Participant Observations on Integrated Backyard Farm Project

Chocolá Agrarian Community, San Pablo Jocopilas.

"On the way to my house, there is a family that has a family garden; every time I pass I see it and I like it a lot. I asked the lady how she had done it and she told me that she was participating in the Seeds for the Future project. I spoke with my parents to get permission and right now I am implementing my garden and learning to experiment and produce nutritious food for my family and me."

Fredy Daniel Rosales Zapeta, 9 years old

"I no longer have to buy hierba mora, chipilín, chard, bledo, moringa [various nutritious greens], jalapeño pepper, bell peppers, onion, Jamaica and other things because I have them at my house. The garden plants help us a lot--when there are a lot, we eat them, share them with my family or sell them. With the animals, when we want to eat a duck or a chicken I catch it and cook it, the rest I sell and this helps us to continue buying. If one accepts the ideas Seeds for a Future shares with us, we don’t need anyone to give us money."

Bernarda Natareno

"The family garden helps in our household economy, the greens that we grow on the patio of the house are organic because they do not have poison that is bought in the farm store; the fertilizer that is applied to the plants comes from our compost heap and manure of animals from the corrals. Seeds For The Future is teaching us to work to benefit ourselves and to save money. The money that I had to spend before, I have used to buy chickens. This is an investment because sometimes we eat them and sometimes we sell them."

Silvia Tulul
“Semillas Para El Futuro has brought a project that benefits the community. In our homes we now have vegetables for the family to eat. I tell other women of the community to participate because the benefit is for us, that we do not expect them to bring us things away to give away. We will organize ourselves and get tomato seeds to diversify our crops, and with the training we are learning how to raise seedlings.

With the backyard farm we have more meat to eat and also that we can sell. This generates an income that helps us in the education of our children or other things that we can use at home.”

Patricia Magdalena Cifuentes

“The project that came to our community, thanks to Semillas Para El Futuro, helps us to take advantage of the spaces we have around our house. They have taught us to plant chard, blackberry, and flor amarilla that we did not think would grow here because of the weather, but now we are eating those greens. Besides we do not need fertilizer that they sell in the agricultural store, but we can make fertilizer ourselves, by using our organic household waste and putting it in the compost.”

Rosa María López
Lolemi, San Pablo Jocopilas

When I was not in the project I had chickens but they got stolen or I did not take advantage of the eggs. Now I keep an eye on them in the pens and I take advantage of the eggs to eat or for hatching and have more chickens coming up. Before I had to pay a taxi to go to the market to buy greens, now I have them right at my door. The project has helped a lot and I'm glad to be part of the backyard farm project.

Lilian Raquel Hernández

To grow food to eat, you have to sweat, but it's worth it. When you come to my house and see the chard, you're surprised that I can harvest my own food. I'm very happy because this is helping me a lot with feeding my family.

Lilian Raxuleu
When they teach us how to work, we all win. Since I started with the project I am taking advantage of the opportunities that my family has to eat and live well. Animals and plants decorate my house and at the same time feed me. I do not have to go to the market to spend time and money because I have what I need in my garden.

Alba Carrillo

In the educational sessions we learn the nutrition that is in the things we eat. When they visit the house, they clarify any doubts and when they have the cooking practices we learn to prepare the foods that we have in the garden in various ways. We have learned a lot that will always serve us.

Socorro del Chan

The project has helped me to have enough greens and to nourish my family well, to eat fresh foods free of fertilizers because they are produced with organic fertilizer, to take advantage of the available spaces that we have around the house, making them productive. The project also teaches us -- from the preparation of the soil up to harvest. What we have left over we can sell and have money to buy corn or rice.

Rut Ajqui
Piedrecitas, San Pablo Jocopilas

In the time that I have been participating in the Semillas project, it has given me a lot of satisfaction. I have planted and harvested plants that I thought would not grow in these areas. I have chickens that have served me to eat and sell when I need to.

Paula Osorio

Having a garden, fruit trees and raising animals have complemented my family's diet and nutrition; the spaces that are now full of food before were full of garbage. The training that has been given to me to be better every day has helped me a lot, this I have taught my family because at first only I took care of things but when they realized they were important the plants and animals were for us, my family started to help me.

Rosenda Cumar
Semillas Para El Futuro has been a hope for my life -- my baby was dying, his hair was falling out. They helped me with a blood test, they taught me what to give him to eat and how to prepare it. Now, thank God my baby is walking and smiling. The best thing is that together with my daughters he is learning to plant food.

Antonia Marleni Perez Pumar

When things are done from the heart, they work. Semillas workers are very kind, they have patience to teach us. I have learned to garden, feed my animals and keep them in pens. I will continue, so I have more food to eat.

Antonia Adelina Graves
Santo Tomás La Unión, Suchitepéquez

“The project of Integral House-Farm is an aid for my family. I do not have to go to the market to buy herbs that I do not know how they have grown them. What I have in my house is organic because I fertilize it with (compost from) household waste. Of my animals I can eat whenever I want, but I know I should buy more of them so that I always have some and never run out of anything. As the land is not so good we organize with my children to go and bring it from another place, so we can harvest the nutritious greens.”

Mirna Yaque Gómez

“The patio of our house was full of banana stalks, garbage and other things that we did not use and did not produce anything. With the training that Semillas Para El Futuro has given us, we have learned to take advantage of the spaces, in order to (grow food to) eat.

“Through savings we improved the kitchen with a water filter so that our family does not get sick by taking water from the faucet. This saves money and the time that is lost by boiling the water, as well as damaging the environment. With oyster mushrooms we have eaten and sold to neighbors, that generates an income to buy other things and have the range of things we eat.

“In the patio now there is blackberry, chipilín, flor amarillo, chard, bledo, quilete, chaya, watercress, green bean, chile pepper, jalapeño pepper, cilantro, celery, tomato, güisquil, ginger, cucumber, and in the fruit trees we have strawberry, blackberry, passion fruit, rambutan, mangosteen, pineapple, tangerine, lemon, banana, platano. There is also maxan leaf, among other things that we eat every day.

“We like the project very much because it does not give things, but it teaches us. In our pens we have broiler chickens, laying chickens, rabbits, ducks, and pigeons. The training has taught us the importance of consuming animal and vegetable food. The fish tank and our snails are a great help. We are working hard as a family because the benefit is for all of us and everyone is assigned their tasks, even our 4 year old child. The project has taught us to work and value what we can do for ourselves.”

Maribel Macario y Esvin Tzunun