

Village Update

Villa Linda, Guatemala



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

Antonio Juan Simón is a busy man. Having planted a parcel of coffee plants last year, he is occupied tending the crop to encourage the first good harvest in 2009. Meanwhile, to ensure his family's nutritional security and health, Antonio works in the fields to produce corn and beans. His involvement does not end here; Antonio is also working to bring clean water to each family's home. Motivated and eager to stay on the land and develop it, Antonio's presence and commitment is encouraging to the entire community.



Antonio Juan Simon working with tubing for domestic water

Community Organization

A values-planning workshop was held for the families of Villa Linda in which fourteen women contributed their ideas and opinions. This discussion will help lead the community towards gender equity and sustainable development as more and more women are encouraged to participate.

The community's documentation project has been completed and materials were turned into the Community Organization Coordinator. The project involved youth and adults working together to collect priceless information in a variety of mediums such as video, audio recordings and written transcripts, on Villa Linda's history, culture and traditions.

Land Ownership

During the present quarter, all twenty families received promissory notes for their land, laying out the terms and payment schedule for the land. According to the document, the families must begin making interest-free payments by the end of 2011, with the option to start payments earlier, completing repayment in 2016.

Each family is also working to improve their production of basic grains in order to ensure adequate nutritional security for their families, planting an average of 0.6 acres and harvesting 800 pounds of corn per family. This last year, the families reaped two harvests.

Housing & Infrastructure

Within the present quarter, a water collection and distribution tank and system have been constructed. The work was shared between members of both the Villa Linda community and their neighbors in the Agros community Nueva Primavera, resulting in in-home water for the twenty families of Villa Linda and twenty families of Nueva Primavera.



Juan Domingo Rafael with fellow community member and Agros staff during construction phase of the water collection and distribution tank

The community is very proud that every family of Villa Linda has completed building their home. The houses provide security, shelter and privacy needed for a healthy community.

The community has been working to build twenty improved cook stoves and twenty composting latrines, one for each family. Each family is provided with cement and training in construction. Cement blocks are made and with the blocks the families begin constructing the stoves and latrines, infrastructure that greatly contributes to improved family and environmental health. Currently, half of the families have finished making the blocks needed.

Sustainable Economic Growth

In addition to continuous learning about their crops, the families are busy planting, growing and caring for their coffee. In addition to the acre of coffee planted last year, about 16 more acres have been planted in Villa Linda. This crop, producing its first harvest three years following planting, will give the families with the income needed to repay their land loans and provide for their families.

Twenty individuals participated in a training on traditional and organic coffee production, increasing the farmers' awareness of the similarities and differences between the two, including advantages and disadvantages. From this information the participants may select the type of coffee that they think best to grow.

Seven community members in the process of planting coffee received monitoring to ensure that the holes dug for the new coffee plants were the correct size.

Twenty members of Villa Linda were able to fertilize a section of their new coffee parcels to track and monitor the growth and development of the plants receiving fertilizer with those that are not.



Julian Pedro Diego applying compost to coffee

With assistance from Agros technical staff, farmers in Villa Linda are learning a new sowing technique that optimizes space in the fields to increase production.

Each family participated in a training regarding terracing, its benefits, such as soil conservation, and how to begin terracing.

As part of the animal husbandry work in the community, five pigs were castrated.

The women of the Community Bank continue to maintain their financial responsibilities completing 100% loan repayments before or on the due date. The group began their second loan cycle October 12, 2007.

Community Education & Training

Eleven women were trained in the use of several different medicinal plants. During the training, the participants learned the function of each plant and how to grow and harvest each plant for its particular use. With this information, the families will be better prepared in keeping their families healthy without relying on expensive doctors fees.

One of the women of the community serves as the local midwife, providing medical attention to the birthing needs of the twenty families of Villa Linda. To support her role, Agros provided the midwife with several supplies such as scissors, cloth and towels, and a flashlight, among others.

The elementary school recently received a donation of educational materials, including story books, textbooks, puzzles and games, poems and dictionaries.