



# TRANSFORMING

lives in community





Since 2003, **Puente a la Salud Comunitaria (Puente)**, has been dedicated to promoting food sovereignty and contribute to the development of community capacities within the state of Oaxaca, to achieve lasting social change.

In 2022, recognizing the power of collaboration, we established a strategic alliance with SiKanda. This partnership enables us to share resources, facilities and operational infrastructure, exchange experiences and harmonize methodologies, all with the objective of advancing human rights and reducing inequalities. This proactive step towards greater organizational strength and resilience has allowed us to mark two decades of impactful service to Oaxacan communities in different regions. Building upon this alliance Puente has broadened its engagement to include collaborations with migrant agricultural communities from the Mixtec region residing in the United States, as well as women's economic empowerment and the advancement of gender equity, while sustaining our core focus on food security and health.

In 2024, we had the distinct opportunity to conduct a field visit to the agricultural fields of Oxnard, California, where thousands of Oaxacan men and women contribute with their labor. Challenging the perception that migration leads to improved livelihoods, our observations revealed the often-deficient and undignified realities they face. Recognizing this complex and precarious context, we remain steadfast in our commitment to building bridges of collaboration that foster the local empowerment and resilience of Oaxacan communities.

*With your trust and donations, Puente is helping build a more sustainable future for individuals and families.*

**José Carlos León Vargas**

*Director of the Puente – SiKanda Alliance*

## 2024 IMPACT at a glance

+  
**479** direct  
participants  
served  
1,916 Indirect beneficiaries impacted

4 IMPLEMENTED  
**PROJECTS**

**5** Alliances and  
paternships with

Santa María Yucuhiti Auxiliary  
Municipality, Vicente Guerrero  
Auxiliary Municipality, Tierra Blanca  
Auxiliary Municipality, Calpulli A.C.  
and Becari Language School

**43** Donors

10 foundations, 33 individual donations



across

**2** REGIONS  
Mixteca and Central Valleys





## MARES Women Saving in Solidarity Networks

Provides a supportive space for women, primarily mothers, to collectively improve their livelihoods. Through bi-weekly savings sessions, participants develop consistent saving habits, acquire essential financial literacy and tools, and learn techniques to improve family nutrition.

The year's results highlight the accessibility and usefulness of this community-led financial mechanism.

**136** women participants

Actively engaged in

**10** savings groups

across the Central Valleys and Mixteca regions of Oaxaca

**89%** Of participants requested at least **one loan** from their group

**99%** saved over USD \$750

**68%** met or exceeded their individual savings goal

USD **\$62,555**  
Amount saved collectively in one year

Allowing to grant **370** individual loans for USD \$71,010

USD **\$8,035**  
in interest generated  
+ USD **\$261.5** in fines

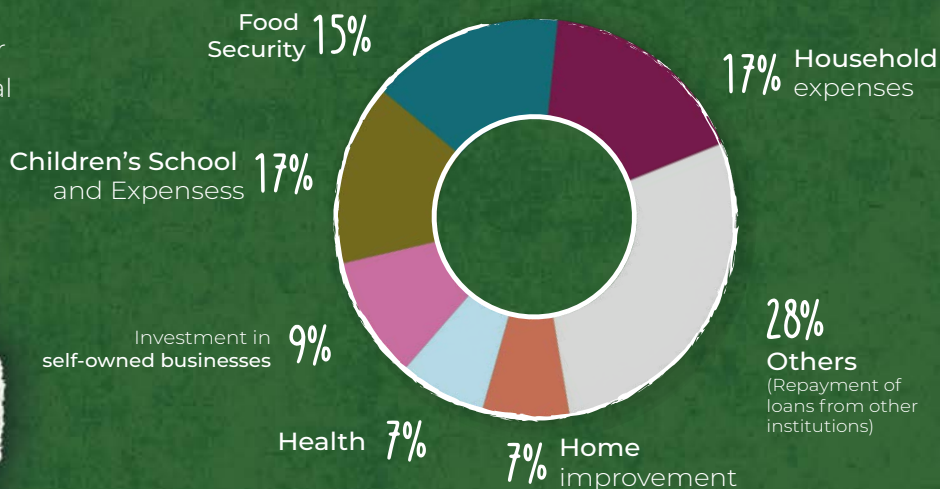
Achieving an average profit of: **13%** on the value of their savings demonstrating the tangible financial benefits of their participation in the solidarity networks.



