GRASSROOTS

IMPACT GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE // TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES, ONE MOTHER AT A TIME // OCTOBER 2026



A home visit in a Curamericas Guatemala community.

SHE LEARNED. NOW SHE TEACHES.

In the Cuchumatanes Mountains of northwest Guatemala, the roads are steep, often gravel or dirt, and poorly maintained. Communities, most with a few hundred people, are scattered across ridges and valleys, and many sit hours on foot from the nearest paved road. The nearest hospital equipped to perform a cesarean section can be hours away by pickup truck, and getting there costs more than a month's income for many families.

Most families are Indigenous Maya, and many women still give birth the way their mothers did: at home, with a traditional birth attendant or a relative. Maternal and infant mortality here once rivaled rates in Afghanistan. That began to change when Curamericas Guatemala opened Casas Maternas in the region and started working house by house with local women.

Catarina lives in a small community in San Sebastián Coatán. Her first pregnancy ended in complications and an emergency cesarean section. "At the time, there was a lot I did not understand," she said.

A first-time mother goes through a frightening birth and major surgery, and afterward she doesn't understand what happened or why. That is not a failure of her intelligence. It is what happens when health information never reaches the woman who needs it most.

Before her second pregnancy, Catarina joined a Care Group run by our alliance partner, Curamericas Guatemala. A Care Group is a circle of 8 to 12 women from the same neighborhood who meet regularly with a trained local health facilitator. They learn practical lessons about pregnancy danger signs, nutrition, newborn care, sanitation, and vaccinations. They also talk about home gardens, clean water, and their families' health.

"In these groups, I learned that even small changes in how we care for ourselves can make a big difference," Catarina said. "I also heard other women talk about their births, what they experienced, and what helped them."

In a Care Group, a young mother sits beside a neighbor who hemorrhaged after giving birth and survived because she reached the Casa Materna in time. The doors were open, and someone was ready to receive her. That's when the lessons stop being abstract. They have names and faces.

When her second baby was due, Catarina was ready.

Story continues on back ↪

Impact Global Health Alliance

Mail to:
Impact Global
Health Alliance
PO Box 1090
Holly Springs, NC 27540

Enclosed please find a check made payable to Impact Global Health Alliance in the amount of:

$_____

GR 26/10

Please make any name or address corrections above, detach, and return with your tax-deductible gift.

Give Monthly By Credit Card or eCheck

A gift of $450 helps train and support a community health facilitator like Catarina for one month. Consider a recurring gift.

Visit **impactglobalhealthalliance.org/giving-monthly/** or **scan the QR code**.

Questions? Please contact us at:
andrew@impactglobalhealthalliance.org

SHE LEARNED. NOW SHE TEACHES. (continued)



Catarina, community health facilitator, San Sebastián Coatán.

"When it was time to have my baby, I felt calm and more prepared because I knew more about what to expect and felt supported," Catarina said. "My baby was born without complications."

This year, Curamericas Guatemala is extending CRECER (Spanish for "to grow") into 33 new communities around its existing project areas. CRECER is built around 45 trained community health facilitators, along with six new health educators. The facilitators are women from the neighborhood who visit pregnant women, young mothers, and families in their homes. Moms visiting moms. They lead Care Groups, teach breastfeeding, give health lessons, and record every pregnancy, birth, illness, and death in their communities. Each facilitator oversees 5 or 6 Care Groups, reaching roughly 50 households.

No one appointed these facilitators from an office. Curamericas Guatemala brought CRECER to the community and women's assemblies in each Maya community and asked them to identify women willing and able to serve. Catarina was one of them.

"That experience is one of the reasons I do this work now," she said. "I enjoy sharing what I have learned with women in my own community so they can take better care of themselves and their families. I am still learning, especially about health. It makes me happy to see families learning new things about their own health and bodies."

It would be easy to read Catarina's story as one woman's turning point. It is more than that. It shows how Impact Global Health Alliance works with partners like Curamericas Guatemala. We don't bring health care into these mountains from the United States. Curamericas Guatemala finds women like Catarina in their own communities and trains them to lead. The expertise is homegrown, and it stays.

One woman teaches her neighbors, and each neighbor teaches her family. Over time, mothers learn to recognize danger signs, plan for safe births, and demand better care. Through CRECER, Curamericas Guatemala will expand its reach by 60 percent, from 19,779 people to about 31,650. That growth rests on the shoulders of women like Catarina.

Your gift of $450 trains and supports a community health facilitator like Catarina for one month. Use the reply slip above, or give monthly at **impactglobalhealthalliance.org/giving-monthly/**.