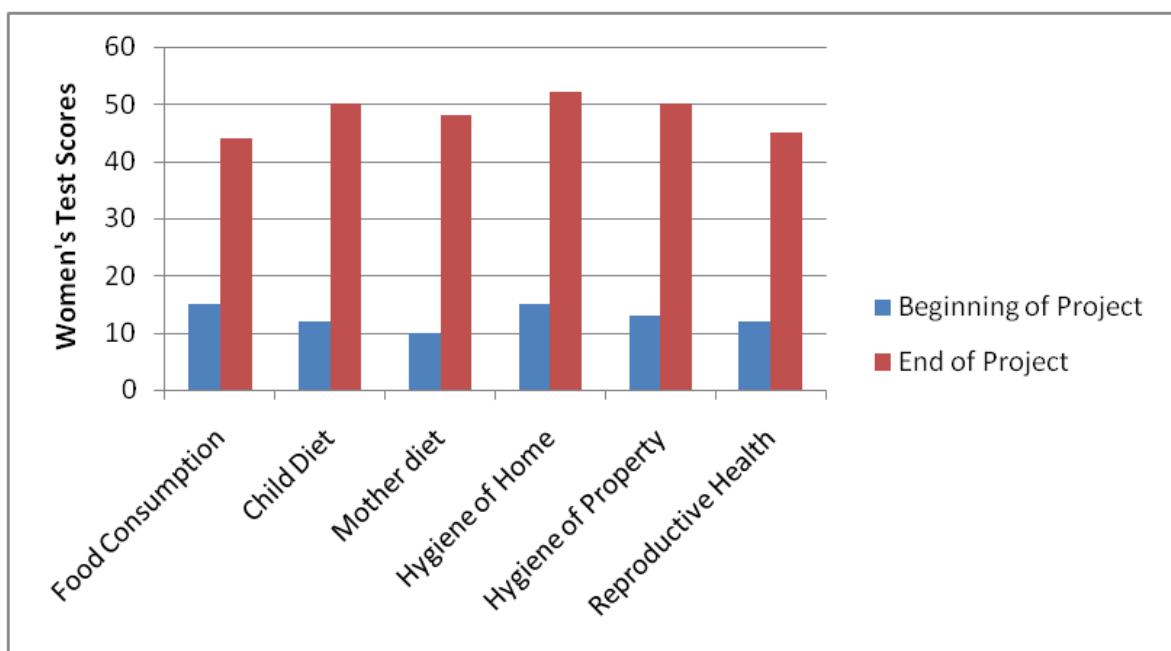
Skill Development

Through the skills development module implemented weekly, the project became successful in motivating the mothers of the families in recognizing the importance of nutrients in the food they consume daily. Therefore, the application of these healthy habits to maintain the cleanliness of the home as well as personal hygiene has improved the environment in which children live, allowing them to enjoy a high quality of life.

Accomplishing Goals & Expanding Knowledge

During the process of the project, distinct themes and modules were developed with the objective of expanding knowledge as well as improving the quality of life of the participating women of the project. In order to evaluate the knowledge of the participating women about the most relevant project topics, an evaluation pre-test and post-test were designed and taken by the participants before and after the workshops in order to determine their knowledge level of the workshop topics. These tests were evaluated with a specific mark in accordance with what was taught in the workshop.

In the following detailed graph, one can observe the topics most relevant during the project and that emphasize health and nutrition of the children as well as of the mothers of the families.



The above graph demonstrates that the majority of women of families improved their knowledge during the project modules of Skill Development, Chats as well as Workshops, inspiring and motivating the Nutrition Project team to continue working for the development of this vulnerable population of people that do not rely on education obtained during childhood.

The Nutrition Program taught us about several topics that have helped me to take care of Jorge well because there were a lot of things that I didn't know when my children were born: proper diets for babies and the special hygienic care the children require so that they don't get sick or get parasites. Now Jorge is a healthy child that doesn't have parasites due to the great hygienic care I take of my home. My baby now is 1 year and 2 months old and weighs 15 pounds. — Dina Cahuex, 25 yrs old & son Jorge Gustavo Orozco Cahuex, Community Chuicavioc





The Stairway to Good Health Program

Women's Health Education

The Stairway to Good Health, our women's health education program, teaches women to be health promoters in their own homes and leaders in their communities. In 2007, Primeros Pasos began to reach out to mothers in the Palajunoj Valley whose children were already involved in our well-established Healthy Schools program. Recognizing the importance of reinforcing healthy habits in the home, we developed The Stairway to Good Health curriculum, which empowers and encourages women to make conscious, informed decisions about their individual health and the health of their family and community.



In 2013, Primeros Pasos worked with five groups of women in communities throughout the Palajunoj Valley: 36 women in Tierra Colorada Baja, 14 women in Xepache 14, and 21 women in Candelaria. The groups are led through three, yearlong curriculum modules to educate women about family health and personal development.

They are first introduced to basic preventive health topics such as hygiene, nutrition, and first aid, which seek to improve the overall health of the entire family and build confidence in the group setting. From there, our educators begin to delve into more specific women's health topics such as family planning, menopause, and breast cancer. During their second year, women receive workshops focused on self-esteem and community participation. These sessions integrate various solidarity and confidence building activities and feature local guest speakers. In the third year, the groups are given two options, plan and execute a project benefiting their community, or become health educators and start a new group.



