



 **natik**

CATALOG FOR CHANGE | 2015





Dear Friend of Natik,

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In 2015 Natik Esperanza celebrated twelve years of international development work. Thanks to your generous financial support, our partners in the Mayan communities of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala and Zinacantán, Chiapas, Mexico continue to transform the lives they touch.

We invite you to browse this catalog to learn more about our partners and how Natik has helped them succeed in the past year. As always, more information, including videos and artisan products, may be accessed on our website. On behalf of our board, staff, fellows, volunteers, partners, and constituents, we wish you and your loved ones health, happiness, and fulfillment in 2016. We warmly appreciate your past participation and ask that you please consider including Natik in your year-end gifts and donations.

Thanks for being part of the Natik family!

Ian Ramsey-North

Ian Ramsey-North

Anita Smart

Anita Smart, ED



Who are our Partners?



We partner with grassroots organizations working to counter the educational and economic inequalities that exist for Mayans in both Santiago Atitlán and Zinacantán. Real socio-economic transformation requires multidisciplinary collaboration, and we ensure our partners have the resources, people, and knowledge they need to succeed.

Our education partners are pioneers for their communities: they develop early stimulation classes, reading circles, remedial education, and scholarship opportunities. Our economic partners are maximizing their strengths and learning new skills to grow their global markets.





Santiago Atitlán is a Tz'utujil Mayan community on the picturesque shores of Lake Atitlán, high in the mountains of western Guatemala. The Tz'utujil Mayan people occupied this region for many generations before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. Today, their primary sources of income are coffee exports, canoe construction, and artisan crafts for tourists.

Recent history has not been kind to the community. In the 1980s, the Guatemalan army killed or disappeared hundreds of villagers because of the presence of left-wing guerrillas in the area. The fierce violence of the civil war (1960-1996) and the landslides caused by Hurricane Stan in 2005 have left deep psychological and economic scars. Located in this geographically beautiful but troubled setting, our programs are a reflection of the indomitable spirit of the Atitecos as they work tirelessly to transform generations of painful history.



The Santiago Scholarship Program

The Santiago Scholarship Program provides financial, academic, and life-skills assistance to highly-motivated students whose families lack the financial resources to support their educational goals. In exchange for their scholarship, students contribute to the community through service to local organizations. These students represent their family's hope for an improved future, and we commit to funding each through high school and, in exceptional cases, through university.

SPONSOR

\$50 - A student for a month

\$250 - A student for half a school year

\$500 - A student for one full school year



High School Scholarship students mentor younger students, since often parents do not have enough formal education to help their children with their studies. Look for our "Nuestras Notas" blog posts and newsletters to read their stories in their own words.



3 Introducing our New Language and Cultural Immersion Venture!

It is a victorious thrill for our Santiago Scholarship students to graduate high school; often they are the first in their families to do so. They are equipped with technical degrees in subjects like business administration, accounting, bilingual secretary, alternative tourism, and teaching. However, for many graduates, good employment is hard to find in Santiago Atitlán, and they must either move or accept the same low-paying jobs their parents have. In an effort to provide more opportunities for graduates, the Santiago Scholarship team joined forces with local organizations to create a business that could avail itself of the graduates' skills.

We are pleased to announce that after two years of envisioning, planning, and prototyping, the language and cultural immersion program will launch in 2016. International students will select a week-long volunteer project, and during their stay in Santiago, they will live with families, practice Spanish or Tz'utujil both with a personal tutor and in formal classes, and learn about the Mayan Cosmovision through seminars and cultural activities conceived and executed by visionary Mayan youth.

LEARNING & ADVENTURE

contact@natik.org



Puerta Abierta

In areas where low incomes and poor education make books and literacy scarce, La Puerta Abierta Library is a lively, interactive learning center that generates excitement around books and education. The library is home to a preschool, a kindergarten, a first grade class, a teen reading program and early stimulation classes for mothers and infants. Twice a month, the library opens its doors to the scholarship students for academic support and life skill sessions.

CONTRIBUTE

\$25 - A book bag for the Traveling Library.

\$100 - A month of "Mommy and Me" classes for 20 mothers and 20 children

\$500 - A half school year of visits from The Traveling Library for one school

\$1000 - A full year of visits from The Traveling Library for one school



Working with eight schools and over five hundred children each week, the Puerta Abierta Traveling Library brings books, art, and music to rural schools lacking these creative opportunities.

