



## CHIK'AJ Q'IJ PROJECT: Poqomchí Mayan communities lead their transformation

The goal of community transformation is to impact as many communities/families as possible with the resources we have. To this end, on the basis of community consultations and the joint analysis carried out by LASC, Helvetas, ADRI and the communities of Chisiram, Chepenal, El Salmar and Santa María, in San Cristóbal Verapaz, in the department of Alta Verapaz, have been selected as priorities for intervention in Phase IV. Drinking water supply is the top priority and starting point for collaboration with local stakeholders to strengthen trust, leadership and a shared vision for development.

The main actions proposed in Phase IV are: (i) constructing and/or rehabilitating community water systems to ensure safe and reliable access to households; (ii) conducting participatory diagnostics of social services (health, education), housing and basic infrastructure, environmental conditions (including source protection), and local economic dynamics (including market analysis and opportunities for sanitation-related enterprises); and (iii) implement initial source protection measures. This phase will provide a community-based understanding of medium- and long-term development pathways, and a clear delineation of actions and indicators to pursue them in a sustainable manner.

At the end of the intervention, members are expected to withdraw their physical and capital contributions, and community members will continue to work together on their own to achieve everything they want for the development of their community. In the exit phase, the partners move into a regular advisory and supervisory role.

Our Phase IV program focuses on five integrated activities: watershed protection, inclusive local leadership, WASH, income generation (MSD), and baseline/diagnostic, which together align with LASC's priorities. Leadership capacity is developed through the formalization of COCODEs, gender equitable participation standards and social auditing. The "community dream tree" is part of our participatory diagnosis. Income generation includes an MSD assessment and a community income generation plan, as well as pilot projects.

The assessment will also explore the sanitation value chain to identify business opportunities and local private actors capable of providing affordable sanitation products and services in future TC phases. At this stage we did not implement general financial education. Food security interventions are addressed through pilot projects for climate-smart and post-harvest production.

Under WASH, Phase IV will take the first steps towards a market-based approach to sanitation by conducting a basic assessment of local sanitation supply and demand, identifying potential private or community actors, and exploring opportunities for affordable solutions. The first six months are spent on mobilization and preparation (baseline, establishing governance, pre-feasibility), followed by implementation.

## OBJECTIVE:

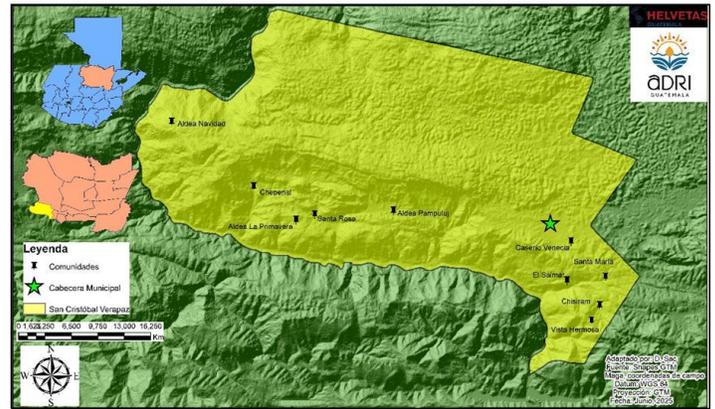
To contribute to the comprehensive and sustainable development of rural communities in poverty by strengthening local leadership, improving access to basic services such as water, sanitation, health, nutrition, decent housing and education, and promoting financial capacities and entrepreneurship that generate income and improve the living conditions of the population, especially of the Maya Poqomchi People.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Each of the activities planned for the next 18 months is described below:

- **Watershed protection and environmental management.** This result seeks to analyze the micro-watershed of the intervention area, to determine its current conditions and its potential to provide environmental goods and services to the population, and then define the priority protection measures. Implementing measures to protect water recharge zones and areas of influence of water sources.
- **Inclusive local leadership.** It seeks to strengthen the leadership of women, men and young people for the transformation of the community, starting with the effective management of water systems. Actions include mapping community actors and analyzing their influence; the formalization and legalization of water governance structures; the norms of equal participation between genders; training on the roles and responsibilities of water committees; and accountability mechanisms to ensure transparent use of resources.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).** Prioritize the supply of water to households through pre-feasibility studies and the construction or rehabilitation of systems. Provide disinfection kits, plumbing tools and spare parts for repairing systems in case of an emergency. Strengthen the technical and administrative capacities of the Water & Sanitation Committees (CAS); through training on operation and maintenance plans, financial management, peer-to-peer exchanges with model committees, and raising awareness among beneficiaries on the efficient and safe use of water. The first steps towards a market-based approach to sanitation will be introduced through a basic analysis of the market and stakeholders, which could support affordable improvements in sanitation in future phases.
- **Revenue generation.** Community transformation requires families to achieve economic autonomy. Accordingly, we will identify and evaluate income and employment opportunities. Using a market systems development (MSD) approach, engaging market players to address major constraints. Pilot tests will be implemented with seed money to validate the most promising economic alternatives; personalized technical-business advice and training will be provided to the producers involved.
- **Reference diagnosis of the project.** Through immersion in the territories and confidence-building, a participatory diagnosis of the current conditions of the community (health, education, basic services, income, environment, infrastructure) will be carried out. A shared vision of the "tree of dreams", climate risk analysis, adaptation planning (participatory climate risk management), and social conflict analysis will be developed in a participatory way to establish an appropriate and relevant intervention strategy with the reality of the communities. Finally, the results will be consolidated into a project baseline to guide implementation and track long-term changes, with active participation of the four partners for the co-design and approval of a budgeted Community Transformation Plan (TC) that includes the timeline, roles/responsibilities, and a timeline for releasing resources.

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:



## FAST FACTS

### Geographical location:

The project will be implemented in Guatemala, in the department of **Alta Verapaz**, specifically in the municipality of **San Cristóbal Verapaz**.

The communities that have been prioritized for this first phase of intervention are: 1) Chisiram, 2) Chepenal, 3) El Salmar, and 4) Santa María.

<b>Phase and duration:</b>	18 months
<b>Start Date:</b>	January, 2026
<b>End Date:</b>	June, 2027
<b>Phase Budget:</b>	\$ 1,309,405.05

### Entidades involucradas:

- Municipality of San Cristóbal Verapaz
- Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare
- Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food
- Water and Sanitation Committees -CAS-
- Community Development Councils (COCODE)
- Organized Community Groups

### Donor:

- Light a Single Candle Foundation

### Partners:

- Lead Partner: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
- Implementing Partner: ADRI, Integral Rural Development Association



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