



On November 22, our growing team came together to relax and celebrate another year of transformative work!

Dear Friend,

Hello! Welcome to our final newsletter of 2024!

It's been a tremendously busy few months, filled with many wonderful opportunities to meet and strategize with our team and partners, share our research and insights, and welcome new friends and old for visits, including our annual Board Retreat.

We also hosted our fall Insight Trip, which included a visit to the fantastic Day of the Dead kite festival in Santiago, Sacatepéquez, where we had several chance encounters with none other than Guatemala's President Bernardo Arévalo, who appeared fully engaged in the festivities. In the photo at right, Board Member Chris Davies caught him in action!

Wishing you a lovely holiday season!

Anne

Anne Kraemer, CEO



Click on the image above for a quick video recap of recent events!



Premio Nacional de Innovación 2024 awards.

## INNOVATION AWARD HONOR!

We are so proud and excited to share that Chief Medical Officer Dra. Waleska López Canú and our Mobile Maternal & Infant Health Program received this year's prize for health in Guatemala's National Secretariat of Science and Technology (SENACYT) [National Innovation Awards](#)! The winners (one in each of 5 categories) were selected from 141 entries.

The [Mobile Maternal & Infant Health Program](#), which saves mothers' and babies' lives by working with indigenous midwives and care navigators to support healthy births in rural communities, relies on strong collaboration with key partners, including midwives, [safe+natal](#), and the Ministry of Health.

**Congrats to the team and thank you to SENACYT for this honor!**

## SHOWING OUR WORK

We had a terrific time visiting team members and patients on this fall's [Insight Trip](#), which took us to our buzzing headquarters in Tecpán and surrounding villages; the Kaqchikel Maya archeological site of Iximche; Lake Atitlán and the gorgeous town of Santa Catarina Palopó; and finally, the stunning Day of the Dead Giant Kite Festival in Santiago, Sacatepéquez, the place where we got our start.

As always, the highlight was the families who were kind enough to invite us into their homes and share the extraordinary struggles and joys that come with fighting for the best possible health for their children in remote, underserved communities.



Wrapping up the Insight Trip at the giant kite festival.



Since we couldn't bring all our visitors to the field, our team found ways to bring field experiences to our visitors!

In October, we had the pleasure of a visit from the Board and team leaders from **Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP)**, a key partner on our work in reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health. Our team got creative and did a bit of role playing to show how we work with patients to overcome some of the barriers that rural, Maya people face in accessing quality healthcare. We were so proud of our Women's Health and Maternal & Infant Health teams, who brought to life the work they do day by day to educate, provide primary healthcare, accompany patients, and ultimately save lives.

Earlier in the month, we got the opportunity to connect with an array of creative, dedicated individuals from philanthropy, government, NGOs, business & beyond at the **Central American Donors Forum (CADF)** conference and **El Directorio** networking event in Antigua. We're still processing all the amazing ideas that percolated up in these gatherings.

## BE A CHANGEMAKER, DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

We hope that you have been enjoying our year-end campaign featuring community members, team members, volunteers, and donors who are helping to advance health equity in Guatemala by supporting our work in rural, Maya communities.

[Give today](#) to receive a 1:1 match and help us reach our goal of raising \$105,000!

GIVE NOW!



## GETTING STRATEGIC

Leaders from our women's health, nutrition, and chronic and complex care programs recently came together for a monitoring and evaluation planning session to assess what's working and what needs to change in 2025. We conduct these SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) — or FODA (fortalezas, oportunidades, debilidades, y amenazas) — exercises to strategize how to best use our resources to maximize our impact.



## MATYOX (THANK YOU) TO OUR MIDWIFE PARTNERS!

Our Mobile Maternal & Infant Health team recently hosted a holiday gathering in Tecpán to celebrate the midwives who are at the center of our work supporting safe and healthy births.