The Stairway to Good Health Program Up Close

One objective of the program was to inspire the women to obtain an improved attitude and upkeep of good health practices and habits through a systemized process of Health Education.

The program consisted of 28 Health Workshops that focused on helping the women to have more awareness and knowledge of how to better care for their health in order to reduce costs, for example of medications, and placing an emphasis on their diets as a way to prevent illness.

Additionally, another 23 workshops were centered on Personal Development and accompanied with practical exercises. Combining the women groups from the communities Tierra Colorada Baja, Candelaria and Xepache, these workshops focused on and emphasized the importance of the women's self-esteem as it impacts the well-being of their children. As shyness is a common characteristic among the women, creating major obstacles to achieve true change, these workshops are even more imperative and necessary. Moreover, the program celebrated Mother's Day through 3 small activities that aimed to help the women recognize their work as mothers in their home as to motivate them to always improve their role.





Another objective of the program is promoting not only Women's Health but also the health of teenage girls through a comprehensive approach that seeks to improve their quality of life as well prepares the young girls for their adult life. Throughout the year, the women and young girls, as well as their children, received free medical consultations which included pap smear examinations and fecal laboratory testing to determine if they had any gastrointestinal infections, such as parasites.



During community visits, the Program Directors organized activities for the women, such as a reflection sessions for Women's Day and Mother's Day. The Program Directors also conducted activities and exercises that were based on the participating women's interests, helping them to not only realize their potential and capabilities but also put them into action as well.

Financial Summary

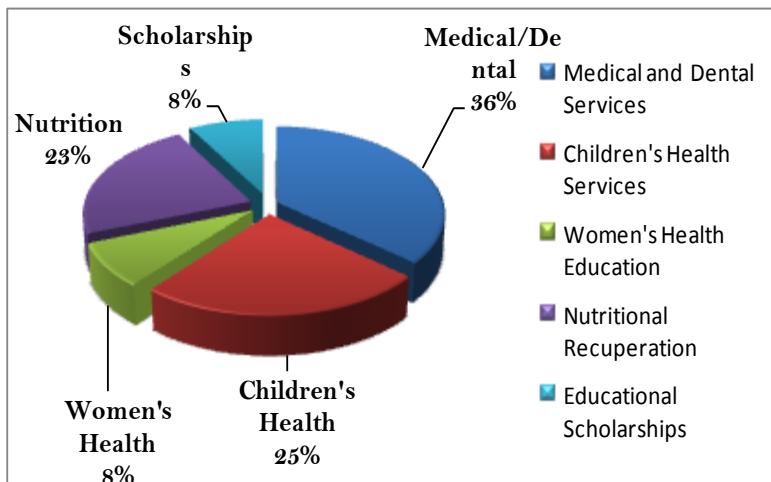
Primeros Pasos relies almost solely on small individual donations and grassroots fundraising initiatives, and works diligently to make these donations go as far as possible. Fundraising for Primeros Pasos is coordinated by the Inter-American Health Alliance (IAHA), a U.S.-based 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 2004 to support Primeros Pasos' operations. Additionally, Primeros Pasos' Nutrition Recuperation Program earned a grant from the foundation One Day's Wages as well as from Habitat for Humanity Guatemala.

Primeros Pasos is a program of Asociación PASOS, a Guatemalan-registered non-profit organization founded in 2004. Its NIT (tax ID) is 8147040-1.

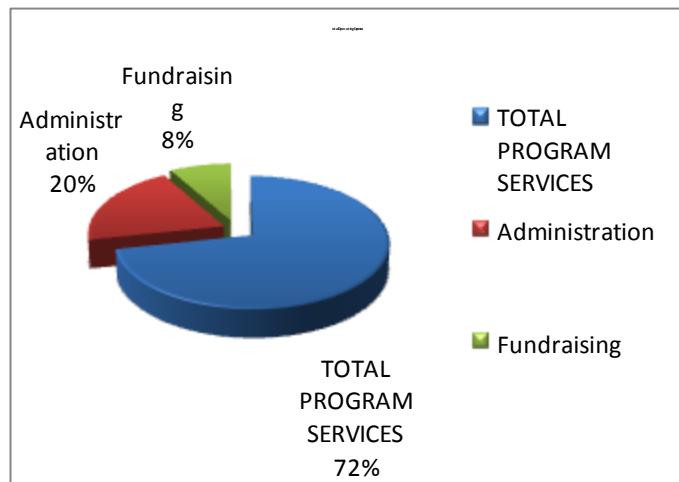
Operating Expenses

Medical and Dental Services	\$ 24,654.18
Children's Health Services	\$ 16,729.91
Women's Health Education	\$ 5,549.18
Nutritional Recuperation	\$ 15,422.12
Educational Scholarships	\$ 5,549.18
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	\$67,904.57
Administration	\$ 19,116.59
Fundraising	\$ 7,747.42
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$94,768.59

Total Program Services



Total Operating Expenses



2013 Leadership

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Dental Program Director Dr. Byron Quixtan

Laboratory Director Irma Mazariegos

Nutrition Program Director Crisalida Susana Tacam

Women's Health Education Program Director

Miriam López

Scholarship Program Director Lucy Alvarado

Children's Health Program Directors

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