



Midwifery, a community centered solution:

Asociación Manos Abiertas

The Guatemalan Context

In Guatemala, maternal mortality rates are very high due to the lack of access to quality reproductive healthcare. Only 69% of women aged 15 to 49 who wish to avoid pregnancy have access to contraceptive methods.

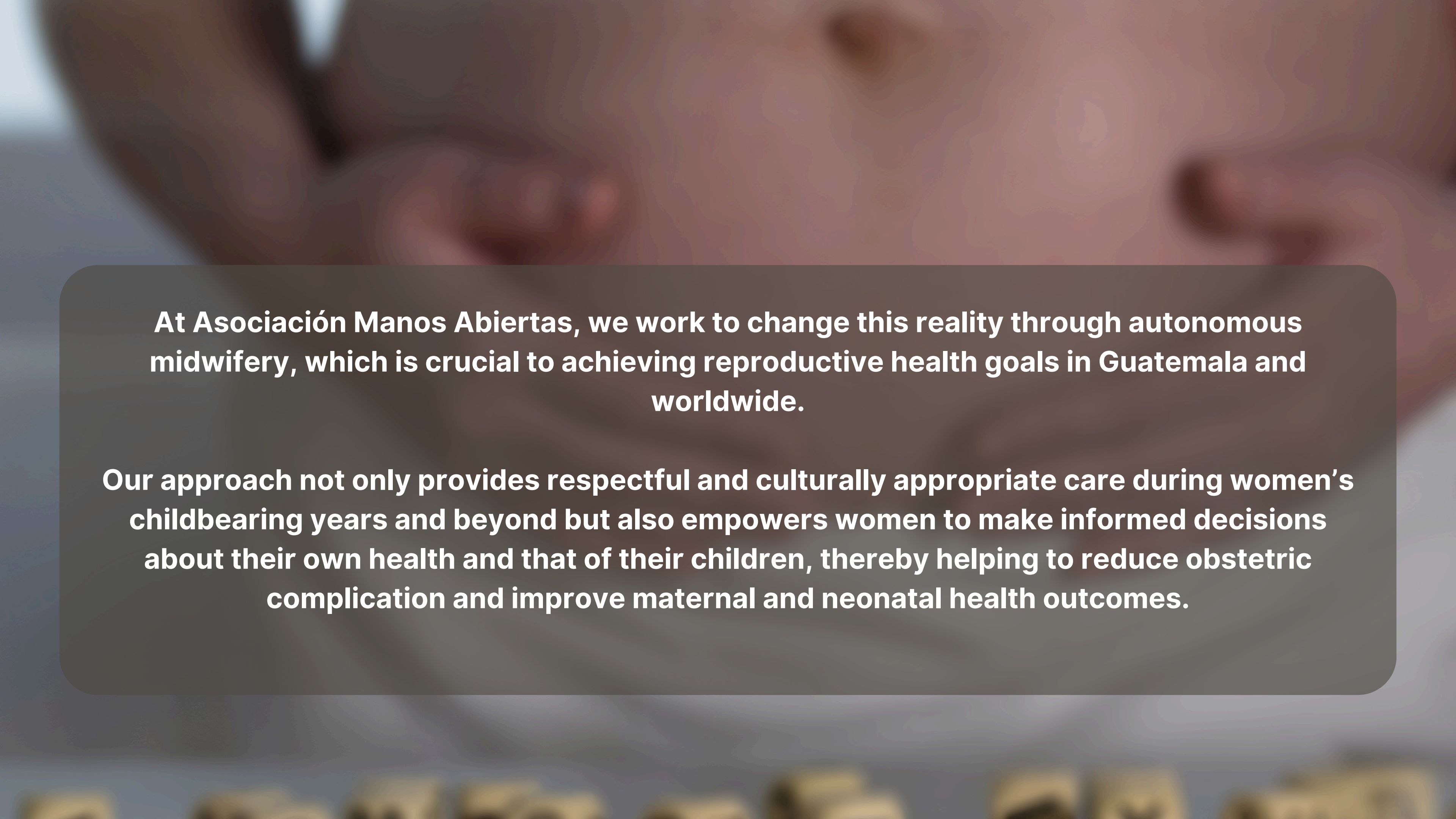
Every year, 430,000 women give birth in Guatemala, but many do not receive the necessary care. For example, 77,000 women have fewer than four prenatal visits, 130,000 do not deliver in a health facility, and 52,000 do not receive care after obstetric complications. Additionally, 65,000 newborns do not receive necessary care for complications.





