



CasaSito Annual Report 2019

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Dear CasaSito Friends,

2019 was an important year for CasaSito. We celebrated our 15th year with a new office and new strategies. And to mark this milestone, we organized a 5k and 10k run “Corre Por Mis Sueños”, where more than 200 people participated and which was supported by many local businesses and our faithful donors.

All of our scholars and staff from Sacatepéquez, Alta Verapaz and La Primavera del Ixcán gathered in Antigua and spent two joyful days.

Alice Lee
CasaSito Co-Founder



Guatemala 2019

2019 was another bustling year as an election year and with many politic events, fatal car crashes, and the end of CICIG in Guatemala. Many events centered around politics, including arrests of old politicians, some in the country, and others outside the country linked to drug trafficking.



Guatemala literature is in mourning. The night of January 28, 2019 our Mayan Kiché poet: Humberto Ak'abal passed away. He was born in Totonicapán in 1952. He was the creator of thousands of verses with deep roots in the Mayan cosmo vision, and the author of more than twenty compositions translated to more than 20 languages.

In August, with more than 1.5 million votes, Alejandro Giammattei won the presidential elections and will follow the controversial Jimmy Morales as the 9th president of the democratic era in Guatemala. (Democracy was established in 1996 after many decades of a political system dominated by the military by means of coups and electoral frauds.)

In September, the presidential ex-candidate and ex-first lady, Sandra Torres, was arrested, accused of illegal electoral financing and illicit association.



The Youth Development Program in Mural Form

Young people are searching for opportunities while encountering difficulties in life.

(The colorful tree represents opportunities, darker colors represent difficulties)

Then they find CasaSito and become scholars of our Youth Development Program.

Participating in our extracurricular programs and workshops, and with psychological support, they improve in knowledge and gain necessary life skills.

(the color changes from dark to bright)

With these tools, they are equipped to confront their challenges with confidence.

They find that they have the power to identify and seize opportunities, and reach their goals!



Meet the Youth Development Program (YDP) Scholars

In 2019, we supported, in total, 100 students in our YDP with scholarships.

We had less scholars than the previous years due to reduced funding. However, this situation has improved. Not only we can support more students in 2020, but we received grants to start the pilot Teaching Training Program.



Ethnicity

Indigenous 69

Ladino 31

NOTE: This is based on how scholars choose to identify themselves

Grade

Middle School (30)

High School (54)

University (16)

Geographic Area

Rural 18

Semi-rural 67

Urban 15

Gender

Women 51

Men 49

Program Snapshots of 2019

1. We supported 100 scholars, their families, and communities in 3 districts of Guatemala – Sacatepéquez, Alta Verapaz and La Primavera del Ixcán
2. We impacted 41 communities
3. We had a 95 % retention rate
4. 97% of scholars achieved the grade point average (75%)
5. We had 27 graduates (9 middle school, 16 high school, and 2 university)
6. We provided 11 extracurricular activities
7. We hosted 13 personal youth development workshops and 8 for parents
8. 1,090 hours spent on monitoring
9. 1,386 volunteer hours completed by scholars



The extracurricular activities: The activities for 2019 were: Art Club, Computer club, Creative Writing, Debate Club, English Club, Math Club, Music club and Theater Club (Teatro del Oprimido), and last but not least the vacation courses that were: Japanese, Zumba lessons and Harp.



CasaSito English Club Alta Verapaz 2019: <https://youtu.be/xYGWyRAINR8>

CasaSito Theater Club Sacatepéquez 2019: <https://youtu.be/7Bcof2IVXz8>

CasaSito Debate Club Sacatepéquez 2019 (sponsored by Developing Scholars): <https://youtu.be/Szy69K7g7es>

Attitudinal Evaluation: CasaSito carried out an evaluation in Sacatepéquez in September and October, with a sample of 20 out of the 35 scholarship students. The objective of this was to measure their ability to express their feelings, attitude changes, problem solving capacity and behavior. We encourage the reader to take a look at the attached file to know more about results and the impact of this study group.

*To read the complete report, consult the attached documents.



Psychosocial Support:

Our accompaniment process is a support tool for the families and scholars. The monitoring takes place throughout the school year, from January until October. We interviewed each scholar once a month, visited their schools twice a year, and conducted family visits regularly.

Psychological Support: In CasaSito, leaving room for mental health is very important. We can offer a professional individual psychological support. CasaSito works cooperatively with Rafael Landívar University which provides clinical psychologist interns making themselves available for weekly sessions as necessary. During 2019 there were 21 cases dealt with among scholarship holders and parents. The bigger problems found were: relationship issues (between parents and their children), conflictive relationship problems (between parents), and daily life issues. There were 645 hours invested in monitoring, follow up, emergency cases and psychological support.



