

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Local Solutions • Education • Collaboration

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FROM LEARNING TO CLARITY

Dear friends,

2025 marks the completion of our 2020–2025 strategic plan in Guatemala. More importantly, it marks a transition from learning to clarity. Five years of listening, adapting, and working alongside communities have deepened our understanding of the role local leadership plays in creating meaningful change.

What began as a fellowship program has evolved into a community-led model for educational leadership and local development. We have learned that communities are best positioned to identify their priorities and lead solutions, while partners, governments, donors, and organizations contribute the resources, relationships, and opportunities that allow those solutions to grow and endure.

Perhaps our greatest lesson has been this: communities already hold the knowledge, commitment, and leadership needed to shape their future. Our role is not to bring solutions, but to work alongside educators, families, and partners to strengthen solutions that emerge from within communities and help them flourish.

This year reaffirmed that belief. Across Guatemala, Fellows strengthened local initiatives, communities continued investing in their own development, municipalities began engaging more intentionally in education, and new partnerships expanded opportunities for educators and students alike. Together, these experiences reinforced that when communities lead and others contribute their strengths, change reaches beyond individual projects to strengthen the systems that support learning and local development.

As we begin our 2026–2028 strategic chapter, we do so with greater clarity about who we are, how our model creates change, and where we can contribute most. We look ahead with confidence, continuing to work alongside educators, communities, and partners to strengthen local leadership and support solutions shaped by the communities themselves.

To our Fellows, families, partners, donors, and supporters:
thank you for believing in leadership that grows from within.
Everything we have accomplished has been made possible
through your trust, collaboration, and commitment.

What we have built together is only the beginning.

With gratitude and conviction,



ISA LAPORTE

Chief Executive Officer



A MODEL SHAPED IN PRACTICE

THE EVOLUTION OF CONNECTED FELLOWS

ConnectED Fellows was created with a simple question:

What becomes possible when educators are trusted to lead change in their own communities?

Since 2020, we have worked alongside rural educators across Guatemala to answer that question. Through successes, challenges, and continuous learning, a clearer model has emerged: one rooted not in externally designed solutions, but in local leadership, community participation, and shared responsibility.

Over time, we learned that meaningful change rarely comes from projects alone. It comes from relationships. It comes from communities that help identify priorities, contribute resources, and take ownership of solutions. It comes from educators who are willing to listen, convene others, and lead collective action.

Today, ConnectED Fellows supports a growing network of educators who are strengthening schools while helping communities address broader challenges related to learning, well-being, opportunity, and local development.

What began as a fellowship has evolved into a community-led model that continues to be shaped by the people closest to the challenges and closest to the solutions.



Following her Fellowship, Rodia mobilized community leadership and a partnership with World Connect to establish a Community Wellness Center for women and children, illustrating how educator leadership can extend beyond schools to strengthen entire communities.

THE THREE PILLARS

HOW CONNECTED FELLOWS CREATE CHANGE

1ST PILLAR: EDUCATORS AS COMMUNITY LEADERS

At the heart of ConnectED Fellows is the belief that educators are uniquely positioned to lead change. Fellows identify local priorities, bring people together, mobilize resources, and help communities move from ideas to action.



2ND PILLAR: COMMUNITY CO-INVESTMENT



Lasting change requires shared ownership. Families, community members, local organizations, and municipal actors contribute time, labor, materials, expertise, and resources to support initiatives. This co-investment strengthens commitment and increases the likelihood that projects continue long after initial funding ends.

3RD PILLAR: ADAPTIVE INNOVATION

Innovation is most effective when it responds to local realities. Fellows explore practical approaches that strengthen learning and community development, including peer learning, digital resources, community problem-solving strategies, and emerging technologies. The goal is not innovation for its own sake, but innovation that communities can adapt, sustain, and build upon over time.



Together, these *three pillars* create a model that supports educator leadership, strengthens community ownership, and expands opportunities for children and families.