Many of our midwife partners helped to design the Mayan Kaqchikel phone application they use to help monitor mothers' health and provide timely care. Thanks to the program's great success, we are working to double the number of midwife partners to 80 so together we can cover more births and save more lives in the Tecpán region.

In the meantime, the celebration was a time to share some fun, joy, and fellowship. The event ended with words of gratitude from our team, highlighting the importance of continuing to care for patients during the holiday season. Some of the midwives also shared a few words. "We are very grateful to you for helping us in so many ways,



thank you for your patience with us, you have taught us a lot," said midwife Rufina Suar.



Midwife Rufina Suar



Karyn Choy and Dr. Peter Rohloff at the Global Brain Network meeting.



## KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We've had the privilege of sharing our research and experiences as well as learning from others in a variety of forums this fall.

Among the highlights:

Chief Medical Officer, Dra. Waleska López Canú, former volunteer and medical student Jackie Diaz, and Christine O'Dea, who leads our collaboration with the University of Cincinnati, presented at the **American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Global Health Summit in Phoenix** in September. In a talk entitled "Your Partner Should be Your Role Model," they shared insights on how our indigenous-led Guatemalan nonprofit prioritizes anti-colonial values while building a lasting partnership with a US academic medical center, the University of Cincinnati's Department of Family Medicine and Community Medicine.

Chief Science Officer Dr. Peter Rohloff and Dra. López Canú presented on Overcoming Health Inequities for Maya Populations for the **Harvard Global Health Institute Global Health Coffee Session**, October 25. They focused on our work addressing high maternal-infant morbidity and mortality, heat-related injuries in agricultural workers, and other critical health issues faced by Guatemala's Maya population.

In November, Dr. Rohloff and Community Ethics and Engagement Coordinator Karyn Choy presented on Working with Indigenous and Minority Communities at **The National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center Global Brain Network Meeting** in Rockville, Maryland. [Karyn checks in via video here!](#)

## PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS

Our Center for Indigenous Health Research continues to be a leading publisher of health research in Guatemala. Recent publications include:

[Worldwide trends in diabetes prevalence and treatment from 1990 to 2022: a pooled analysis of 1108 population-representative studies with 141 million participants](#)

We're proud to have contributed to this comprehensive global study on diabetes (types 1 and 2) published in The Lancet. The study found that the global rate of diabetes doubled from 1990 to 2022, with much of the increase occurring in low- and middle-income countries, where treatment rates remain low. In Guatemala, the rate of diabetes in 2022 was 17% — an 8.6% increase from 1990 — and fewer than 42% of people with type 1 or 2 diabetes were receiving treatment. These rates are even worse in the rural, indigenous communities where we work. Maya Health is currently collaborating with the Guatemalan Ministry of Health to improve diabetes treatment and availability across the country.

[Evaluating the World Health Organization's HEARTS Model for Hypertension and Diabetes Management: A Pilot Implementation Study in Guatemala](#) and [Reach and effectiveness of a HEARTS hypertension pilot project in Guatemala](#)

These studies looked at the feasibility and effectiveness of using the World Health Organization (WHO) HEARTS package to improve primary care management of hypertension, diabetes, and other cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors in Guatemala's Ministry of Health (MOH) primary health care system. They found that this approach generally holds promise for Guatemala's public health system.

[Practices of Maize Handling and Nixtamalization to Reduce Fungal Toxin Exposure in Rural Guatemala](#)

Researchers examined diverse communities' harvesting, processing, storage, and preparation processes for maize, along with locally tailored and culturally sensitive guidance to help prevent the development of fungal

toxins that pose health risks.



## SO THIS HAPPENED

All too often, this is what travel looks like in Guatemala, even on our major highways. En route from Tecpán to Panajachel, we witnessed this mudslide, which blew through a guardrail and shoved a bus to the edge of a ravine on the Pan-American Highway.

A kilometers-long back-up of cars, motos, trucks, and buses idled while land movers cleared the trees and mud – only to have a second slide undo their work just as they were finishing.

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*Thank you so much for your ongoing support!*



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