With Natic's encouragement, Puerta Abierta has been writing a manual so others can replicate their program's success. In November, they shared their lessons with Yo'onik, and we hope the partnership will help more schools and students fall in love with learning.



Chiapas Programs



Zinacantán is a Tzotzil Mayan village in the mountains just outside the colonial city of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. Zinacantán’s primary sources of income are agriculture and artisanal textiles.

Families in Zinacantán work together to keep their children in school and to stay rooted in their beautiful mountain homeland. Our educational and economic programs are deeply immersed in the local communities and help students and artisans create more opportunities for themselves.



Yo'onik Learning Center



Over the past five years, The Yo'onik Learning Center has grown from a borrowed storage hut to a vibrant new building thanks to Natic's many friends and partners. Mentored by Puerta Abierta, it is amassing a library of books and educational toys and now offers a remedial education program run by Natic scholarship students. With the technical support of RiseNow, Yo'onik has constructed a recycled tire playground. The Lower East Side Girl's Club of New York sponsored a teen photography project that has created a trilingual literacy book called *El ABC de Mi Cultura*.

Currently, Yo'onik is raising \$5,000 for a modest kitchen area so they can offer full-day workshops to local groups including members of Mujeres Sembrando la Vida. Topics will include adult literacy, financial literacy, artisan project design and marketing, and entrepreneurial enterprise.

PARTICIPATE

- \$50 - A package of books for the library
- \$100 - A two-month study stipend for a Zinacantan youth
- \$500 - A substantial contribution towards the completion of the kitchen

PURCHASE

Many of MSV's customers are hotels and department stores in Mexico, but Natik is helping develop their international marketing and sales capacity. Mujeres Sembrando la Vida's one-of-a-kind products are available online at www.etsy.com/shop/NatikEsperanza.

Mujeres Sembrando la Vida

For sixteen years, the two hundred female artisans of Mujeres Sembrando la Vida have been applying their traditional weaving patterns and embroidery skills to create products that compete in national and global markets. They named themselves “Women Sowing Life” because they believed that in addition to generating sustainable income for its members, the cooperative could contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole. Mujeres Sembrando la Vida has led reforestation efforts and the construction of low-smoke stoves, dry latrines, and rainwater capturing systems.



Service Learning Trips

Natik was initially founded by university students with a sense of global responsibility. We continue in that spirit today by offering service learning trips to university and high school students. These trips provide students with concrete ways to contribute to our partners' work and to learn about the social, economic, and cultural contexts in which they operate.

JOIN

Your high school, university, or graduate program can join our mission.
contact@natik.org.



In 2015, Natik collaborated with Rise Now to host two youth service learning groups who constructed a fun and educational play space in Yo'onik's garden.

Donate To Specific Projects

to ensure the success of our partners.

Donate To The Natic General Fund

to support all of Natic's work.

Become A Friend

to help sustain our life-changing work with ongoing monthly gifts.

Volunteer

to use your expertise either on the ground or from afar.

Donate To Our Fellowship Fund

to enable full-time fellows to work with our partners.

Support Our Artisans

by purchasing their products. You can find embroidered handbags, placemats, scarves, and more at www.etsy.com/shop/NatikEsperanza.

Contact Us

E-mail us at contact@natic.org or visit our website at www.natic.org.
We'd love to hear from you.



Just Apparel in Transition

The mission of Just Apparel has always been to provide dignified work for economically marginalized women in Santiago Atitlán. Recently, we identified an opportunity to connect the Just Apparel artisans to a local cooperative of indigenous women with sustained operational success. The artisans and Natick have decided to use the proceeds from past sales and donations to secure membership in this cooperative. We will let you know when you can once again purchase their products. For more information please e-mail us at contact@natick.org.



Natick's Hummingbird

A Message from Our Executive Director, Anita Smart

When we were choosing our name, one of the final contestants was “Colibrí,” or hummingbird in Spanish. Although we chose Natick, we agreed the hummingbird’s speed and agility reflected our modus operandi, and the unanimous decision was to keep it as our symbol. It still reminds us of our mission today--to swiftly respond to the logistical, financial, and organizational needs of our partners through collaborative solutions.



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