

# Village Update

*Futuro del Mañana, Nicaragua*



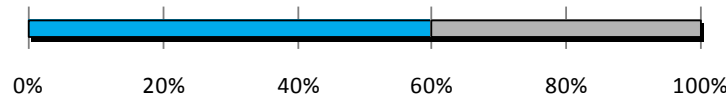
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Agros uses 20 indicators to measure the impact of our work in Agros communities. Indicators measure predetermined outcomes, such as improved access to water, that are hoped to be achieved through Agros' work and make up the greater vision of Agros, to restore hope to the world's poor. The eight indicators below are measured on an annual basis and are now included in each quarterly Village Update.

## ANNUAL INDICATORS OF VILLAGE PROGRESS (June 2009)

Founded: 1999

**Development Level:** Progress through the Agros Development Model  
(100% reached when community has paid off their land loans)



## Economic Indicators:

### Diversification of income-generating crops:

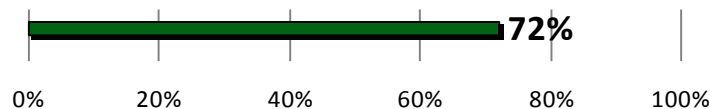
*5 types of crops sold to provide income*

*70% of people have livestock*

### Participation in commercialization of products:

*100% of people commercialize their products*

### Enterprise loan repayment rates:



## Community Indicators:

### Access to water for domestic use:

*100% of families have water at 0-100 meters from home*

### Presence of health promoters in community:

*Yes*

### School-aged children attending school:

*97%*

### Leadership Positions Held by Women:

*50%*

Don Pedro, a young 73-year old, and his two grown children, Virginia and Franklin, have a moving story about the challenging journey towards land ownership. Together they moved to Futuro del Mañana several years ago, but soon after they settled in, Pedro's wife passed away. Unable to see how to carry on, it was only his two children that kept him going. "My mother always told me not to borrow money, and when my wife died, I wanted to leave the community because I didn't know what to do without her. I tried to leave many times, but Agros staff and my children encouraged me not to throw away all of our hard work." In 2008, Don Pedro and his children were able to complete their last land loan payment. "I paid with my own work, but it was God that allowed me to keep going and get ahead."

## Community Organization

As the community prepares for the last year of partnership with Agros, leadership is taking on more and more responsibility, including revising bylaws, coordinating the title ceremony, finalizing the new annual plan and encouraging the nine families that still have loan payments left. Monthly meetings provide space for the entire community to stay up-to-date and give their opinions.

Two meetings were held as part of the values-based planning process to determine the goals and activities for the upcoming year. 90% of the families participated, allowing their common values to guide their vision.

## Housing and Infrastructure

The men in the village worked together this quarter to make repairs to the access road leading to Futuro del Mañana, using gravel and cement in some sections. The families hope to improve access and transportation in anticipation of the land title ceremony.

## Land Ownership

The men, women and children coordinated a community-wide clean-up to trim overgrown limbs and pick up trash around the homes and fields. It was a very fun and encouraging activity as everyone worked together to make their community a cleaner, more beautiful place to live.

The community continues to care for the trees that were transplanted to their fields as part of this year's reforestation project. Each family waters the young trees near their land to ensure survival and development during these dry months.

This quarter, four additional families have made the final payments on their land loan, resulting in 13 of the 22 families being owners of their land. Everyone is motivating the remaining nine families as they finish up their last payments.



## Sustainable Economic Growth

During the dry season, some of the families rent their fields to be used as pasture for cattle ranchers, especially due to the drought facing the region has prevented cultivation of most crops. This way they can continue to earn income and during the rainy months when more water is available, families will plant diverse crops for consumption and commercialization. A few families have migrated for short periods to Costa Rica or work in neighboring sugarcane fields to help supplement income during the drought. Migration continues to lessen as the families are able to work on projects on their land or near the community.

The Tabasco chili pepper, plantain and some granadilla crops are still being maintained during these dry months. The peppers are in their last production phase, but production is limited due to the

residual ash from the slash-and-burning implemented in neighboring sugarcane fields, as well as the lack of water. Plantains and granadilla crops are being watered by hand. Families continue with the vision for diversification even during the dry months.

The carpentry business run by a father and his two sons continues to do well. With a loan through Agros, the family was able to purchase machinery to set up a basic workshop. This alternative to agriculture is helpful in diversifying income-generating activities, especially during the dry season.



Families received improved seeds, fertilizers and chemicals to plant their basic grain crops. When the rains start shortly, the families will use these supplies to plant corn and beans for consumption.

### **Community Education and Training**

Parents are learning how to support healthy growth in their children through trainings in nutrition, education and prevention of domestic violence situations. Men and women participated, learning what violence looks like and how to respond. Children and parents received anti-parasite medicine and vitamins to ensure adequate absorption of essential nutrients. Children's weight and height were monitored to prevent malnutrition in the community.

Young mothers participated in a workshop on sexual and reproductive health and the importance of nutritious diets and early education for their children. With an adequate diet and positive, age-appropriate interaction with their families, healthy childhood development is more guaranteed.

Two mothers in the community were invited to share about use of medicinal plants in treating a variety of minor ailments. Participants were grateful to learn this accessible approach to improve their families' health. Similarly, the promoter responsible for the first aid kit and medicine supply in the community has been administering medicines to families as needed. Several have come down with colds and coughs and have come to rely on this resource within the community.

The students are doing well in their classes, especially with the help of donated school supplies. Agros staff updated the attendance roster, showing a total of 22 students that were promoted to the next grade level, including two girls who are starting their first year of secondary school!

Through reflection and practice of their values, community members are able to resolve conflict and other challenges they face. Families enjoy attending services held in the pastor's home twice each week where they pray and share together.