

EXPANDING THE BRIDGE

2014-2016 STRATEGIC PLAN



FriendshipBridge

Empowered Women Eliminating Poverty



“I HAVE A DREAM AND A PLAN TO REACH IT, AND NOW IT’S POSSIBLE WITH THE TOOLS FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE PROVIDES. I AM ALWAYS THINKING OF A BETTER FUTURE FOR MY SON AND NOW WE ARE MORE STABLE.”

JUANA PERECHÚ CHOVÓN, 26-YEAR-OLD SINGLE
MOTHER AND FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE CLIENT

MISSION

To empower impoverished Guatemalan women to create a better future for themselves, their children and their communities through microfinance and education.

VISION

A world in which empowered women eliminate poverty.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Friendship Bridge provides microfinance and education primarily to indigenous populations in rural areas where the rate of poverty in Guatemala is the highest. Microcredit loans are effective in developing countries where wage-paying jobs are scarce and people survive through self-employment using their skills such as weaving, embroidery, raising livestock or poultry, or growing fruits and vegetables.

The Microcredit Plus program combines microcredit with basic education on everyday topics including budgeting, marketing and sales, nutrition, women's rights and self-esteem. More advanced trainings are offered depending on the client's experience and desire.

On average, a Friendship Bridge client earns less than \$2 a day, has had approximately three years of formal education, cannot read or write, and is unlikely to speak Spanish, the official language of the country. The average loan for a client is \$350 for a 4-12 month term and is used to start or expand an existing small business. Over the last several years, Friendship Bridge clients have maintained a loan repayment rate of more than 98%.

Microcredit allows for more dependable cash flow, increased productivity, increased sales and, therefore, higher income for their families. Ultimately, Microcredit Plus benefits the client as well as an average of six others in the community, including spouses, children, parents and employees.

CORE VALUES

- ▶ Empowerment
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Solidarity
- ▶ Participation
- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Transparency





EXPANDING THE BRIDGE

The 2014–2016 Strategic Plan reflects a strong commitment to clients’ growth as individuals, entrepreneurs and change-makers within their communities. The next three years will see an emphasis upon continued development of the Client Continuum. Our strategy is to offer the most relevant programs to clients at whatever their level of development, whether a first-time client dreaming of a more stable future or an experienced leader in search of new opportunities and markets. As clients reach higher levels of economic and social empowerment, Friendship Bridge wants to grow with them and be a significant part of their journey at every step.

The plan also includes continued, careful growth in new clients, portfolio, geography and corresponding staff and infrastructure to support this. As client growth continues and additional programs are developed, Friendship Bridge remains committed to analyzing programs to ensure the effectiveness of products and services offered. Over the next three years, Friendship Bridge will use a clearly defined social performance management system to better understand impacts and guide operations. Our goal is to continue to make a positive impact in the lives of our clients, their children, the communities we serve and in the lives of the people we employ.

2014–2016 STRATEGIC GOALS

FURTHER DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE CLIENT CONTINUUM STRATEGY

As part of our commitment to the growth of Friendship Bridge clients, our strategy is to offer the most relevant programs to each client at whatever their level of development. For artisans and those involved in agriculture, who make up a majority of our poorest clients, we will develop an integrated value chain, providing not only capital and skills, but eventually linking clients possessing the desire and ability with better access to markets to sell their products.

USE SOCIAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE PROGRESS TOWARD OUR SOCIAL MISSION

Friendship Bridge has always had a social mission and a strong commitment to it. We now have a defined system to measure impact and provide input to our products and services. Over the next few years, we will capitalize upon best practices and standardized reporting to:

- Implement systems for social responsibility that meet or surpass industry standards
- Align business processes to achieve both social and financial objectives
- Incorporate social impact into all decision making processes

STRENGTHEN CLIENT RETENTION AND LOYALTY

Our impact work tells us that the longer a client is in our program the better off she is. One of the significant factors inhibiting the success of a client along the Continuum is related to health issues, either hers, or someone in her family. The 2014–2016 Strategic Plan includes implementing a health services program, a critical area to help improve the lives of clients, their children and their communities. Additional loyalty programs such as savings accounts, rewards, access to more education and added credit products can improve retention levels and assist clients in moving along the Continuum toward maximizing their potential.

ADVANCE STAFF AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS' GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

While working to improve our clients' lives, it is also essential that we continue to build our organization internally. Programs that develop leaders among our employees are imperative, especially in rural areas where hiring quality staff is always a challenge. A special emphasis will be put on developing women leaders and hiring more clients as employees. In addition, maintaining a strong and informed Board of Directors is critical to the future success of the institution. Ensuring all of our leaders remain current with industry trends will encourage change, innovation and progress toward creating new opportunities for our clients and employees.

IMPROVE OPERATIONAL PROCESSES AND LOWER OVERALL PROGRAM DELIVERY COSTS

Friendship Bridge is committed to consistently improving operational efficiency and delivering expanded programs at the lowest cost possible. Using technology, process improvement tools, employee retention strategies and better transportation solutions will allow us to streamline processes, improve employee effectiveness and improve the timeliness of product delivery to clients.

