



# Horizons

## OF FRIENDSHIP

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO END POVERTY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

Dear

Spring 2026

During my travels in Mesoamerica, I have seen how deeply women's health is connected to the environments in which they live. When access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is limited – as is common in the Global South – women and girls are denied their full health and dignity, which severely restricts their future prospects.

**Our Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) project in Guatemala - newly named Utz K'aslemal - addresses this critical reality. The 7-year project is supported by Global Affairs Canada and your generous donations.**

### How women and girls are affected

A lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene disproportionately affects girls and women. They face increased risk of urinary and reproductive tract infections, struggle to manage menstruation safely and privately, and face stigma that limits their participation in daily life.

Without proper sanitation practices and facilities, girls are more likely to miss school, which affects their ability to receive a good education, develop careers and earn income. Women are likewise affected, missing work, losing income, and being exposed to harassment due to a lack of private sanitation facilities.

Menstrual health is not only a matter of dignity, but is also directly tied to opportunity and long-term well-being. It is also an environmental issue, as the unsafe disposal of feminine hygiene products can contaminate already fragile water sources.

### Nurturing health and the environment

Through community-based workshops, our Utz K'aslemal project will empower youth, women, families, and traditional midwives (comadronas) to nurture both human health and ecological balance. Improving hygiene, managing household waste safely, and protecting water sources supports better menstrual health, leading to healthier pregnancies and safer births.

Our specialist for this project, Facundo López, is an Environmental Engineer and member of Guatemala's National Drinking Water and Sanitation Network. He promotes health and environmental awareness through interactive workshops that combine technical expertise with cultural insight.



Adolescent girls learn about water, sanitation and hygiene during an Utz K'aslemal discussion group in rural Quetzaltenango.



PIES Environmental Engineer Facundo López delivers a workshop on the connection between health and the environment.



In partnership with

Canada



I want to help Horizons empower people in Central America and Mexico.

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To Donate



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“When I begin my talks, I ask, ‘Could the environment be connected to sexual and reproductive rights?’ It’s about raising awareness – about caring for the environment and preventing early pregnancies. Our environment is fragile, and protecting it is essential to ensuring these rights,” says Facundo.

Because of your commitment to this project, the work we are doing in Guatemala is strengthening agency among adolescents, especially young women. When girls have knowledge, resources, and supportive environments, they can make informed decisions about their bodies and futures.

### New Partnership: Defending the Right to Clean Water

I am excited to share news about a new partner and a new project that also focuses on the importance of clean water for health and well-being. IMDEC (The Mexican Institute for Community Development) has been working with communities in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, for more than 60 years to protect natural resources and defend against pollution caused by factories, pipelines, and industrialization.

Access to clean water for drinking and sanitation is a human right, yet many Indigenous communities and entire regions in Jalisco fight for it every day.

Horizons’ project with IMDEC will strengthen the technical, social, and advocacy skills of communities, Indigenous groups, and organizations in three areas of Jalisco. These groups are fighting against 1) pipelines being built without community consent, that leach toxic chemicals into soil and water 2) E. coli and other contaminants in water sources causing serious health problems, and 3) mega projects that destroy biodiversity in Indigenous areas.

As women continue to be primary caretakers of the home, they face greater exposure to these forms of pollution. Unsafe drinking water and sanitation lead to kidney diseases, diarrhea, cancers, E. coli infections, and much more, which directly impact fertility, maternal health, and family health.

### The Power of Your Donations

With you in our corner, we continue to ensure that women and girls have the resources they need to live healthy, dignified and empowered lives. By supporting women’s health, we support entire communities in Mesoamerica on their journey to well-being, resilience and self-determination.

**Please continue to give generously. Becoming a monthly donor provides you with a convenient, budget-friendly way to give, while providing us with the reliable, sustained funds we need to plan projects effectively.**



Sincerely,

Rodrigo Konigs  
Executive Director, Horizons of Friendship



A protester holds a sign declaring ‘Water for life, not for business’ in Jalisco, Mexico, where many communities and Indigenous groups are fighting to defend their right to clean drinking water.



As primary caretakers of the home, women and girls face the harsher health impacts from pollution and environmental degradation.



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