

Village Update

Futuro de Mañana, Nicaragua



4528 8th Ave. NE Suite 1A, Seattle, WA 98105
[p] 206.528.1066 | www.agros.org

Mutual support and sharing of daily tasks has been a point of transformation for the family of Juan José Pérez and Angela Vanessa Aguirre Somarriba and their three young daughters. To complete all the chores necessary for a smoothly-running, peaceful and productive home, the couple has found that helping each other, despite the societal gender roles that may define the task, makes for a happy home. “If there is unity and understanding in a home, everything comes together for the good. We can’t be like donkeys, where one pulls on one end and the other on the opposite end. Nothing will ever come of that.” Putting his words into action, Juan can be found helping his wife collect firewood when she makes bread or cooking so that the girls can bring a hot lunch to school. While Vanessa is selling bread with other women, Juan sells the milk from their cows. While Juan goes over homework with their girls, Vanessa is preparing dinner. “We help each other in this way and, slowly but surely, continue making payments with the money from the projects we are involved in.” This family has been an inspiration to their neighbors as peace and love transforms their relationships and they credit the support of many for this change. “I have no doubt that having become involved in a church has helped our life together; because it is there that we learned to guide each other as partners. Another thing that has helped us equally is belonging to the community of Futuro del Mañana, because through Agros we have come together even more than before to face challenges, and this is an experience that we will be able to share with our daughters as they grow up.”

Community Organization

The community Board of Directors was recently restructured through a community assembly called by the previous Board of Directors. This decision was made in light of the Board having completed their term. Through a democratic election process, each member of the community voted for those thought to be the most capable and qualified for leadership positions. With the process finalized, the new Board signed their agreements.

The new Board of Directors received training in the roles and responsibilities accompanying their new position. They also participated in workshops regarding situations that affect relationships and good work rhythms. The members were given examples of specific cases that can affect relationships such as: oppression, discrimination, disrespect, etc. At the end of the activity the Board agreed to continue meeting to tackle other possible challenges.

Land Ownership

The families are working hard on the repayment of their land loans. Seven farmers recently earned \$863 from their crops and eagerly used the money to repay their debts, modeling an example to the rest of the families. The community is now looking at strategic ways to save part of their income and prioritize loan repayment.

The farmers have done extensive work to ensure a plentiful corn and bean crop. Through loans, family income and mutual support within the community, the families were able to buy seed and are hopeful in a bountiful harvest to provide them with food throughout the year. Presently, the crops are in the development stage and growing well with this season's steady rainfall.

Housing & Infrastructure

One of the primary goals for Futuro del Mañana is to secure a reliable water source to support irrigation efforts. With the assistance of Rotary Club International, two 150-foot deep wells were planned to be dug. However, upon digging the first well, it was found that the subsoil layers are solid rock, and digging has been discontinued. Further possibilities being researched by field staff and community leadership to bring water into the community include pulling water from the river for crops.

Sustainable Economic Growth

Milk continues to generate high profits for the families of Futuro, providing them money to repay their loans. Income generation from milk recently enabled participants to pay off an additional \$800 of their land loans. Using earnings to repay land loans demonstrates the culture of repayment and the sense of responsibility that this group has in relation to fulfilling their agreement with Agros.

The farmers of Futuro have been receiving technical assistance in the regular accompaniment of their livestock project, especially with the approaching rainy season. As livestock are commonly at risk of contracting illnesses such as anthrax poisoning, the farmers

have vaccinated the livestock against this threat, as well as removed parasites.

Farmers are also improving farming techniques through technical assistance with their basic grain crops. Though many of the farmers already have extensive experience in this area, recommendations in the use of insecticides, fertilizers and other types of fungicides are shared to decrease harm to the land and reduce the risk farmers may face working with crops.

The families continue to sell their granadilla (a local fruit) crops to provide an additional source of income and repay their land. Abraham Zalasambrana, in particular, has been dedicating himself to his granadilla crops. From the early hours of the morning he is working in his orchard. Following the harvest, a merchant takes loads of at least 100 fruit from the community to the market in Rivas, where they are sold for about 45 cents each.

Community Education & Training

The families are beginning to show more interest and excitement towards the groups that visit. The children, adolescents and adults are expressing a greater desire to exchange elements of their culture such as dance, food and daily tasks, as well as the planning for these events. Everyone expressed their love and enthusiasm toward the recent visit of the Service Team, who gave much of their time and support. The entire community became involved in the activities and reflected on their life stories sharing a photo album. This shift in attitude towards outside groups often marks internal change on the individual level, vital to the development of the community's cultural and spiritual lives.

A group of 15 people, primarily mothers interested in improving their children's health, has been practicing new ways of preparing soy-based foods. Already familiar with the preparation and use of soy in meals, the workshop has helped deepen their knowledge of the great nutritional benefits of soy. With regular integration of these lessons, mothers hope to gradually make soy a routine part of their diets.

Ninety percent of the families meet regularly to hold Bible studies, in which they reflect on passages, pray and sing. They use fasting as a way to seek solutions for difficult problems and pray for others. Agros promotes study methods that encourage disciplined and respectful participation from the families.