Puente a la Salud projects do not provide direct monetary handouts or payments. The focus is on providing financial tools to enhance the participants' own savings and financial capacity.

### LOAN AND SAVINGS USAGE

From hard work to improved family well-being



## HEALTHY FAMILIES, healthy water

Beyond financial empowerment, 50 women and 17 children in the MARES groups also received training in financial literacy, introductory entrepreneurship, healthy cooking, vegetable gardening, and the construction of household greywater filtration systems for non-potable reuse.





## Unidad ÑU SAAVI Solidarity Beyond Borders

A bi-national project focused on reducing inequalities and enhancing health and resilience of indigenous Mixtec and Zapotec farmworkers living in California and Oaxaca. Working in close partnership with the agricultural communities themselves and the community organizations that serve them in the United States and Mexico, this initiative nurtures engagement and cross-learning to generate locally-driven solutions for enduring challenges.

**90** Women participated

and shared their experiences during the formative research sessions in the Central Valleys and Mixteca Regions of Oaxaca.

The Puente-SiKanda alliance proudly joined the initiative led by the Public Health Institute Center for Wellness and Nutrition (PHI CWN) and the Mixteco / Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

## Rojas SUSTAINABILITY CENTER

Serves as an educational and demonstrative hub for environmental awareness, with a core mission to build community and strengthen the social fabric around fundamental principles: human rights, gender equity, intercultural understanding, and intergenerational collaboration.

**1. COLLABORATIVE MEETING VENUE:** Providing an accessible and well-equipped venue for joint meetings of the Puente and SiKanda teams, fostering synergy and collaboration, particularly for combined organizational gatherings and project participant trainings.

**2.- ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVE SPACE:** Functioning as a demonstration site for environmentally friendly techniques and methodologies. In 2024, the center welcomed student groups from high schools in San Luis Potosí, Guadalajara, and Monterrey, offering invaluable firsthand learning experiences in eco-technologies and local planting systems.

**3.- TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPER:** Acting as a preserver of ancient agricultural practices through the cultivation of ornamental plants and vegetables. The center actively promotes clean and conscious consumption of healthy, nutritious food through agro-ecological methods, organic waste management via vermicomposting, and the preservation of seasonal seeds such as corn, beans, squash, and chila-cayote.

**4.- OPEN CLASSROOM:** Equipped as an open and engaging learning environment featuring practical applications of eco-technologies, including dry ecological toilets, greywater filtration systems, rainwater harvesting infrastructure, bio-construction techniques, solar energy utilization, and innovative recycling initiatives.



**82** Participants

42 at the Rojas Sustainability Center,  
40 across other municipalities.

Additionally, the center extended its reach through workshops focused on the construction and maintenance of ecological toilets, composting methods, and community health initiatives.



By working together, many women find new capabilities within themselves, are able to generate income, and build dreams that previously felt out of reach.

The story of **Sabina**, a MARES participant in the La Gotera neighborhood, powerfully demonstrates the transformative impact of Puente's work in Oaxaca.

When Sabina first joined the group, she often arrived late and displayed a certain hesitancy. Yet, with time and the supportive environment of MARES, she blossomed into a disciplined and confident individual. Her initial small loans fueled a little business selling flip-flops, bows, and candy, which, through her hard work, steadily grew into a successful grocery and bread store. Today, entrusted by her fellow members, Sabina holds the vital role of group accountant, a clear reflection of her dedication and the recognition of her growing leadership within the community.