WHAT WE LEARNED

FIVE YEARS OF LISTENING, TESTING, AND ADAPTING

As ConnectED Fellows concludes its 2020–2025 strategic plan, several lessons have emerged from working alongside educators and communities across Guatemala.

Communities invest when they help shape solutions.

Projects are stronger when community members participate in identifying priorities, making decisions, and contributing resources.

Educators can be powerful community leaders.

When given the tools, support, and trust to lead, educators often become catalysts for collaboration and collective action beyond the classroom.

Ownership matters more than funding.

The initiatives most likely to continue are those that communities help build, support, and sustain themselves.

Networks multiply impact.

When Fellows learn from one another, share experiences, and collaborate across communities, ideas spread further and leadership becomes stronger.

Systems matter.

Individual projects create important change, but long-term transformation requires stronger connections between schools, communities, and institutions.

These lessons continue to shape how ConnectED Fellows evolves and where we invest our efforts moving forward.



Independent Research & Learning

Independent case studies conducted by [REACH Alliance](#) (2023) and [Population Council](#) (2025) reinforced that educational change is strongest when communities lead, partnerships are collaborative, implementation remains flexible, and schools become catalysts for broader community development.

A GROWING NETWORK OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE MODEL WORKS

Today, ConnectED Fellows brings together a growing network of educators who are strengthening schools and communities across rural Guatemala. What began with a small cohort has evolved into a community of leaders who learn from one another, share ideas, and mobilize local solutions to address the challenges facing their schools and communities.

“ConnectED Fellows transformed the way I lead. Before, we had many ideas and the desire to act, but lacked the tools to turn them into reality. Through the Fellowship, I learned how to mobilize resources, build partnerships, and understand that leadership is not about working alone, but about inspiring others to build together. ConnectED opened doors that continue to create opportunities for our school and community.”

Erik Locón, Fellow 2020



Building leadership that lasts

IMPACT AT A GLANCE: 2020-2025

FIVE YEARS OF EDUCATOR-LED AND COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE

69

Fellows

68

Community
Initiatives

17,000+

Students Benefited

293

Communities Served

80%

Indigenous Fellows

48%

Women Fellows

97%

Project
Completion Rate

97%

Projects that Continue
Beyond Fellowship

\$670K

Community
Contributions



For every US\$1
invested in Fellow-
led projects,
communities
contributed
US\$3.50 in local
resources, labor,
materials, and
services.

2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A YEAR OF GROWTH, LEARNING, AND COMMUNITY ACTION

1



17 New Fellows Joined the Network

Educators from 17 schools began their Fellowship journey, bringing the network to 69 Fellows across Guatemala.

2



5,315 Students Benefited in 2025

Fellow-led initiatives expanded learning opportunities and addressed priorities identified by schools and communities.

3



Women's Leadership Council Launched

Five Indigenous women Fellows created ConnectED Fellows' first peer-led space focused on leadership, gender equity, and mutual support.

4



Municipality Model Piloted

The Municipality of San Andrés Semetabaj partnered with ConnectED Fellows to strengthen collaboration between schools, communities, and local government.

5



Technology and Innovation Expanded

Fellows explored practical tools, including game-based learning and artificial intelligence, to support teaching and learning.

6



\$134,000 Mobilized Locally in 2025

Communities contributed labor, materials, services, and other resources to support Fellow-led initiatives.

Across Guatemala, Fellows continued to demonstrate that lasting change happens when communities are trusted to identify priorities and lead solutions together.

FELLOWS SUMMIT 2025

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS, SHARING LESSONS, AND BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY OF LEADERS



In 2025, 34 Fellows from across Guatemala came together to learn, reflect, and strengthen relationships across the ConnectED Fellows network.

The 2025 Annual Fellows Summit brought together graduating Fellows and new cohort members, creating space to share experiences, explore challenges, celebrate accomplishments, and build a stronger sense of community.

More than an event, the Summit reflected the strength of the network itself. It demonstrated how leadership grows when educators have opportunities to learn from one another and work toward a shared vision for their communities.

