



AUGUST UPDATE

Building Tourism Businesses in SC



Meet Claudia, a CECAP Culinary Program graduate who teaches Guatemalan cooking classes to visitors here in Santa Cruz. In addition to Guatemala Cooking with Claudia, visitors are also taking traditional weaving and beading classes with local artisans trained in Amigos' the CECAP Vocational Training Center. Claudia and her fellow instructors are earning an income through a growing community tourism economy here in Santa Cruz, while having the opportunity to share local Mayan culture with visiting tourists. Read more about our visitor classes [here!](#)

CECAP Training Painting Students to Become Professional Artists

This year, the CECAP Vocational Training Center is instituting a year-long training course in professional painting techniques for six Santa Cruz students. The students are learning to convert their passion for art into a trade and future source of income. Their ultimate goal is to learn the style of oil painting that is very popular on the western shores of Lake Atitlan,

including San Juan, San Pedro and Santiago, but doing so with uniquely Santa Cruz colors and touch. This style depicts local rural life and culture in vibrant colors, often from a bird's eye view. It shows men and women in aspects of their daily life, at the market or in the home, with local foods, flowers, and dress.



This painting, left is an example of what the students in this class are learning. Currently only one person from the Santa Cruz communities, Abel Chumil in the small town of Jaibalito, is trained in this art form. He sells his paintings in the [Manos Cruceñas Artisan Store](#) here in Santa Cruz, but they sell out fast and he is unable to keep up with demand. These classes are meant to fill that gap, producing more trained Santa Cruz artists and a new source of income in the community.

Training Youth Leaders to Promote Sexual & Reproductive Health



This group of young men and women hope to lead their community to a future in which all youth have access to information and resources on sexual and reproductive health. Amigos has made significant progress in implementing SRH education in the Santa Cruz public schools over the past 6 years, but many youth outside of the public school system are getting left

behind. This group of youth leaders is attending bi-weekly workshops to become SRH educators and promoters themselves. They will serve as resources for young people in their communities, providing information and presenting to other youth groups. The hope is that all youth in Santa Cruz will have access to the information and resources that allow them to make informed decisions about their bodies, their lives and their futures. The goal is that this information not just come from outside educators, but from fellow youth from within their own community.

Meet Elizabeth, Our Women's Empowerment Program Coordinator

Elizabeth Pérez Cholotio joined our Women's Empowerment Program in January 2018. With a degree in Tourism Business Administration, she has been fundamental in identifying new business opportunities in Santa Cruz and helping

organize groups of women to take on the administration of these new businesses. Under Elizabeth's leadership, Amigos now supports over 50 women entrepreneurs and 20 different local businesses. Elizabeth is passionate about improving women's lives in Santa Cruz, and believes that increased economic inclusion for women will lead to greater gender equality. Elizabeth comes from the neighboring Lake Atitlán village of San Juan, and in her free time enjoys developing her own small business making hand painted bird necklaces from coconut shells.



"Community development requires adequate conditions that allow men and women to participate equally. I am proud to be part of the empowerment of women, in order to achieve meaningful community development." - Elizabeth

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