“No te diré mi nombre” (I Won't Tell You My Name) (translated version)

Hi! I am a CasaSito scholarship holder who is studying his possibly last year in this organization. I won't tell you my name since I figure that after I leave there will be someone that shines and writes better than I do, but, who knows.

The future is uncertain and that's why it is so scary or motivational, but today, I am not writing about existentialism or anything like that. Today, I will explain to you how is to start from scratch here in CasaSito.

If you are a newcomer, please feel at home. CasaSito is an organization that tries to create leaders and not to repress them. Many think they will be judged and even I thought that way, but now that I've experienced what it really is to belong here, I can say that the CasaSito team has helped and seen me grow, as with many other stars that shine brightly in the sky.

You'll realize that more than an organization with psychologists, it is more like a family. On your path towards developing yourself, you will forge friendships with which you'll create strong bonds or, in the best case, get along with everybody. Don't see the clubs as an extra burden, but see them as tools, which will help you as a student and as a professional. Along the way you'll be able to develop many skills you never knew you had or never admitted to having out for fear. After this, you'll keep moving along the way in this crude world heading to the achievement of your goals and if you are part of middle school then you'll keep studying until you get to high school. Here everything steps up a level and you will have to be able to manage your time. CasaSito will still support you so that you feel sure of your destination. Now, along with time, your determination will be a valuable tool so you can keep up. If you have determination and the desire to overcome, you'll be able to succeed in high school.

But the moment of farewell will come. Your last year is one of the saddest ones because here, you will remember each adventure and experience you had with CasaSito staff, with your friends, and believe it or not, with your teachers. But at the same time, this last year is required to finish a cycle and start another one, one in which you'll proudly remember you were a scholarship holder in a small but beautiful organization, which shaped your first steps and saw you grow and evolve on a trail full of experiences, many of them beautiful, and others that made you think and lose sleep, but with a lot of effort you could find a solution.

In which case let me tell you, after finishing your scholarship process, don't forget it. Because CasaSito helped you to move forward in life and sometimes gave you the strength to pass the tests of space and time. Congratulations! You've become one of those stars CasaSito creates year after year. Now you shine with much more clarity along with the others that were able to keep going and forge their future. You've achieved what other people at the beginning said was too hard and you should give up. Without further ado, I want to tell you that you are unique and special person, with all your abilities that inspire others to succeed, and with your weaknesses which you may see as something bad, but which really guide you on the road to success. This is what makes you more human: to fall, get up and move forward.

Best regards,
Another CasaSito scholarship holder “Carlos Joshua Gutiérrez Paredes”



CasaSito Fondo de Emergencia - A couple of minutes can save lives and reduce damage.

In an effort to support three communities located in zones surrounding the volcano Fuego which erupted on June 3, 2018, killing thousands of people, and to reach a long-term impact, CasaSito Association supported the installation of three volcano warning systems in the communities of El Rodeo, Santa Rosa and Las Palmas, located in the department of Escuintla. More than 1,500 families residing in the three communities will benefit from this project.