Sabina

Initially hesitant, **Raquel**, housewife and owner of a clothing store, questioned the value of joining the MARES savings group in La Gotera, fearing it would be an unproductive use of her time. However, as the savings cycles progressed and she witnessed tangible improvements in both her business and personal finances, Raquel experienced a profound shift of perspective. She now recognizes that the time invested in the group is not an expense, but rather a valuable investment in her own personal and economic growth and overall well-being.



Raquel

MARES methodologies create a strong network of support, mutual learning, and personal development. Each meeting, loan, and achieved goal add to a collective story of growth. Here, women's savings become the foundation for profound self-transformation.



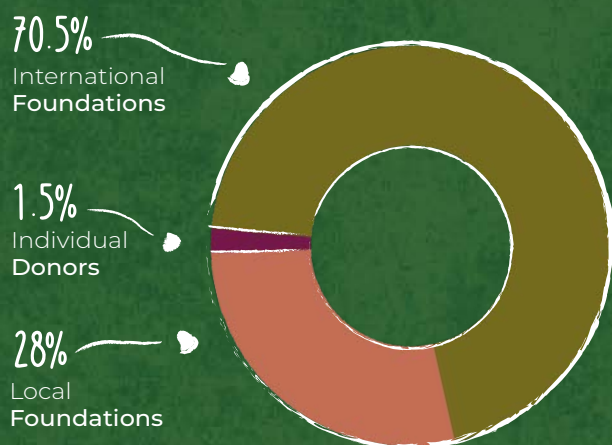


## Our FUNDING

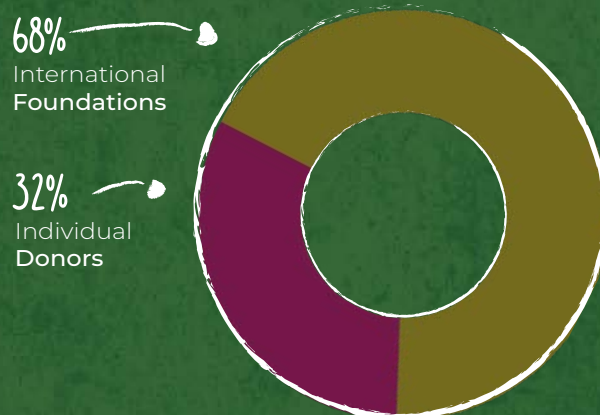
As a registered organization, Puente a la Salud Comunitaria adheres to all requirements mandated by tax authorities in Mexico and the U.S. We manage all funds and donations responsibly, ensuring efficiency in project budget implementation, a proper use of organizational assets, and an adequate compensation of our team.

Puente's operations are sustained by funding from:

Puente a la Salud Comunitaria  
Mexican civil society organization



Puente a la Salud Comunitaria  
501(c)(3) organization registered in EUA



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## DONORS and alliances

The collective generosity of our **individual donors** plays a crucial role in empowering our work. We extend our profound gratitude to:

Katherine and Peter Lorenz, Perry Lorenz, Kate Seely, Peter Noll, Cassie Chandler, Becca Pryor, Lisette Schuitemaker, Mary Stelletello, Mr. Audie McRae, Matthew Butkus, Eric M. Seubert, Leslie Seely, Amy Margolies, Cynthia Margolies, Jim & Kelley Smith, John C. Leonard, John Corbett, Jeremy Strauser, Katherine & Jim Bach, Eric & Lauren Miller, James Chandler, Jenna Cushner, Ms. Jamie Baldwin, Martha and Donald Dolben, Lucille Pulitzer, Jamie Nicole Dean, Patric Spann, Charlotte Herzele, Marty Krasney, Michael Watson, Bradley Tirpak, Mindy Kuth, MaryEllen Sanger, John Dauer, Ela Dadal, Andrew Springer, Jeya Aerenson, Lynn Evers, Grant Mitchell, Thomas Brisebras, Larry Warshaw, Allison Squires, Jack Corbett, Jennifer Brown, Sheridan Lorenz, Melanie Torres, Megan Glore, Alan Fenton, Barbara Bash, Martin Krasney, Scott Ross, Jamie Dean. Cedeño & Associates. Accounting, Tax & Bookkeeping.

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