If all maternal and neonatal care needs were met in Guatemala:

- Maternal deaths would decrease by 72%.
- Neonatal deaths would decrease by 74%.
- Unwanted pregnancies would decrease by 78%.
- Abortions would decrease by 78%.
- Unsafe abortions would decrease by 78%.



At Asociación Manos Abiertas, we work to change this reality through autonomous midwifery, which is crucial to achieving reproductive health goals in Guatemala and worldwide.


Our approach not only provides respectful and culturally appropriate care during women's childbearing years and beyond but also empowers women to make informed decisions about their own health and that of their children, thereby helping to reduce obstetric complication and improve maternal and neonatal health outcomes.

Empowerment Through Autonomy



In our work, we highlight the fundamental importance of preserving women's autonomy at all stages of their lives, especially in the areas of health, sexuality, and reproduction. We recognize that respecting autonomy is essential to ensuring that decisions related to their bodies and lives are made in an informed and free from coercion.

TRAJECTORY

A photograph of five women standing in a row in front of a window with white curtains. They are all wearing scrubs in various colors: red, teal, light blue, pink, and dark blue. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The lighting is bright and natural, coming from the window behind them.

Over the past 16 years, Asociación Manos Abiertas, founded by Hannah Freiwald and now led by her daughter Diana S. Freiwald, has been dedicated to guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health care for all women in Guatemala. By developing a scalable model of midwifery-led, humane care, AMA ensures that every woman, regardless of her resources, receives the essential services she needs. Diana and her team of women continue to champion this mission, empowering both the community and the staff, and solidifying AMA as a beacon of hope and dignity.

DIANA

Diana Freiwald's journey into midwifery began at the age of 8, apprenticing under her mother, Hannah Freiwald, the founder of Asociación Manos Abiertas. Growing up immersed in the world of compassionate care and advocacy, Diana developed a profound understanding of the importance of sexual and reproductive health. This early exposure shaped her into a skilled and passionate midwife, deeply committed to continuing her mother's legacy. Alongside her clinical expertise, Diana holds a strong passion for leadership and management, driving AMA forward as its Executive Director and ensuring the organization's mission thrives in empowering women and transforming communities in Guatemala.



MARY

Mary, who has been with us for 13 years, has grown professionally under our support. She started out incharge of maintenance, progressed from primary school to secondary school, then sought training as a nurse practitioner before we trained her to become a midwife.

Originally from Yepocapa and of Mayan descent, she is deeply committed to the defense of sexual and reproductive health rights and care, embodying a strong sense of dedication to her community.



EVELYN

With our support, Evelyn completed her schooling, training as an auxiliary nurse and is now finishing her midwifery apprenticeship with us. Equipped with comprehensive training, she functions as a secondary provider, capable of providing care independently. Evelyn's passion for sexual and reproductive rights is matched by her enthusiasm for learning clinical procedures, reflecting her dedication to providing quality care.



MIRIAM

Miriam plays a vital role in maintaining the center part-time while learning midwifery care. Currently enrolled in nursing school, she is the newest addition to our clinical team and shows great enthusiasm for learning. Miriam's dedication to her learning and her enthusiasm for expanding her knowledge make her a valuable asset to our team as we work together to provide quality care



ASTRID

Astrid, with education in Guatemalan Law, has been an integral part of our team for over 6 years. Her experience in daily management and human resources ensures smooth operations. Astrid's unwavering commitment to sexual and reproductive rights further strengthens our mission, ensuring effective and ethical practices in all aspects of our work.



MISIÓN

At Asociación Manos Abiertas, we work according to the professional midwifery model of care and sexual and reproductive rights. We firmly believe that by empowering women, especially those with limited resources and opportunities, through education and access to culturally competent sexual and reproductive health services, we can change the world.



In 1 Year AMA provides Approximately

500-900

Long Term
Contraception
methods

270

Short Term
Contraception
methods

305

GYN consults

270

Prenatal Care
check ups

50

Pediatric
consults

24

Family planning
day clinics

100

STIs tests

52

Post abortion
consults

250

Cervical Cancer
screenings

20

Natural Births

The Value of Midwives in Our Communities



Midwives, pillars of our communities for generations, provide expert and compassionate care during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. Their wisdom and experience are invaluable to maternal and child health.