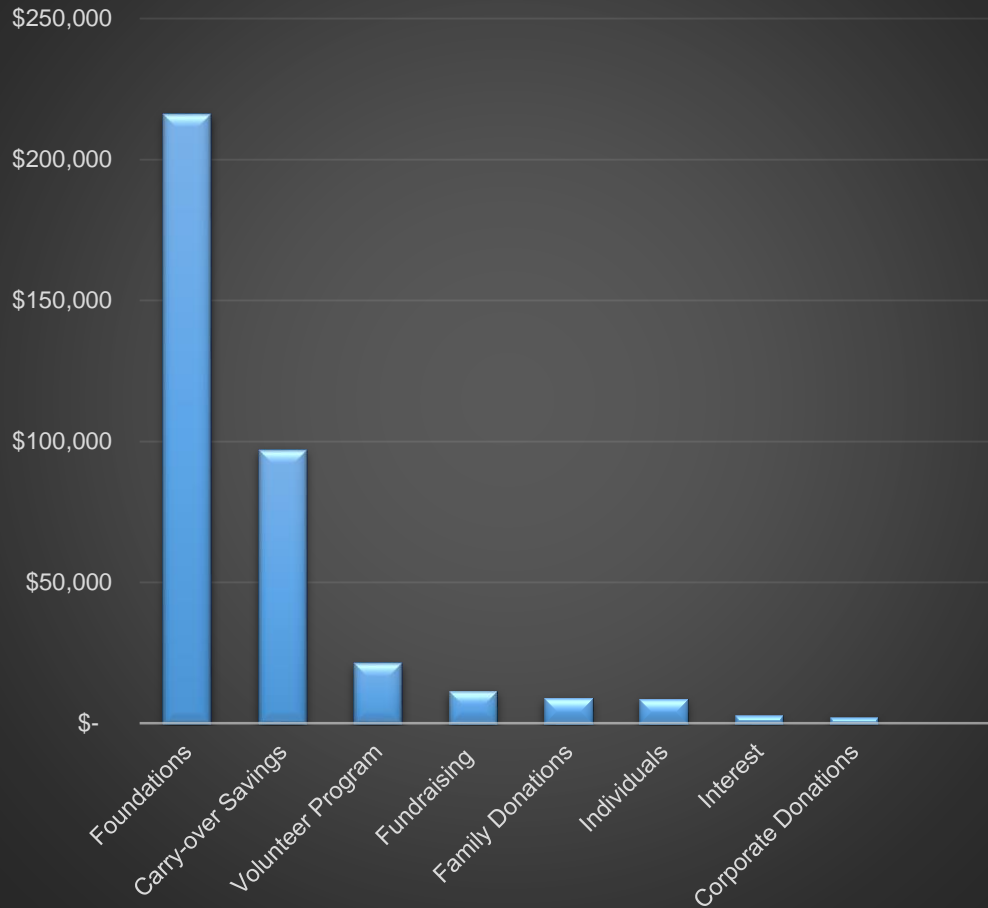
The systems consist of sirens that will be activated by a selected group of trained residents of the communities when imminent volcanic danger threatens or in case of a possible evacuation. Residents will be advised to evacuate the communities and head to the nearby highway by vehicle or foot. This alarm will give them valuable minutes more to save their life.

The first two warning systems in the community of Santa Rosa and Las Palmas were inaugurated in April and the third warning system was inaugurated in June in the community of El Rodeo, in commemoration of the one year anniversary of the eruption.

