

# ROTARY HONORS: CHAMPIONS OF IMPACT

BY ETELKA LEHOCZKY



**STEVE DUDENHOEFER**

**ROTARY CLUB OF PUERTO BARRIOS, IZABAL, GUATEMALA  
PROJECT: GUATEMALAN TOMORROW FUND**

Steve Dudenhoefer founded the Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund and Asociación Ak' Tenamit 33 years ago, after selling his business in the US and moving to Guatemala to serve as a full-time volunteer accompanying rural Indigenous Central American communities in their sustainable development processes.

The Guatemalan Tomorrow Fund helped develop a program of work-based learning and job placement for young Indigenous people in the country. One thousand Indigenous girls and boys receive vocational training at rural residential schools. Community education promoters visited communities to recruit students and offer scholarships. Teachers were trained in improved methodologies and taught how to provide psychological support to students who had been abused. More than 4,000 students have graduated from the program, and 86% of them are gainfully employed.

Members of five Rotary clubs in Guatemala and 36 clubs in the United States worked with Asociación Ak' Tenamit, the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, and local municipalities to ensure the project's long-term financial and operational sustainability. The project is now managed by a board of directors composed of Indigenous graduates of the program.



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