The Summit explored key themes shaping the future of the network and rural education:



Gender Equity

Creating more inclusive opportunities for leadership.



Leadership and Vulnerability

Building confidence through reflection and shared experiences.



Responsible Use of AI

Exploring practical tools for teaching and learning.



2024 Cohort Graduation

Welcoming new alumni into the ConnectED Fellows network.

RESHAPING WHO LEADS

CREATING SPACE FOR WOMEN EDUCATORS TO LEAD, SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER, AND SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

The **Women's Leadership Council** was established in 2025 to strengthen leadership opportunities for women across the ConnectED Fellows network.

While women play critical roles in schools and communities, they often face barriers that limit participation in decision-making spaces. The Council was created to provide a space where women Fellows could connect, learn from one another, and collectively explore how leadership, opportunity, and gender equity are experienced in their communities.

Led by five Indigenous women Fellows, the Council is helping ensure that women are not only participating in community change, but helping shape it.



The Women's Leadership Council is helping create new possibilities for leadership across the ConnectED Fellows network.

Through reflection, dialogue, and shared learning, Fellows are challenging assumptions about who leads, whose voices are heard, and how opportunities are created for future generations.

The impact extends beyond Fellows themselves. As women educators strengthen their leadership, students gain new role models, classrooms become more inclusive, and communities benefit from broader participation in decision-making.

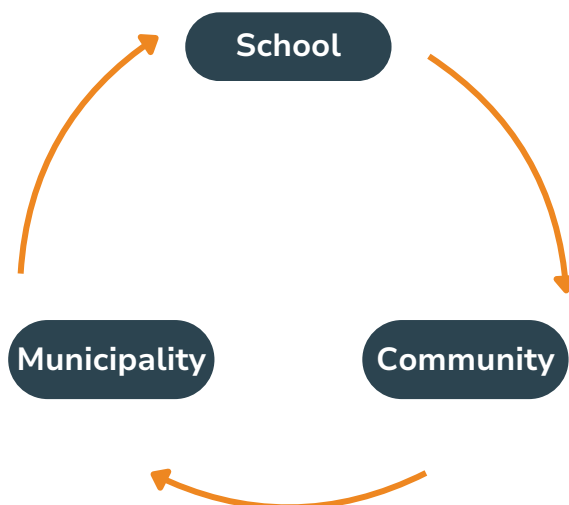


2025 Milestones

- Co-designed and launched ConnectED Fellows' first gender equity curriculum.
- Led conversations on gender equity and leadership during the Fellows Summit.
- Established a peer support network for women Fellows.
- Integrated gender perspectives into Fellowship activities and learning spaces.

FROM PROJECTS TO SYSTEMS

EXPLORING HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES CAN WORK TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION



A New Partnership Model for Education

San Andrés Semetabaj became the first municipality to formally collaborate with ConnectED Fellows beyond individual projects, creating stronger connections between schools, communities, and local government.

WHAT CHANGED?

- ✓ Municipal participation in identifying future Fellows
- ✓ Greater coordination between schools and local government
- ✓ Alignment around local educational priorities
- ✓ Increased opportunities for shared investment

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Instead of supporting isolated projects, the Municipality Model explores how entire local education ecosystems can work together.

When communities, schools, and municipal governments share responsibility, solutions become more coordinated and more likely to continue over time.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Municipality Model remains in its early stages, but early lessons are already informing opportunities for replication and adaptation in other municipalities.

As the model evolves, ConnectED Fellows will continue exploring how local governments can strengthen and sustain community-led educational change.

When communities, schools, and municipalities work together, educational change becomes more coordinated, locally owned, and more likely to last.

BUILDING CHANGE TOGETHER

Throughout 2025, ConnectED Fellows strengthened and expanded strategic partnerships with communities, municipalities, foundations, and organizations that believe in locally led solutions. Together, these collaborations advanced our model, created new opportunities for Fellows, and laid the groundwork for scaling community-driven impact across Guatemala.