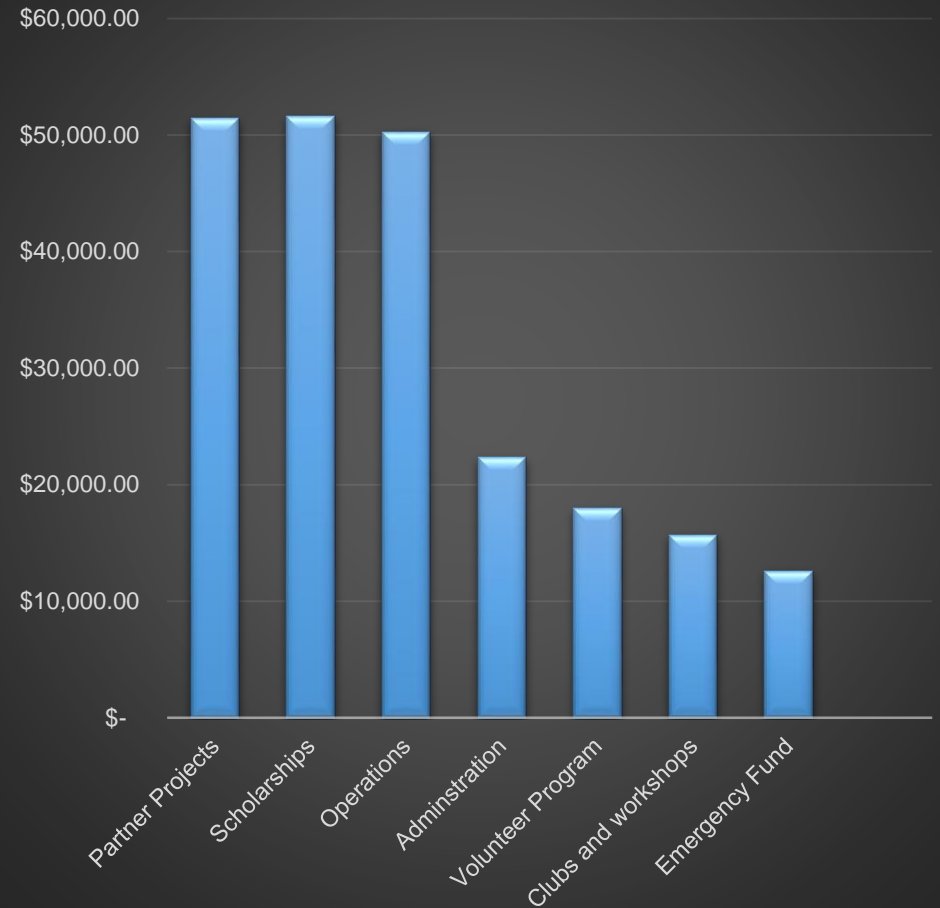


Financial Summary 2019

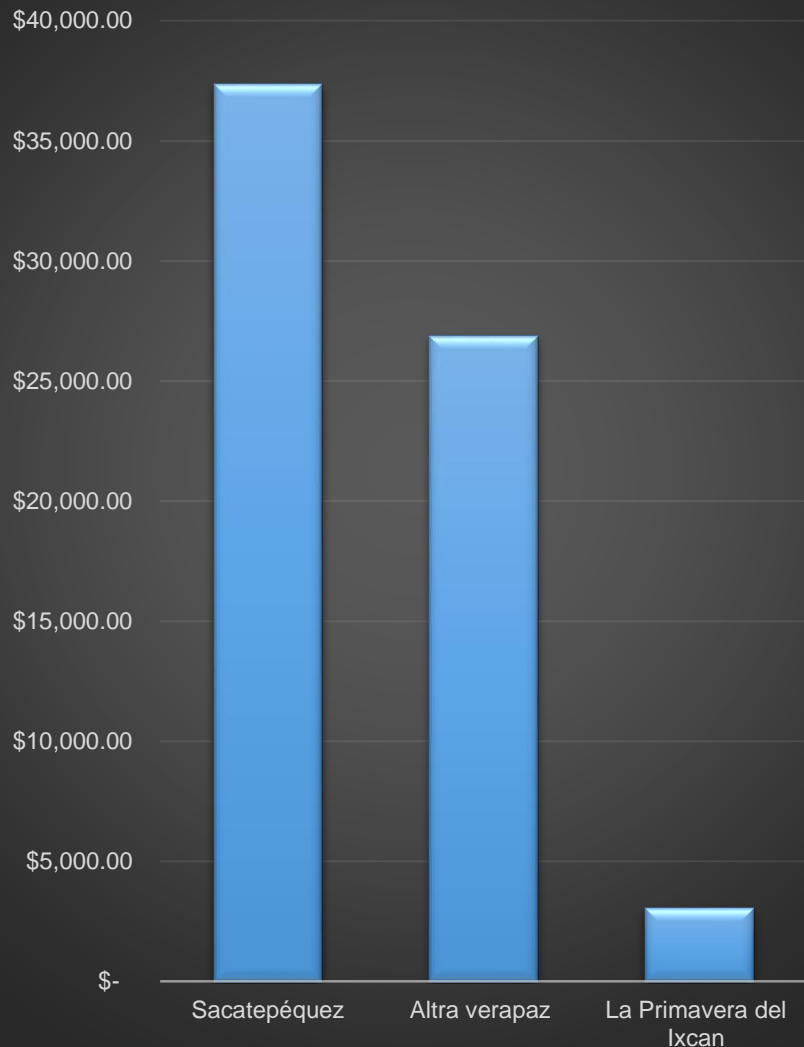
CasaSito USA & Guatemala 2019 Total Funds: \$367,896



CasaSito USA & Guatemala 2019 Total Expenses: \$221,754



Scholarships, Services, Clubs & Workshops: \$67,241



Sacatepéquez : 35 Scholars

- 6 Middle School (Basico)
- 23 High School (Diversificado)
- 6 University (Universidad)
- Psychological supports
- Workshops for scholars and parents
- 10 clubs activities: Art club; Debate club; English club, Creative Writing club; Japanese club; Math club, Music club, Theater club; Volunteer club, Zumba

Alta Verapaz : 53 Scholars

- 24 Middle School (Basico)
- 21 High School (Diversificado)
- 8 University (Universidad)
- Psychological supports
- Workshops for scholars and parents
- 4 clubs activities: Art club, English club, Debate Club; Math club

La Primavera del Ixcán : 12 Scholars

- 10 High School (Diversificado)
- 2 University (Universidad)
- Workshops for scholars and teachers
- 2 clubs activities: Math club, Music club

Meet the 2019 CasaSito Team



2019 CasaSito Operation Team Sacatepéquez

Silke Wahl, Development Consultant
Lourdes González, Regional Director
Miriam Valle, YDP Director
Corina Cho, YDP assistant
Carolina Aragon, Work Scholar



2019 CasaSito Operation Team Alta Verapaz y Quiché

José Marcos de la Cruz – Regional Director
Lucy Morales, Rural Social Worker
Fernanda Heinemann, Rural YDP Facilitator
Kevin Omar Sis – Work Scholar



