

Village Update

San Diego, El Salvador



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A group of two women and two men are working together in a new chicken project in Agros community San Diego. Typically a project reserved for women, Aldofo and Chalillito asked Versa and Mely if they could join. Despite having never worked in a coed project such as this, the group decided to work together, keeping equity and respect at the core. The group cleared the land, built the brick and wire coop, received training on caring for the birds, and prepared the space for the 100 birds, and is now reaping great rewards. The eggs are sold in San Diego, and accompanied by the men, the women carry eggs balanced on their heads to neighbors in La Esperanza and El Papaturro to be sold. With this success, Aldofo, Mely, Versa and Chalillito are glad they made the decision to work together despite their differences, and are hoping to double their project in the next few months.



Community Organization

The leadership of the community is working together to revise San Diego's by-laws. Many of the by-laws are irrelevant and others need to be added to help the community run more smoothly.

Housing and Infrastructure

With support from Agros and partnerships with the town of Suchitoto and San Pedro, the families successfully completed maintenance work on the access road leading to the community, essential for facilitating transportation in and out of the community.

Sustainable Economic Growth

This quarter, fourteen families in San Diego are involved in planting pasture and grasses to ensure that their livestock have a stable source of food throughout the year, especially during the dry season with pastures dry up. Currently, those involved are providing maintenance for the pasture and will cut and dry the grasses for later use.

As mentioned above, the chicken project has proven very successful, earning essential income for the participants' families. Other small businesses active in the community include the crafty women doing *repujado*, an art form that covers surfaces with designs painted on embossed metal. The women involved have been busy participating in various events and fairs to sell their work and build their clientele. This quarter, the group attended an art festival in Suchitoto, the Day against Domestic Violence where the group was publically acknowledged and congratulated for their work, and the National Fair of Women-Led Economic Initiatives. At the latter activity, the group from San Diego interacted with other women involved in similar business activities in their communities and shared their experiences, challenges and successes with each other, contributing to the motivation and confidence of all who attended.

Community Education and Training

Agros staff together with the Health Committee is working with the rest of the community to improve health by preventing illness through proper use of the composting latrines and efficient cook stoves. With some additional follow-up training on hygiene and use and maintenance of the latrines, the families can prevent gastrointestinal diseases. Similarly, with follow-up support on the correct use of the efficient cook stoves, families can prevent respiratory illness and inefficient use of firewood.

The families are learning new techniques for managing their gray water in the community, as well as preventing build up of stagnant water. With these new skills, the families have

purchased materials to build a simple system to conserve natural resources by reusing water in their fields, and are also preventing breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other water-borne parasites.

The youth of the community were celebrated this quarter during a special event at the Education Center in Cantón. Over 100 boys and girls along with their families from San Diego and neighboring Agros community La Esperanza participated in the festive day of clowns, dancing, piñatas, presents and cake. The children had a great time and everyone worked together following the event to clean up the center.

School's out and the youth were able to participate in Vacation Bible School held in the community. Youth volunteers from local churches helped facilitate the activities and everyone enjoyed the time spent together making new friends, playing games and participating in discussions.

The men in the community met this quarter with Agros staff to reflect on their roles in the family, community and greater society at large. The participants discussed how the gender roles traditional to Latin America have affected their families and how they would like to work for gender equity among the men and women in the community, especially within participation in assembly meetings, decision-making and leadership. The women in the community also met this quarter with Agros staff to share their goals and vision for the future. The majority of the women expressed the desire to continue their education, at least to the sixth grade.