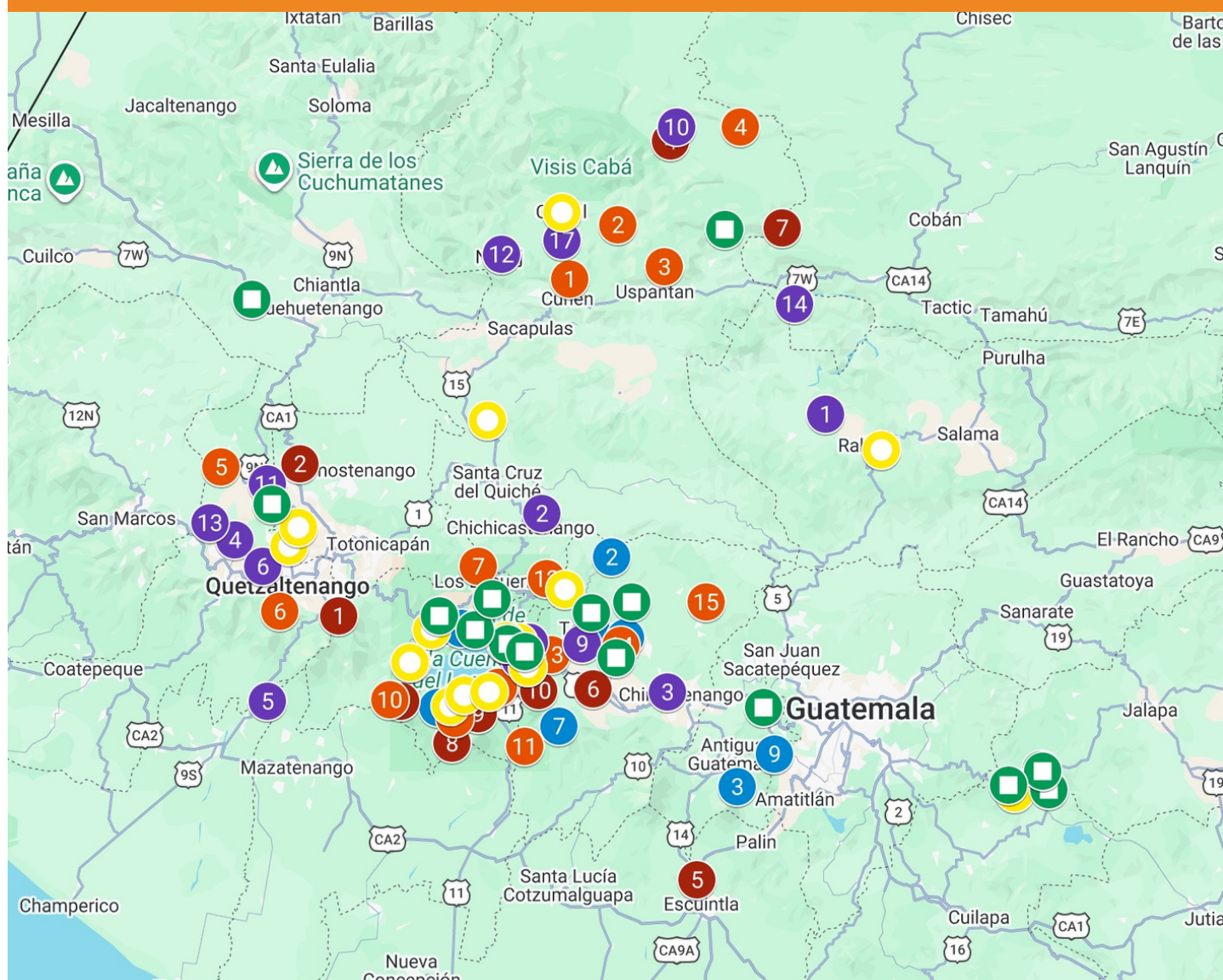
Thank You to Our Institutional Funders & Partners:



Lasting change is built through collaboration. Every ConnectED Fellows initiative succeeds because educators, communities, governments, and partners each contribute their unique strengths toward a shared vision for rural development.

