



Women's  
Justice  
Initiative

**Annual  
Report 2017**



# A Year of Progress

Dear Friends,

2017 was a year of significant growth for WJI as we reached more individuals and made substantial progress toward ending the cycle of violence and gender inequality in rural Guatemala.

In 2017, 4,060 women, men, and girls participated in our programs, benefiting over 20,000 people and transforming communities. Our Legal Services Program grew by 72% from the previous year with a total of 495 legal cases. WJI's 29 Community Advocates were at the forefront of our work, leading rights-based workshops in their communities, partnering with local leaders, and providing accompaniment to women seeking legal services. The Advocates' transformation into women's rights educators, local leaders, and mentors to women and girls in their communities is an inspiration to us all.

In addition to working with women and girls, WJI worked with 280 community leaders to enact 11 Community Action Plans, which establish community-based responses to gender-based violence and child marriage. WJI trained 47 government service providers including police, judicial, and health officials on improving their responses to cases of violence.

The challenges remain great. Guatemala faces some of the highest levels of violence against women and girls in the world and has the third highest femicide rate globally. Save the Children recently named Guatemala the worst country to be a child in Latin America and it ranks third lowest in the region on the Gender Inequality Index. Rural, indigenous women and girls are disproportionately impacted due in part to their social isolation and limited access to resources.

With your support in 2017, WJI surpassed its goals and continued its critical work to build a safer and more just society for Guatemalan families. We hope you will join us in supporting and protecting the rights of women and girls in rural Guatemala.

With gratitude,

**Clara Ferraro**  
*President of the Board  
of Directors*

**Kate Flatley**  
*Executive Director*



# About WJI

The **Women's Justice Initiative (WJI)** improves the lives of indigenous Guatemalan women and girls through education, access to legal services, and gender-based violence prevention. Founded in 2011, WJI combats gender inequality and violence against women and girls in rural communities in Guatemala through its culturally grounded, bilingual Mayan Kaqchikel-Spanish programs and innovative, community-based approach.

## WJI envisions a Guatemala in which women:

Are active leaders in their communities

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Have access to legal services

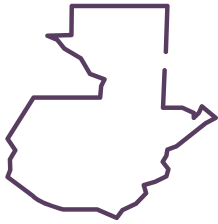
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Have knowledge of their legal rights and can safely assert these rights

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Are free from violence against women and girls

# Why Guatemala?



Over **40%** of the population is Indigenous

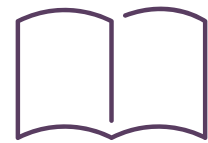


## **GUATEMALA**

has the 3<sup>rd</sup>. highest rate of violent deaths among women in the world.

**75%** of the Indigenous population lives in poverty.

By age 15, **60%** of Indigenous girls drop out of school.



Guatemala ranks 3<sup>rd</sup>. lowest in Latin America on the **Gender Inequality Index**.



By 18, **40%** of Indigenous girls are **married**.



## Making a Difference

In 2017

# 4,060

women, men, and girls participated in WJI's programs, benefitting over

# 20,000

individuals in

# 31

 communities.



# Women's Rights Education Program

The Women's Rights Education Program is a six-month legal literacy and empowerment course that educates women on asserting their rights. Women receive training on issues including domestic violence, sexual and reproductive rights, and property rights. The program provides skill-building workshops, focusing on leadership, decision-making, and communication skills.

**557**

women graduated from the program.



**6%** of women agreed that it is justified for a husband to abuse his wife, a **71%** decrease from before program participation.



**34%**

of participants have sought legal aid from WJI, an increase from **4%** before the program.





# Adolescent Girls Program

WJI's Adolescent Girls Program works to prevent early and forced marriage through the implementation of community-based interventions and protection mechanisms. The program improves girls' knowledge of their rights; transforms local norms that condone child marriage; and ensures parents and community leaders take action to delay early marriage.

**98%**  
of girls who participated in the program remained unmarried.



**291** girls participated in the Girls Empowerment, Rights, and Leadership Course.

**40%**

increase in girls who plan to get married after 21 years of age.



*"I feel freer, stronger, I know that I have rights and I feel an obligation to help other women."*

Irma, Community Advocate



## Community Advocates Program

The Community Advocates Program is a two-year training program that combines comprehensive human rights education with leadership development for local women. These women become leaders, women's rights educators, and mentors to their peers. They multiply WJI's impact by facilitating workshops in their communities and providing accompaniment to women seeking legal support services from WJI.