AMA honors the historical work of traditional midwives and combines it with the American model of autonomous professional midwifery.



The Importance of Access to Community-Centered Health Services



- Access to community-centered health services, led by midwives, is essential to ensure safe and culturally relevant maternal care. Their presence in the community promotes trust and accessibility to quality care.
- Asociación Manos Abiertas recognizes the value of this personalized and culturally sensitive care and works to train local midwives to strengthen their skills and resources, ensuring that all women receive the care they deserve.

The Value of Being a Small Organization

Although we are a small organization, our agility and proximity allow us to respond quickly to community needs. This enables us to provide more personalized and effective support.



How We Complement Government Efforts



- NGOs like ours play a crucial role in providing sustainable support to communities, especially where the government has limited resources, by delivering programs and services tailored to local needs and ensuring that no individual is left without access to basic healthcare and other essential services.
- We complement and strengthen government efforts by working in collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders to identify and address gaps in service delivery, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Services

Well Woman Care

We provide comprehensive care to promote the health and well-being of women of reproductive age and post-menopausal women, including regular medical exams, screening tests, and counseling on healthy habits.

Family Planning Counseling

We facilitate access to condoms, short-term hormonal contraceptives, and long-term methods such as intrauterine devices (IUDs), hormonal implants, and referrals for permanent methods like tubal ligation and vasectomy.



Risk Reduction Counseling

Our approach to risk reduction in unwanted pregnancies includes education on family planning, access to contraceptives, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections. It also involves efforts to prevent clandestine abortions and other consequences of unwanted pregnancies (such as suicide).

Services

Family Planning Methods

We facilitate access to various contraceptive methods, including condoms, hormonal contraceptives, intrauterine devices (IUDs), and referrals for other long-term methods.

Cervical Cancer Prevention

We conduct cervical cancer screening tests, such as Pap smears and VIAA-CRIO Tests, and provide education on the importance of early detection and prevention.



Prenatal Care

We offer specialized care and follow-up during pregnancy, including prenatal exams, screening tests, nutritional counseling, and emotional support to ensure a healthy pregnancy.

Services

Cesarean Prevention

We provide education and support to promote safe vaginal delivery and reduce unnecessary cesarean rates through careful monitoring of pregnancy and labor progress and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

Risk Reduction During Pregnancy

We offer guidance on healthy lifestyle habits during pregnancy, including proper nutrition, safe exercise, and stress management, to minimize risks to both mother and baby.



Diagnosis and Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections

We conduct tests for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and offer appropriate treatment and follow-up to ensure the sexual and reproductive health of our patients.

Services



Pediatric Care

We provide preventive and follow-up healthcare services for children, including regular physical exams and counseling on child health.

Breastfeeding Counseling

We offer specialized counseling and support to help mothers establish and maintain breastfeeding, thus promoting the health and well-being of both mother and baby.

Servicios



Mobile Family Planning Clinic and Cervical Cancer Prevention

Through our mobile clinic, we bring family planning services and cervical cancer screening to remote and hard-to-reach communities, ensuring that all women have equitable access to reproductive health care.

**Bought with
Population Connection's
Support!**

Funding:

- *2023-2024, aprox.* 11% of our funding comes from fee for service donations, a scaled range of fees allows to benefit those in greater need whilst allowing us to provide care to Guatemalan women from all backgrounds.
- One of our goals is to increase in clinic demand by 100% and mobile clinic demand by 50% by 2026 whilst maintaining a 10% income from fee for service donations. So, reaching more lower income women
- Our main donors, who have funded us between 5 and 3 years are: Planned Parenthood Foundation(2008-2013), The Bergstrom Foundation and Population Connection (current primary donors).
- In the past we have received grants from Lush Foundation, Nursing Hearts, and some Individual Donors.

“We firmly believe that empowering women to exercise their autonomy allows them to take control of their health and well-being, promoting a more equitable and just society for all.”



Our hybrid income model combines donations, grants, and affordable service fees. This ensures that we can sustain our operations and expand our impact in a sustainable manner.

Join us !

Your donation today can save lives and empower women. Together, we can make a difference in maternal health in Guatemala and beyond.

For more about us go to:

<https://www.manosabiertasgt.org/en>