WHERE WE WORK*

A GROWING NETWORK OF EDUCATORS LEADING CHANGE ACROSS GUATEMALA



FELLOWS BY DEPARTMENT

86 Fellows in 11 Departamentos:

Baja Verapaz (1) · Chimaltenango (12)
Escuintla (1) · Huehuetenango (1)
Jalapa (5) · Petén (1)
Quetzaltenango (12) · Quiché (14)
Sacatepéquez (4) · Sololá (34)
Totonicapán (1)

OUR IMPACT

Since 2020, ConnectED Fellows has supported educators across Guatemala who are strengthening schools, mobilizing local resources, and leading solutions in partnership with their communities.

Together, these educators form a growing network that continues to expand opportunities for students and families.

*Includes the 17 Fellows selected for the 2026 Cohort

FROM ONE PROJECT TO MANY POSSIBILITIES

Fellow: Erik Giovani Locón

Cohort: 2020

Project: Promoting Healthy Nutrition at Maya Canoense Institute

Location: Canoas Altas, San Andrés Semetabaj, Sololá



Erick Locón, principal of the Instituto Básico por Cooperativa in Aldea Canoas Altas, and a member of ConnectED Fellows' first 2020 cohort, shows how resource mobilization can become a catalyst for community transformation.

What began as a project to build a school kitchen and dining space grew into a broader effort, bringing together parents, municipal support, and external opportunities to strengthen his school.



Building on this momentum, Erick secured 30 computers through a national competition, obtained municipal investment for infrastructure and equipment, and launched a water purification enterprise that now generates income for the school. More recently, he brought together external funding and community co-investment to establish a music training school.

His leadership shows that lasting impact is not defined by the size of initial funding, but by the ability to build trust, activate networks, and turn collective effort into long-term opportunities for youth and their communities.

Five years later, Erik continues to demonstrate how educator leadership can create opportunities far beyond the original project.

Since Becoming a Fellow

- ✓ School kitchen and dining space
- ✓ 30 computers secured
- ✓ Municipal investment mobilized
- ✓ Water purification enterprise launched
- ✓ Music training school established

What began as one school project became a platform for new opportunities across his community.

THE STRENGTH OF QUIET LEADERSHIP

Leadership does not always look the same. For María Juliana Tacám, a ConnectED Fellow from the Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta Aldea Patachaj in San Cristóbal Totonicapán, it meant moving forward with patience, staying grounded in her purpose, and continuing even when progress was slow.

Her journey was not linear. There were delays, shifting plans, and moments of uncertainty. But Juliana did not step back. She kept moving, working alongside fellow teachers, school leaders, parents, and community members, building trust and advancing step by step.

Together, they brought her vision to life: a classroom technology initiative that equipped the school with smart TVs, benefiting more than 1,000 students and opening new possibilities for interactive learning.

Juliana leads with calm and intention. She listens, creates space for dialogue, and brings people together around shared solutions.

Her story reminds us that leadership does not need to be loud to be powerful. Sometimes it is built through persistence, trust, and the ability to bring people together around a shared goal.

Fellow: María Juliana Tacam

Cohort: 2025

Project: Strengthening Classroom Technology Resources

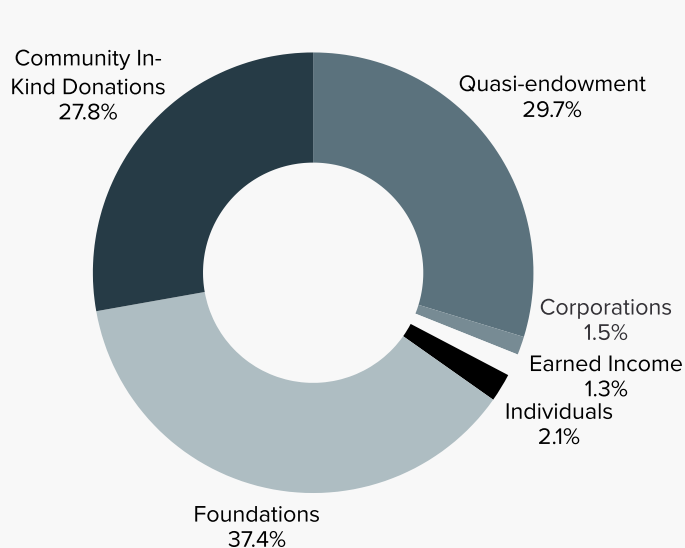
Location: Aldea Patachaj, San Cristóbal Totonicapán, Totonicapán