2019 Board of Directors USA

Greg Schwendinger, President (Co-founder)
Alice So Fong Lee, Director (Co-founder)
Eric Behrs, Secretary



2019 Board of Director Guatemala

Christoph Ege, Active member
Alice Lee So Fong, Treasurer (Founder)
Paula Castellanos, Vice President
Silke Wahl, President
Desirée Iturbide, Active member
Manuela Rosales, Secretary



Camino de 10 años - A 10 Years Path

By Lourdes González – Regional Director of Sacatepéquez

My name is Lourdes González, but in the CasaSito family they kindly call me Sisi. I belong to CasaSito for 10 years. I was the first employee. I recall the first time I came here, I was a professional with little experience, very insecure about my capabilities because unfortunately in Guatemala there's no professional empowering system that helps you believe in yourself.

I started as the scholarship program coordinator in 2009. This was my first experience working with foreigners and administering an education program for youngsters. I do remember with profound gratitude that despite of my limits as a professional and as a human they taught me with patience and empathy. Alice and Greg were the founders and always motivated me to express myself with liberty and confidence. They taught me with their example how to become a better human being and to address others that came to CasaSito the very same way they did with me.

As time passed by and working with lots of people, I learned many things, for instance, being honest with what I feel and express myself freely with two ingredients: empathy and respect. I learned that regardless of the position you occupy, even for menial tasks, we all need to cooperate. I learned that listening is the key to find fair solutions for everyone. I learned to be organized and transparent with the expenses and to manage the resources responsibly, trying to take advantage of every cent. Now, after 10 years, I consider myself a different person professionally and personally speaking.

Today, I'm the regional director of Sacatepéquez. CasaSito has trusted me to become the team leader. This was a very big change, but I take it with confidence and optimism because I know I have what is needed to become a good leader. I know this position is of high responsibility because not only do I have to supervise the programs and staff, but also to administer well the allotted resources. I feel confident and supported, because I count with the help of a Board of Directors that is highly involved, founders that are my mentors, a work team totally committed, loyal and capable. Along with the support of my family they motivate me to grow every day.

If I could define the year 2019 with three words, they would be: change, growth and gratitude. Thanks to each one of you, I'm utterly proud of belonging to CasaSito!

Challenges and Plans



Being a director in CasaSito has involved a delicate balance between being firm, strict and at the same time showing myself as a friendly, humble and an attentive person. I never imagined becoming a director. It was a huge surprise but above all a personal and professional challenge that has allowed me to contribute to have a better Guatemala. In CasaSito, since the very first day working here, I haven't stopped learning and as director I believe the most important thing is to continue supporting education. This is the only tool that helps us choose in difficult times and upcoming opportunities that life provides us with. I'm in love with my work. – **José Marcos, Regional Director - Alta Verapaz and Quiché**

CasaSito will broaden its activities for teachers in 2020 with a view to attack the roots of low quality education and create a bigger impact in the Guatemalan society. The fundamental missing piece in the Guatemalan educational system is the quality of teachers. Teachers here often lack the knowledge of basic teaching skills, innovative subject variety, teaching techniques and methodologies that help leave traditional teaching behind and could help impact positively the education system in this country.

The Teacher Training Program is a holistic program that includes partial scholarships, personal development workshops and activities. This is focused to students and teachers that have as a goal to awake their critical thinking spirit, leadership and desire for change. This will broaden the teachers' academic, professional and personal opportunities supporting them to succeed. They will become innovation pioneers in their schools.

Furthermore, with the goal of a wider range of activities, in 2020 CasaSito will offer new extracurricular activities to its students, like Japanese and piano lessons, that will help them in their artistic and cultural development.

As CasaSito expands its activities, we are planning on diversify our efforts in fundraising, focusing on increase our online crowdfunding presence, local fundraising activities to build consciousness of CasaSito's work within the community, and international grants. – **Silke Wahl, President of Board of Directors Guatemala**





“Sin Fronteras” - Without Boundaries (translated)

By: Algamaby Cyc

One day came to my life a blessing, I call it happiness.
CasaSito

A place without boundaries, a center to learn
Providing its love to rise
With joy and enthusiasm I gained new experiences
One of the best experiences life has given me
Each knowledge I keep as a legacy
It's like a light that turned on inside me

Three years belonging to CasaSito,
Many judgments to make
CasaSito your name with my heart I shout
For the gratitude that marks my whole being
Unique shared moments
My happiness is priceless
With friends we shared an education
A smile that sprouts in me
I come here, thanking you for your mercy

Volunteers, Scholarship Committees ,and Friends

