

Village Update

El Edén, Nicaragua



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Leonardo Flores, husband, farmer and father of three, is a great example to other agricultural producers of El Edén in that he consistently involves himself in the daily routine activities of his household and his community. Leonardo is often seen enthusiastically sharing with his neighbors the lessons he has learned from growing on his own parcel. He recently harvested 3,000 pounds of corn and 550 pounds of beans. In addition to cultivating corn and beans, Leonardo took a risk in experimenting with passion fruit, a new crop for the region that is earning a high price. This dynamic grower also actively participates in other production projects, including coffee, plantains and sheep, all with the help offered by his supportive children.

Community Organization

The community has elected its leadership and formed a board of directors. The members of the leadership help promote, direct and orient the community members to the different work they need to do, in both production and social areas. They have formed charts that outline the rotation of work on the production projects, done mostly by the men in the community, and the women and youth focus more on the social activities.

Land Ownership

Twenty-four families enjoyed the harvest of 143,000 pounds of beans from 7 acres of land. This plentiful harvest will guarantee food for the families for many months. Another significant activity of this quarter is the sowing of 21.5 acres with more beans. The sale of this harvest is hoped to cover the loan taken for this project.

The families of El Edén expanded their project to cultivate cacao with the planting of 3,018 cacao plants over 1.74 acres. Additionally, 600 passion fruit plants (through a loan of \$1,231) were planted over another 0.6 acres and 1,056 citrus plants over 0.73 acres.

Housing and Infrastructure

Housing projects have been initiated as the thirty-two families of El Edén wait for the construction of their homes. The families will build their houses with the help of service teams and Nicaraguan youth offering their assistance. Improvements have begun on the community center as well. Repairs are being made on the structure's doors, locks and electricity. The community is

also looking to provide a space to accommodate the various groups and technicians that visit El Edén.

The members of the community obtained a pump and all other necessary supplies to install an irrigation system that they are using for 1.45 acres of plantains, vegetables and other non-traditional crops. The families have also obtained hosing through Agros programs to irrigate smaller parcels of nearby land. In order to install running water for household use, studies to find a sufficient water source continue.

Sustainable Economic Growth

Thirty-two families were able to acquire a herd of fifty-eight sheep through a loan. This project will enable the diversification and accelerated development of El Edén's economy, ensuring a stable income throughout the different seasons of the agricultural year and continue making payments on their loans.

Three families assumed financing to buy fertilizer and other necessary inputs to efficiently manage their 0.6 acres of vegetable crops (including lettuce, celery and cauliflower). With this loan, these families will continue to earn a steady income throughout the year and ensure for themselves dietary needs.

The families also received a loan of \$2,671 to plant approximately 1.5 acres of plantains. The families are working this crop together, as they continue to work on crop diversification to increase their incomes throughout the year.

The cattle project has also begun with the purchase of seventeen cows. Along with the sheep, the families are being trained to care

properly for their animals in a collective fashion, including deparasiting them.

Community Education and Training

A group of thirty children, adolescents and adults took part in the trainings in Environmental Health. The result of this activity involved the organization of a household cleaning campaign throughout the community. Following this training, a tour of the homes showed great improvement; even the bathrooms were as clean on the inside as they were on the outside! Such improved conditions reflect the pride that the families of El Edén hold for their belongings and lives.

The hygiene trainings also address personal hygiene and self-care. Other trainings were developed concerning the Rights of the Child convention and protections for the rights of women. Thirty-three members of the community attended this informational session. As a result, many voiced the desire to learn more about other related topics surrounding the issues of women and children so that parents could teach their children and spread awareness. The participants saw that knowledge of these issues allowed them to require respect as human beings and to be valued as integral members of the community.

Adult literacy is a high priority for the people of El Edén. The community is implementing an adult literacy curriculum in which fifteen adults are participating. These audio visual classes, sponsored by the Nicaraguan government, are given daily by a youth from the neighboring Yucul community.

Every community experiences conflict, but what differentiates a healthy community is their commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and healing. This quarter saw temporary conflict due to differences of character and conduct among the youth and adolescents. In practice with the community's values, the groups were reconciled with involvement from their parents so that they would see the importance of extending more attention to their children.

Twenty-five families received 4 egg-laying hens each in a project to strengthen nutrition.

The youth are working with energy and enthusiasm for the various social events taking place in their community. Presently, they are dedicating their time to the decorations and murals for future visitors to the community. Much creative ambition as well as eagerness and preparedness to work is observed in these children.

Women who have formed a community health commission have been delegated to survey the cleanliness and order of the homes as well as be responsible for basic first-aid supplies and medicine in the case of an emergency.