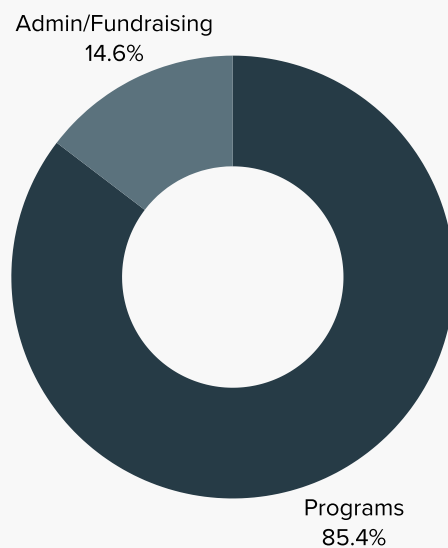
"I feel satisfied, but not finished... we can still do more." It's a mindset that continues to guide Juliana as she looks for new ways to serve her students and community.



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE RESOURCES ARE MOST POWERFUL WHEN COMMUNITIES INVEST ALONGSIDE US



How Our Work is Funded
\$419,768.34



How Resources Were Invested
\$388,424.56

85% of every dollar spent supported programs that strengthen educator leadership and community ownership across Guatemala.

1- The quasi-endowment is currently held as a reserve, accessed sparingly and not meant for routine use, contributing to the organization's pursuit of long-term financial sustainability through various income streams. Use of the fund to cover any annual operational, or one time costs is at the discretion and approval of the ConnectedED Board of Directors.

2- The In-Kind donations reflect the full value of community in-kind contribution (labor, volunteer time, materials, equipment, locally contributed resources).

OUR TEAM

GROUNDING IN GUATEMALA, GROWING WITH PURPOSE

Behind every Fellow and community initiative is a small team committed to supporting local leadership. Based in Guatemala and working across two countries, we bring together expertise in education, operations, fundraising, and organizational development.

Our work is guided by experienced partners and Boards of Directors in Guatemala and the United States, including Fellows whose lived experience in community leadership helps keep local perspectives at the center of our decisions.

As ConnectED Fellows enters its 2026–2028 strategic phase, we remain focused on creating the conditions for educators and communities to lead lasting change.



