

# HEP+ Guatemala: Focus on Youth

## About HEP+ Guatemala

Under the global Health Policy Plus (HP+) project, the [Health and Education Policy Plus](#) (HEP+) program in Guatemala aims to strengthen in-country partners' capacity to navigate complex environments for effective policy design, implementation, and financing aligned to their priorities. Grounded on its mandate to strengthen and advance health policy priorities in family planning, reproductive health, and maternal health, HEP+ is also providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Why Youth?

Guatemala's population is young: 60 percent of people are under 24 years of age. As the majority population, youth are the future and powerful catalysts for change. They are critical partners for designing, managing, and monitoring community programs and their participation in health and education initiatives is essential for the success of programs to support or improve their wellbeing.

Young people deserve opportunities in health, education, and employment that are relevant, accessible, affordable, appropriate, and acceptable to youth. Connecting youth to these opportunities in Guatemala enables them to achieve prosperous, secure, and dignified lives; unlock their potential; and enable them to contribute to a better future for themselves and their country.

## Our Partners

### JAxJS—Young Artists for Social Justice:

[JAxJS](#) is a network of young artists committed to advocating for social, cultural, political, and economic development in Guatemala through artistic expression. Their mission is to use art to gain support among decisionmakers and the Guatemalan population for policies that: improve health, education, and nutrition; prevent violence and other social injustices; and are inclusive of vulnerable populations such as children, youth, women, and indigenous peoples.

**OSAR Youth—Guatemala's Reproductive Health Watchdog for Young People:** HEP+ helped to create [OSAR Youth](#) as a branch of OSAR Guatemala, which monitors and oversees the implementation of reproductive health public policy. OSAR Youth focuses on strengthening the capability of young people to advocate for comprehensive sex education and youth-friendly health services.

## Our Work with Youth

HEP+ works with youth on topics related to sexual and reproductive healthcare, prenatal and postnatal care, food security and nutrition, responsible parenthood, gender-based violence, irregular migration, COVID-19, water and sanitation, civic engagement, and government accountability. With capacity building and knowledge strengthening in these areas, Guatemalan youth are better equipped to advocate for youth-friendly policies that promote better health outcomes.

## Youth Activities



Hold educational workshops to promote awareness and incentivize advocacy for policy improvement



Implement capacity development programming on accountability, advocacy, and for policy improvement



Co-create public campaigns to promote community awareness, stimulate conversation, and encourage advocacy



Sponsor and provide technical assistance organizing JAxJS and OSAR Youth events to amplify their advocacy and watchdog efforts



Foster partnerships among youth organizations and other civil society groups to expand reach and effectiveness



Support JAxJS to become a formally registered association for sustainability and eligibility to receive donations



Facilitate commitments between youth groups and local mayors, legislators, and government agency representatives to foster trust and promote youth needs

## Our Impact

- **Over 75 alliances** brokered among youth groups and policy stakeholders, including corporations, government agencies, cooperatives, and universities, adding US\$25,000 in new funding for JAxJS for community engagement and monitoring
- **More than 50 trainings** held for JAxJS, increasing participant understanding of topics like migration, health, reproductive health, advocacy, social media, public relations, program management, and government accountability by an average of 60 percent
- **28 mayoral commitments** made addressing issues advocated by JAxJS, leading to youth-oriented policy wins on youth commissions, educational and vocational trainings, and investments in water and sanitation
- **More than 250 JAxJS public events** held, including art competitions for awareness on important social justice topics
- **Nearly 80,000 event participants** reached through JAxJS and OSAR Youth community engagements in 2020–2021 to spur community conversation
- **OSAR-App developed** to monitor health indicators, including teen pregnancies, maternal mortality, and its causes in Guatemala
- **Six municipal youth commissions created posts for JAxJS members** on their boards of directors, enabling them to vote on and debate policies that impact youth and leading to establishment of four municipal youth offices and four youth policy proposals

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