

Village Update

Futuro de Mañana, Nicaragua



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Hard-working Pedro Pablo Rodríguez Blandón, 56, has set the bar for others in Futuro del Mañana and other Agros communities by recently paying of his entire land loan. Pedro expressed: “I am grateful to Agros for financing my work and helping me own my land. Although I have already repaid my loan, I will always be ready to work with Agros, to listen to their recommendations and receive their support, when necessary, in whatever it may be.” To pay off his debt more quickly, Pedro always consulted with his children before making any decisions, all of whom supported Pedro by listening to him and following his guidance. Pedro strategized his payments by selling a cow, investing these earnings in his bean crop and saving the remainder. Crediting every good harvest to the grace of God, Pedro believes God helps those in their efforts to move ahead. In Pedro’s commitment to be the owner of his land and care for his family, Pedro strives for a better future for his family and wants more than anything to ensure his youngest daughter an education.

Community Organization

During the planning workshops held in Futuro del Mañana, members of the Communal Committee put together a reformed proposal of the community’s rules and statutes. The proposal will be presented in assembly with all members for approval.

The families recently gathered to discuss themes such as development, poverty and social work, allowing the participants to confront important issues in everyday life. The members of the community emphasized the necessity to evaluate their own attitudes and act with dignity.

Members of Futuro del Mañana recently gathered to participate in the development of their community’s Village Plan for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. During the meeting they assessed the natural resources available on their land, community organization, budget and new projects. Their discussion will be used in the development of the annual plan.

Through collective activities the members of the community continue to strengthen their values, including respect, unity, collaboration and mutual help. The community also demonstrates solidarity when presented with difficult situations, such as sickness or death. It is very important to all members the well-being of those suffering, and these are the attitudes of compassion and service that they pass on to their children.

Land Ownership

Over the last three months, the families have developed a stronger culture of payment towards their loans thanks to the model of fellow villager Pedro Rodríguez and efforts to look for sources of

income within the community. Some families continue to travel to work on the sugar plantations in Costa Rica, however less than before as more families are growing crops on their land that provides them with income.

Housing & Infrastructure

The families recently finished digging a well for an irrigation system in the farmers' parcels. With this system, it will be possible to grow a variety of crops such as plantains, papaya, passion fruit and vegetables and thus supplement the families' incomes and diets. Likewise, the well will ensure that the farmers have steady work year round and decrease migration to neighboring countries for work. With more families kept together on the land, the emotional, economical and spiritual stability will improve.

The families have been repairing the access roads into the farm in order to facilitate crop transportation during harvest season. Improved roads will also help the transportation of animals and people to and from the community. It is important that the roads be in good condition in order to prepare for the approaching rainy season.

Fifteen families of Futuro currently have in-home water basins that serve as a secure source of water for them and their animals. This resource guarantees continuous water and improved personal hygiene to prevent illnesses caused by harmful insects or animals.

Sustainable Economic Growth

The families of Futuro have increased their livestock by two bulls, totaling to 28 heads of cattle and benefiting the 9 families involved in the livestock project. In economic terms, these animals represent for the families an increase in assets equal to that of land or housing. The project is providing income from the sale of 20 liters of milk per month, about \$100, which is helping to pay off the loan associated with this project.

As a part of an enterprise baking project, made up of Vanessa Aguirra Somarriba, Jaqueline Sequeira Ulloa and Seneida Gutiérrez, these three women are making significant progress repaying the project's loan. The group is anticipating completely repaying their debt three months ahead of schedule. Once they repay the project's loan, they will be able to contribute the income from bread baking to the repayment of their land loans, as well as helping with their household expenses.

There are currently three groups of farmers that have taken out loans to grow plantains (two groups of women and one group of men). With continuous support provided through technical assistance, one group of women has already been able to pay off the loan they took out. The other two groups continue paying off their loans by selling their products.

The farmers of Futuro recently sold several of their products at the local markets in Rivas and Masaya. Among these products are papayas, passion fruit, guinea hens and plantains. These sales help to generate a sustainable income for the families and will help enable them to pay off their land loans.

Community Education & Training

Through several home visits to the families, proper health and hygiene practices relating to the cleanliness of their land and livestock areas, personal hygiene and safe food preparation are being integrated into the families' daily habits. These practices help prevent common illnesses in the community. Due to Futuro's high level of education, this community has been particularly successful in adopting and evaluating new hygiene practices.

As of the beginning of 2007, the students of the community returned to school. Six children are enrolled in preschool, 13 in elementary school, 11 in middle school and 4 in high school. Their parents greatly value their children's education, however, it is difficult to supply their children with the materials they need for their studies. As a result, many of the children have to work part of the day to help with these expenses and household expenses.

The farmers received technical assistance and training in the maintenance and care of their composting worm farms, emphasizing how to feed the worms and take advantage of the rich and organic compost the worms produce. The farmers also learned how to prepare alternative food sources for their livestock during the dry season. They demonstrated and practiced together how to prepare alimentation made from molasses, water and chicken meal as well as how to provide livestock with salt minerals. These new techniques are vital to the farmers as they learn how to ensure adequate nutrition for the cows. Otherwise, the cows produce 25% less milk in the dry season.

Through various training events, the families of Futuro have found space to develop critical thought and their ability to analyze. The problems they are faced with in daily life have become an opportunity for them to make decisions and analyze the positive and negative aspects of each situation.

The members of the community engage in biblical studies that lay a foundation for their daily lives and strengthen their faith. Many attend the services in nearby Evangelical and Catholic churches which allow the members of the community to stay active in their church and serve their community such as visiting the ill. All of these contribute to the spiritual enrichment of the families of Futuro del Mañana.