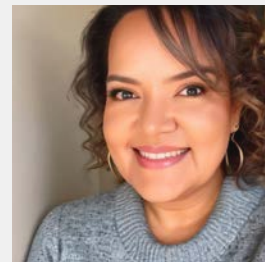
Isa LaPorte
Chief Executive Officer



Sooni Gillet
Co-Founder & Senior
Advisor



Selvin Lutín
Finance and
Operations Manager



Claudia Meneses
Program Manager



Lucia Solorzano
Communications
Consultant

Board of Directors - Asociación ConnectED Guatemala

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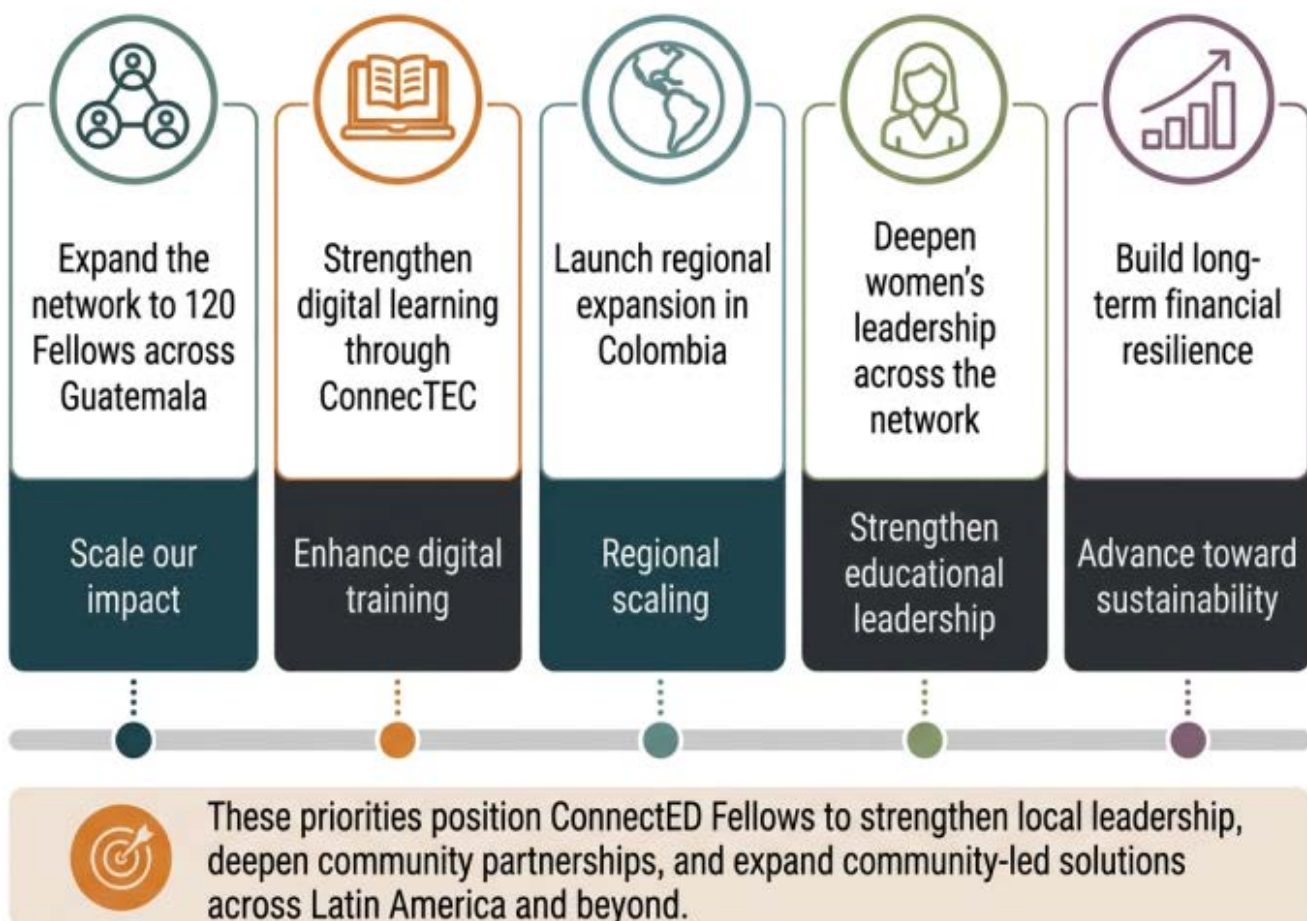
Across two countries, our team reflects a shared belief: collaboration and community leadership are the foundation of lasting change.

PURPOSEFUL GROWTH

OUR NEXT CHAPTER 2026 - 2028

Building on the lessons from five years of implementation in Guatemala, as well as independent case studies conducted by REACH Alliance (2023), and Population Council Guatemala (2025), we enter our next strategic phase with greater clarity about how our model creates change and where we can contribute most.

Over the next three years, we will build on our strengths, expand our reach, and invest in our people and systems to create lasting impact. These five strategic priorities will guide our journey forward.





✉ info@connectedfellows.org

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