**29** women were trained as Community Advocates.



**9** Community Advocates facilitated or co-facilitated workshops.





# Legal Services Program

The Legal Services Program provides free legal services directly to women in need by bringing lawyers and paralegals to their communities and by providing bilingual Mayan Kaqchikel-Spanish resources. WJI's mobile legal outreach ensures that the most marginalized women, who may not be able to leave their homes or communities, can access legal support and counseling. The program focuses on combating gender-based violence and securing women's economic rights, through land titling and registration, child support, alimony, and paternity cases.



In 2017, WJI provided legal services for:

**238** survivors of violence

**183** child support, custody, and paternity cases

**172** property rights cases

**72%** increase in cases from 2016 to 2017

**55** survivors of violence received psychological counseling





## Engaging Community Actors

WJI trains community leaders and government officials to improve local responses to violence against women and girls. WJI partners with local leaders to develop Community Action Plans that establish mechanisms that prevent and respond to gender-based violence and child marriage. By building the capacity of police, health, and judicial officials, WJI improves their responses to cases of violence to ensure that women and girls receive adequate support and protection.



**11** Community Action Plans to combat violence against women and child marriage

**47** police officers and government officials trained on violence against women



**280** community leaders partnered with WJI to address violence against women and girls

# Voices from the Field

“*My dream is that one day **all women may know and defend their rights** so that there is no more violence in the home nor in the community.*”

Irma, Community Advocate

“*All my life I have felt pain and suffering, but through WJI, I started to feel better because I was able to speak with others about my problems. For the first time I understood that I had rights. **I learned that I have value.***”

Teresa, Women's Rights Education Program Participant

“*WJI is helping more victims of violence. They accompany the women to court and advise them. **Women feel stronger when they are accompanied by WJ.***”

Gloria, Judge

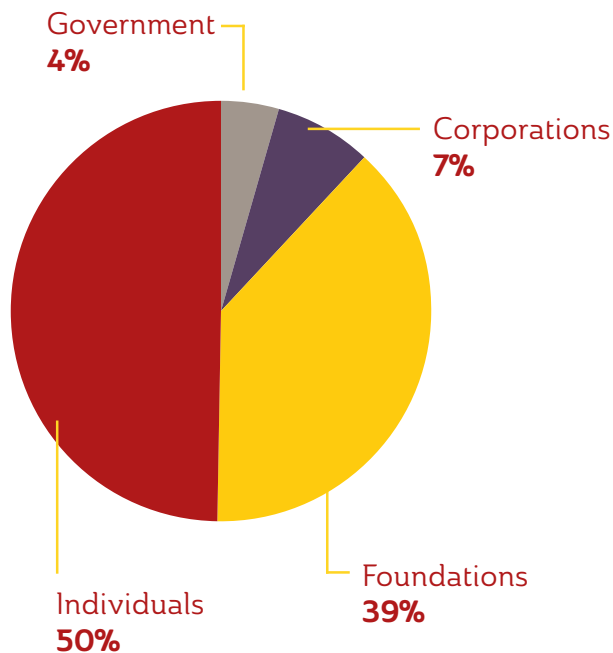
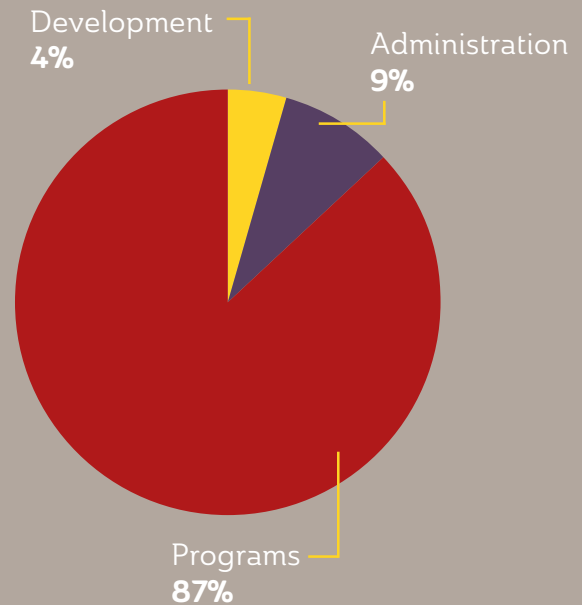


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# Financials

## Expenses

Programs	\$174,671
Administration	\$17,018
Development	\$8,868
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$200,557</b>



## Revenue

Individuals	\$121,615
Foundations	\$93,501
Corporations	\$18,045
Government	\$10,418
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$243,579</b>

**Net Surplus \$43,022**

2017 financial information reflects audited results.

**THANK YOU**  
**for your support!**

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[womens-justice.org](http://womens-justice.org)

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