

WINGS Guatemala

SITE VISIT WITH POPULATION CONNECTION
SPRING 2025

“It All Begins With Reproductive Rights”





Work: WINGS Guatemala provides quality reproductive health education and services to Guatemalan adolescents and adults, primarily those living in rural areas and in vulnerable conditions.

WINGS takes a holistic approach to reproductive health that recognizes the diverse barriers to exercising rights and engages community members to secure reproductive rights and bring their voices to the forefront of the decision-making process.



GUATEMALA'S HEALTH DISPARITIES

- **Maternal health outcomes**
 - Indigenous women account for about 45% of the population but $\frac{2}{3}$ of maternal deaths
- **Restrictive abortion law and practice**
- **Limited access to contraception and family planning services**
 - 1 in 3 Indigenous women have no access to health and family planning services
- **Gender-based violence and impunity**
 - Sexual violence contributes directly to forced pregnancies and long-term physical and mental harms

GUATEMALA'S YOUTH

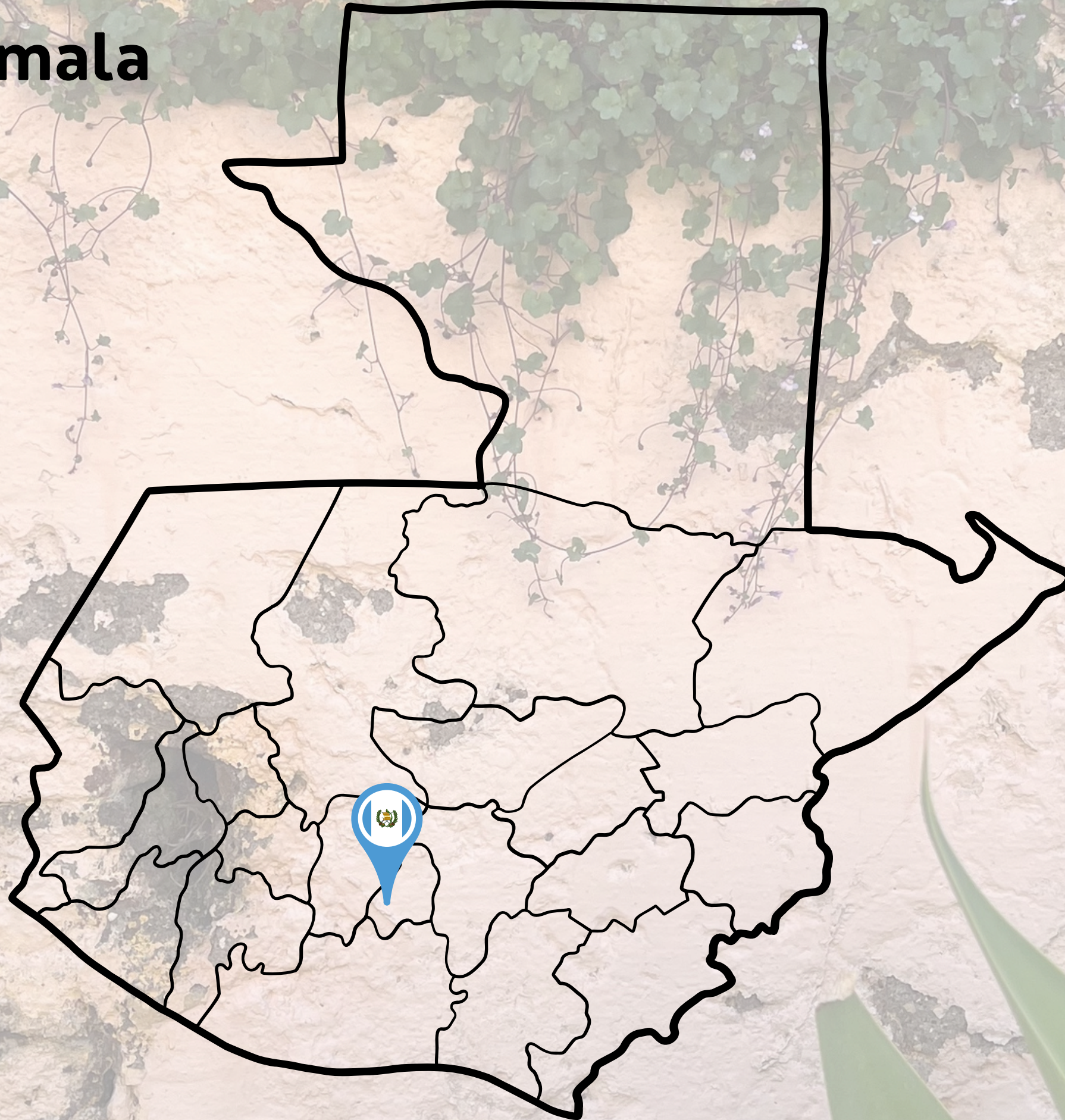
- Major challenges:
 - **Early/forced marriage:** Nearly 30% of Guatemalan girls are married or in a union before age 18
 - Early marriage often ends education prematurely, increases economic dependency, and raises risks of early pregnancy and maternal health complications
 - **Adolescent pregnancy and reproductive health inequality:** Guatemala has one of the highest adolescent fertility rates Latin America—around 68 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19
 - **Educational barriers:** Girls are often expected to prioritize caregiving and domestic roles over schooling; Indigenous youth particularly disadvantaged: less than ½ complete primary school
 - **Unequal economic opportunities:** Gendered labor market participation
 - **Silencing youth voices:** young people—especially women and girls—face limited participation in decision-making about their own futures