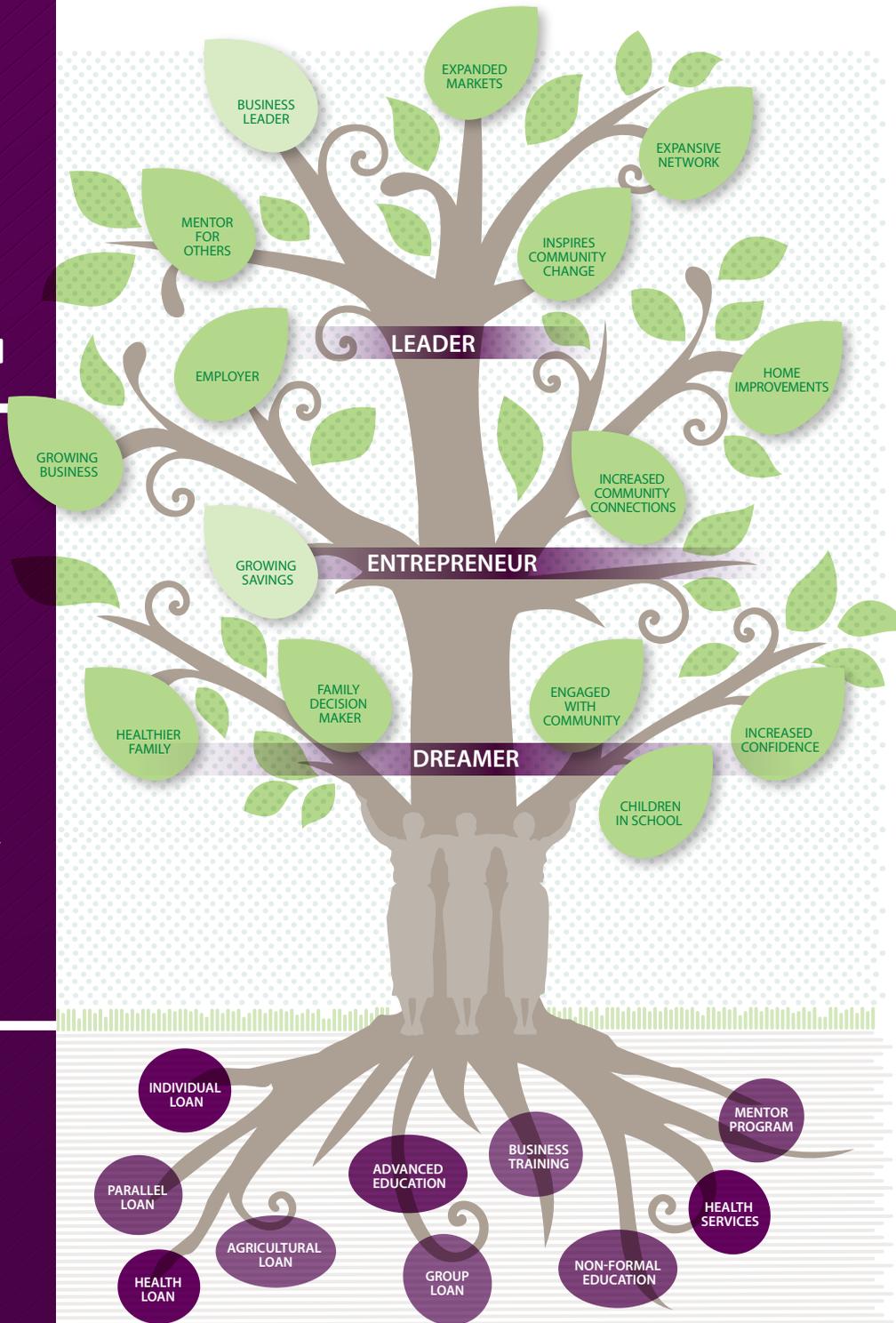
GROW THE PORTFOLIO AND DEVELOP NEW FUNDING SOURCES ENSURING OPERATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Operational self-sufficiency requires careful and strategic growth while providing additional products and services to our clients. To grow our portfolio, we will expand geographically with new branch offices reaching more impoverished, rural clients, while increasing penetration in existing markets. The plan also includes diversifying other revenue sources including new platforms and medias for donations and expanding our portfolio of impact investors.



THE FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE CLIENT CONTINUUM

THE IDEA BEHIND THE CLIENT CONTINUUM IS TO OFFER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE RELEVANT AND APPROPRIATE TO CLIENTS AT WHATEVER THEIR LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT, WHETHER THEY ARE A FIRST-TIME CLIENT OR AN EXPERIENCED ENTREPRENEUR IN SEARCH OF NEW MARKETS.





MEASUREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

The success of Friendship Bridge is based on clients' growth as individuals and businesswomen to become agents of change in their families and communities. To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of our programs, Friendship Bridge will not only use client satisfaction and exit surveys, but also client focus groups and a client advisory council. In addition, we have partnered with the Grameen Foundation to utilize the Progress Out of Poverty Index (PPI). Over the last several years, we have built a solid foundation to measure these successes as clients begin to move along the Continuum, and are currently collecting data on every client. In 2014–2016, Friendship Bridge will publish an impact report on an annual basis to share our progress over time.

“LIFE SEEMS LESS
DIFFICULT TO ME SINCE
I FOUND FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE.
THEY TRUST ME AND THEY
GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO
HAVE A BUSINESS USING
MY OWN SKILLS.”

MARÍA GÓMEZ CATÚ, FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE CLIENT



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FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit established in 1990 and headquartered in Lakewood, Colorado with eight offices in Guatemala. Friendship Bridge holds a Four Star rating by Charity Navigator for sound financial management, accountability and transparent practices.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

and stories about women creating a better future for themselves and their children, please visit friendshipbridge.org and join us on Facebook at facebook.com/microcreditplus.

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