



InnovativeCommunities.org At work in Guatemala

Lake Atitlán, located in the highlands of Guatemala, is a place of incredible beauty, edged by volcanoes, and surrounded by small picturesque Mayan villages. But when you enter one of these villages, you find people trying to eke out a living in very difficult circumstances.



Over 15 years ago, Jacqueline Mealing from Kaslo BC started to work with the weavers of San Antonio Palopó, one of the Atitlán communities. During the past few years, she's been joined by other volunteers, and – thanks to generous contributions from friends in Canada – we've been able to expand the scope of the project to include not only San Antonio, but neighbouring villages around the lake.

What do we do?

Stoves: In both San Antonio and neighbouring Santa Catarina, our main focus has been the installation of safe, fuel-efficient stoves. Traditionally, Mayans cook over unventilated open hearths in their one-room adobe houses. This causes respiratory illnesses, eye infections, and burns to children. Traditional cooking fires also use large quantities of wood, a problem which is contributing to rapid Guatemalan deforestation. The Onil stove (which costs just over \$100 US), developed and produced in Guatemala, is vented, smoke free and uses 70% less wood. We have installed over 500 stoves in the past three years. Already, we are hearing from the health workers in these communities that health is improving dramatically.

Education: We also focus on educational support. Many children still can't attend school because they don't have the small amount of money they need for school supplies. We work with the elementary schools to provide school supplies and equipment, we are building up school libraries, and we provide scholarships for needy students who can't afford to attend secondary school. InnovativeCommunities.org also supports a scholarship program in the nearby community of San Pedro.

On-the-Ground Support: Often, our volunteers are faced with urgent needs in the community, such as a hungry family whose father is out of work, a recent widow with six small children to feed, a mother needing medicine for her child. With your help, we are able to help meet these urgent needs.

How can I help?

When you buy a San Antonio scarf, you help provide much-needed employment, and the proceeds go to buy stoves. If you give a donation, you are helping support work in the Atitlán communities. Because volunteers pay all their own expenses, every cent you contribute goes straight to projects in the communities. InnovativeCommunities.org is a registered charity, so you will receive a tax receipt for your donation.

Here are two ways to make a donation:

- Write a cheque to **ICO Foundation**, write "Guatemala Communities" on the memo line along with other instructions — stoves, schools, general — and send it to ICO Foundation, PO Box 8300, Victoria, BC V8W 3R9
- Donate online at innovativecommunities.org (choose Guatemala: Stoves for Health or Community Development)



For more on ICO's work in Guatemala, go to atitlan.innovativecommunities.org

