

Village Update

Nuevo San Pedrito, México



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Agustín, his wife and two small children are recent arrivals to San Pedrito. Hardly three months ago, Agustín learned that San Pedrito was a good place to live and then came looking for a little land with which to cultivate corn and beans. Before, Agustín had been working as a day laborer on a ranch one hour from his family. “I knew that in San Pedrito things were getting better for my Tsotsil (indigenous group In Mexico) relatives with support from Agros.” Agustín had heard about the water, improvements to their homes, access to affordable loans as well as the visits from Service Teams. “This all really surprised me, and I am very excited and grateful to my companions of San Pedrito for having accepted me into their community, and blessing me with their support.”

Community Organization

Through discussions and participatory workshops, the families have reviewed the progress they have made in last year’s plan. This review helped the community to create a new plan for the upcoming fiscal year. This work reflects a greater involvement of the participants in the planning, execution and monitoring of the activities of their community.

Land Ownership

The families in San Pedrito are looking for additional land to grow more crops. A piece of land has been identified and evaluated in order to ensure water sources and soil quality. Negotiation talks have been held with the owner, but the families have decided to continue searching to find land with better fertility, topography and water sources.

Continuing the community’s environmental initiatives, the families has acquired 216 fruit trees and 1,570 forest trees to be transplanted on the new or existing land pending the community’s decision.

Housing & Infrastructure

In May, three families celebrated completing their temporary homes with the support of Agros. In June, a governmental program has begun offering training and materials for building family water tanks. The tanks, with storing capacity for 4,222 gallons, were built by twelve families, providing adequate water storage throughout the dry season.

In April, the solar energy conductor was installed in San Pedrito, providing light and electricity to the community center and the school. The community center has also been furnished with chairs through the leadership's efforts. A group is also organizing itself to set up a small refrigerator in the community center in order to store vaccinations for animals and other supplies that need to be refrigerated.

Several families are working to make repairs or to replace cook stoves. Efficient cook stoves are essential to respiratory and back health, as well as energy conservation. The community will also continue to hold talks and raise awareness about the construction of composting latrines in each house.

Sustainable Economic Growth

At the end of this quarter, thirteen families in the community have requested and received loans for a total of US\$2,393 in order to support production of black beans. The community's portfolio shows that \$399 was borrowed for improving homes and \$3,015 to support various agriculture initiatives. Repayments this quarter total to \$397 with a high 97% repayment rate.

At the beginning of the rainy season, the families have been concentrating on planting corn and beans. These crops support food security and generate income when production and quality is especially high. The Agros staff continues to accompany the processes in order to help families obtain a crop that would assure the loan repayment and income generation to provide for their families.

Community Education & Training

Two Vision Trips have visited San Pedrito this quarter, sharing in the transformation experienced by the families this last year.

In May, twenty women in San Pedrito participated in a workshop facilitated by an outside consultant and Agros staff about teamwork and leadership, resulting in a self-assessment of their living conditions. The women left feeling more motivated to get involved in new ways in their community, including contributing their ideas during the land search and other family issues. These ideas and projects will be incorporated into the community's annual plan.

Agros staff continues to partner with the families in different health and education issues, emphasizing educating children and families in preventative health practices and nutrition. Also, in efforts to revitalize interest in adult literacy, work is being done to connect the community with governmental services.