

Village Update

San Diego, El Salvador



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Last quarter, several women were learning how to do *repujado*, an art form that covers surfaces with designs painted on embossed metal, and then had a successful experience bringing their creations to the regional arts and crafts fair and the Day of Corn fair in Suchitoto. The group of seven women continues to improve the quality of their products through help from a trained instructor. They are also very excited to have an opportunity to sell the goods to a market in the United States in December through a collaboration with University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington. Through these open doors, noticeable differences in the attitudes of the women are being observed as they feel they are achieving their dreams as business leaders in the community and growing their contacts, a huge accomplishment.

Land Ownership

The families have been working for many months to find the owner of a neighboring piece of land they would like to purchase to ensure access to their fields. They have recently made contact and are in discussions with the owner and Agros to possibly purchase the 3.5 acres of land in order to increase access to additional farmland.

Community Organization

The leadership team is working hard to improve the leadership and administrative skills necessary in guiding the community through their process of development. This quarter, Agros staff has provided accompaniment in holding general assembly meetings with the entire community in attendance and conflict resolution skills. Additionally, the community bought a table and white board to help with meetings and workshops.

Sustainable Economic Growth

The families in San Diego are staying busy maintaining crops, experimenting with different crops, and learning new sustainable agricultural techniques. For example, this quarter the group working with cattle has planted 6 acres of improved pasture in order to ensure sufficient food for their fourteen animals, four of which were purchased in the last three months. Agros staff provided technical assistance and accompaniment in taking care of the cattle as well.

A group of eleven farmers recently planted 2,000 pineapple plants in their individual parcels, a new crop with which the community has been experimenting. Additionally, they planted 300 *nance* trees, trees that produce a fruit similar to a small yellow plum.

These trees serve a triple purpose in that they reforest areas of the community while providing both a source of income and nutrition for the families.

A smaller group of three producers are experimenting with watermelon this quarter. They planted a mini parcel of about 0.1 acres to see if this might be a good crop to implement on a larger scale in the future.

The two men and two women collaborating together in the hen project have recently finished building a chicken coop for 100 birds. This coop will serve as an important component to their project, providing shelter and protection from the elements so that the hens are more productive and lay more eggs, an important source of protein and income for the families.

The families in San Diego are also learning new growing techniques that are both economically and environmentally more sustainable. A training on making organic compost and organic insecticide was provided by Agros staff in which four members of the community participated. The insecticide uses natural ingredients that are easily accessible to the families.

Community Education and Training

The youth and children's committees have been restructured and plans for this fiscal year are underway. The children's committee has held an activity to practice working as a team and loving one's neighbor. The materials needed for the year, such as chairs, tables and colored paper, have been purchased in order to facilitate these group activities.



In terms of health, the health committee includes three women leaders that are trained to provide attention for several different health-related situations. The women are in charge of administering the first aid kit and over-the-counter medicines, helping take people's temperatures with the community's thermometer, and providing training in personal hygiene habits, sanitation and use of the composting latrines, nutrition and oral health. This quarter the women performed a diagnostic of the use of the latrines in each household to ensure that families understand how to clean and maintain the latrines in a way that improves community health.

An oral health clinic was held facilitated by the local health promoters and a local dentist. Fifty-three children and youth of the community received attention and treatment for cavities.