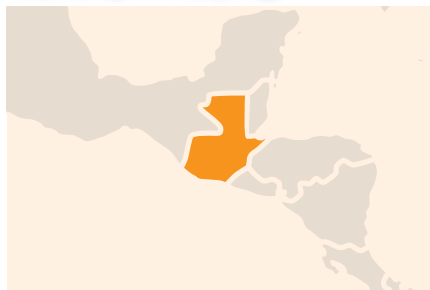


# Partner Profile: Friendship Bridge



Photos courtesy of Friendship Bridge



In Guatemala, an estimated 68 percent of adult women and 72 percent of low-income adults do not have access to formal financial services.<sup>1</sup> The country also faces major healthcare gaps, with Universal Health Coverage (UHC) among the lowest in the Americas—scoring between 40–59 percent on the UHC Service Coverage Index, well below the regional average of 74 percent in 2021—and 42 percent of the population reporting unmet healthcare needs.<sup>2</sup>

**The Friendship Bridge, Inc. (Friendship Bridge)** is a social enterprise operating in Guatemala and is a partner in Global Partnerships' Women Centered Finance with Education and Health initiatives.<sup>3</sup>

#### WHO IS SERVED:

Friendship Bridge focuses on working with underserved female microentrepreneurs. As of June 30, 2025, they currently serve over 27,000 clients, all of whom identify as female and many of whom identify as indigenous.<sup>4</sup>

#### WHAT IS DELIVERED:

Friendship Bridge serves female entrepreneurs at different stages of their business journey, with working capital

loans, alongside financial, business, and health education. Clients borrowing through group loans, often micro and small entrepreneurs, receive short educational training during monthly meetings, covering diverse topics such as financial literacy, health, and agriculture. Those with growing businesses can access hands-on training focused on practical skills such as baking, or crafts. More established entrepreneurs receiving individual loans participate in *Puente al Éxito* (Bridge to Success), an intensive program that includes weekly sessions on marketing, inventory, and production, along with one-on-one mentoring tailored to their business needs.

Alongside education, Friendship Bridge also provides culturally informed health education and services delivered via mobile clinics staffed by female medical professionals who speak indigenous languages, helping clients feel safe and understood. The program includes preventive care such as cervical cancer

screenings, diabetes checks, and nutritional education. Mental health support is also offered, with culturally competent counselors providing therapy in local languages to reduce stigma and improve access.

#### WHY IT IS IMPACTFUL:

Gender-informed financial and educational services, alongside access to basic health services, empower women and enhance the economic resilience and health of households living in poverty. In a 2023 survey, 62 percent of surveyed Friendship Bridge clients reported that their quality of life had 'very much' improved, 48 percent reported 'very much' improved ability to manage their finances, and 51 percent said the income earned from their business has 'very much' increased.<sup>5</sup>

"I have been able to grow my business," says one 45-year-old client. "I have more profits and with that, I can take care of my household needs and my children's studies."<sup>6</sup>

1. "The Global Findex Database." The World Bank, 2024. [https://data360.worldbank.org/en/indicator/WB\\_FINDEX\\_ACCOUNT\\_T\\_D?country=GTM](https://data360.worldbank.org/en/indicator/WB_FINDEX_ACCOUNT_T_D?country=GTM).
2. "Progress in Universal Health in the Americas." Pan American Health Organization, 2024. [https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/63086/9789275129470\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/63086/9789275129470_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
3. As of June 30, 2025, Friendship Bridge was a current borrower of Global Partnerships Social Investment Fund 6.0, LLC and Global Partnerships Impact-First Development Fund, LLC.
4. Data as of June 30, 2025, as reported by Friendship Bridge.
5. Based on responses from 277 Friendship Bridge clients via a mobile, voice-based survey conducted in 2023 by 60 Decibels, Inc., an impact measurement company. [https://www.friendshipbridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/60dB\\_Friendship-Bridge-MFI-Index-Performance-Summary\\_2023.pdf](https://www.friendshipbridge.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/60dB_Friendship-Bridge-MFI-Index-Performance-Summary_2023.pdf)
6. Ibid.

