

## Village Update

*San Diego de Tenango, El Salvador*



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In the midst of a staff transitional period following the resignation of José Ángel, Agros El Salvador Executive Director from 2003-2007, Agros El Salvador is making a significant effort to develop the abilities of new and existing Agros staff and further the success and livelihoods of communities in their country. With the recent hiring of Rafael Huezo, entering with an impressive background in Business Administration and Environmental Studies, including over 20 years of experience and expertise in rural agricultural projects, the new Executive Director, along with his team, are together demonstrating their ability to meet the new challenges of the growing organization.

Thanks to God's provision and the careful discernment of the Agros staff, the Human Development Coordinator and Agronomist positions have been filled by Tania Meza and Fernando Naves, respectively.

### Community Organization

The youth have been active in the continuation of the community reporter project, demonstrating responsibility and development of their social and communication skills. Youth have been trained in communication, interviewing, important factors in recording news, practices of reporters and creating informational bulletin boards. The community reporters monthly

update a bulletin board gathering information from their neighbors and other outside sources, creating pieces of artwork and communicating various announcements to their communities. Through this project the youth are learning the value of participation and being empowered to express themselves in ways beneficial to the entire community.



**Youth reporters working on their monthly bulletin board.**

Training has been provided in the Agros communities for the children, including election or restructuring of the Children's Committees, teachings on love in the family and respect towards oneself and others and Mother's Day activities. The Mother's

Day event was especially successful; all four El Salvador communities came together in La Esperanza to honor and appreciate the role their mothers play in the lives of the families, celebrating with a mariachi band, gifts and decorations hand-made by the children, games, lunch and a cake.



**Children in the Agros El Salvador villages show their love for their mothers at a combined celebration with hand-made gifts.**

With respect to human development activities within the Agros villages, women's programs continue full force as workshops are held in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Restructuring of the Women's Committee, Health Committee and Children's Committee
- Definition of roles and responsibilities
- Organization
- Evaluation
- Activity planning

- Board development and role definition
- Spirituality
- General assemblies
- Conflict resolution

### **Housing & Infrastructure**

An ongoing need for San Diego has been securing access to a reliable water source for irrigation. Currently, the community receives potable water for human consumption from neighboring community Papaturo La Bermuda in Suchitoto. Before San Diego had an excess of water that provided enough to satisfy human consumption needs as well as to fill a reservoir used for irrigating crops during the dry summer months. With the reduction of this water supply, San Diego, supported by Agros, organized an initiative with Papaturo to negotiate a way to share water. During their visit to Papaturo, an obstruction in the tubing between the communities was located and resulted in several members of San Diego getting involved to repair the tubing. The families have a secure water source, but are now working with Agros to determine how best to have irrigation for the next dry season which begins in January.

With respect to the access road from the main highway leading into the community, a work agreement with the municipality of Suchitoto has been established between San Diego and Agros to begin repairing the access road in April. It is projected to be completed by July.

## Community Education & Training

The farmers of the community have received practical training in soil preparation, establishment of “microtunnels” for growing vegetables, preparation of greenhouse nurseries, transplanting, fertilization and control of plagues and diseases. The farmers are enthusiastic to put to practice the new techniques once they can plant vegetable crops in May when the rains come. Similarly, training was provided in raising birds for meat and eggs regarding bird selection, construction of their cages, vaccination and disease control.

In terms of agricultural growth, as of mid February, Agros technical staff has been supervising the theoretical and practical agricultural trainings provided through the various demonstration parcels. The following areas are covered in order to equip the farmers with new techniques and skills:

- Soil preparation
- Production and application of organic fertilizer
- Transplanting
- Cultivation of vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers and onions



**Agronomists supervise soil preparation to ensure increased productivity.**

In San Diego, families are using loans to increase productivity of corn crops for familial consumption. They will also be transplanting tomatoes in demonstration plots.

The irrigation system has been a determining factor for the development of these crops in El Salvador. In San Diego, these vegetables can be grown only during the rainy season until irrigation systems and wells become available.