Antigua, Guatemala

Meetings with staff at
WINGS headquarters



Youth Empowerment
Meeting





**Rubén López,
Communications
Coordinator**



**Celeste Velásquez,
Community
Programs
Coordinator**



**Dr. Michelle Dubón,
Medical Director**



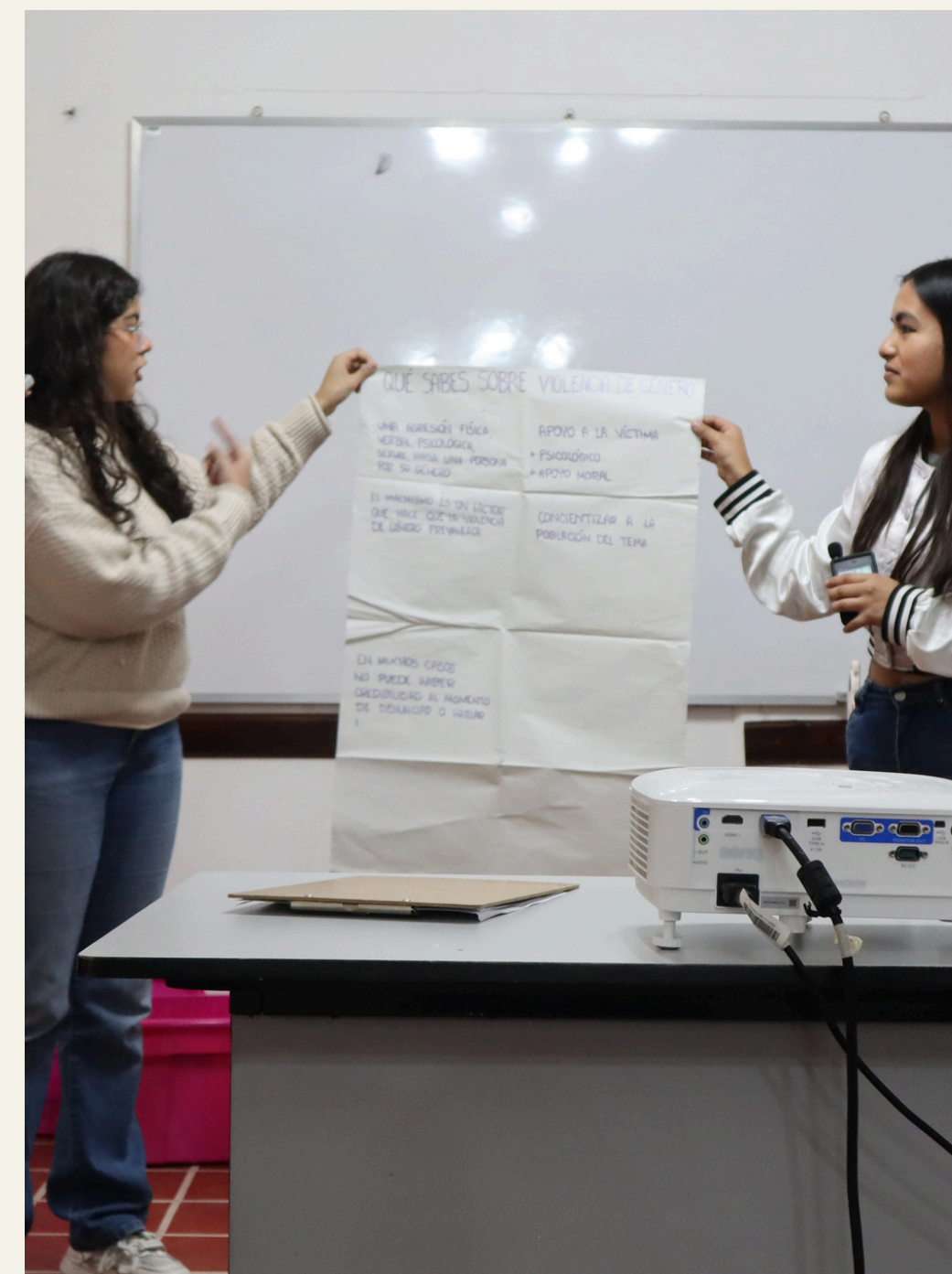


"**Sexuality** itself is a big dimension of our **lives**. It's present from the time of our **births** until we pass away and **transition** to other lives. And in this country, the history of **women** and **different communities**, including **youth** and **young males**, is marked by a lot of sexual **abuse**. For me, the work that **WINGS** does is that it's giving the **power back** to the **women** and giving the **power** back to the **communities**, so at the end, whether they **decide** that they want to have a **[family planning]** method or not, just making **sure** that they can decide what **happens** to **their bodies** for themselves gives their **power** back."

**ERIK POCASANGRE,
PROGRAMS DIRECTOR**



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT MEETING



"I like to be able to share experiences with other young people which in turn helps me help other young people learn more about their bodies and their rights"



"I think it's important to mention that all young people have the right to start a sexual life and learn about what rights we have in our lives"

ALAN, YOUTH LEADER





"Even from the first day I felt good about myself, I felt happy to be here and I didn't feel judged"

"This program has helped me learn so much, not only about sexual rights, but about how to have healthy relationships with people"

ALEXANDRA, YOUTH MEMBER





**RUBÉN LÓPEZ,
COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR**

"One of the **fundamental** parts of being in **Guatemala**, and about being in **Latin America** in general, is that we've been working around **community** for decades. We've been working for years and years **resisting** these **systems** of **oppression** with our **communities**.

And that's **something** that **people** in the **U.S.** can **learn** from us—building a **sense of community** and this **collective** work **against individualism**, because **human rights** abuses are not **solved** by individualistic **solutions**, but by **collective action**."



"Guatemala is a beautiful country with a lot of complex situations, and we are doing our best to transform all of the social challenges...so, if you can keep focusing on this country and helping us to deliver these services, you are helping us to make it so that the beauty of the country matches the opportunities of the people living here."

ERIK POCASANGRE, PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

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