

Village Update

Nuevo San Miguel Mitontic, México



Agros
INTERNATIONAL

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Elena Mendez Pérez is an inspiring woman of San Miguel. As member of the community Loan Committee, Elena understands the benefits of microcredit for the sustainability and growth of her community. Through enterprise loans, she and her husband Agustín have been able to work embroidering belts and bracelets and cultivate fruits and vegetables for sale, respectively. Of the training offered by Agros staff, Elena shares that at first she was skeptical. However, upon learning techniques that improved the quality of her work, Elena says she “has been motivated and wants to continue to move forward.” Elena has now in turn motivated her peers to learn more about their trade.

Community Organization

The President of the Agros Mexico Board of Directors, Eduardo Rodríguez Mendoza, is giving two training workshops in San Miguel—one for the community leaders and one on conflict transformation.

Housing and Infrastructure

The efficient cook stove project continues forward as the eight families participating in the past three months have completed their stoves. These efficient cook stoves use less firewood, funnel smoke out of the house to prevent respiratory problems and cook

food faster. There are now a total of seventeen stoves built of the thirty scheduled for the community.



One of the recently-constructed efficient cookstoves.

Land Ownership

One aspect of the community's efforts towards sustainable growth includes reforestation with fruit-producing trees. Twenty-four avocado, eighteen peach, twenty-two oranges and forty lemon trees have been planted, totaling to 104 trees. Four members of San Miguel have been participating in the demonstration plot managed by Agros staff to promote organic farming. Similarly, the elementary school has also begun a demonstration plot growing twenty-seven orange trees, nineteen peach trees and twenty mandarin trees, all grafted. In total the two demonstrations make up 170 fruit trees planted in the community. Additionally, with the help of Agros staff and the government forestry department, 450 cedar trees were planted near the water spring to contribute to flora diversity and water conservation. There still is much left to be improved upon in terms of environmental sustainability, but the first "seeds of transformation" have been planted in this effort.

Sustainable Economic Growth

Health measures continue to be taken for the well-being of the animals and birds of the community. During recent months sixty-three cows were vaccinated and deparasited and the birds, hens and roosters will soon be as well. These precautions are especially necessary as temperatures are dropping with the start of the autumn season.

Other productive activities include the cultivation of lilies. This group hopes to make the first cutting and bring the flowers to sell in November.



Woman with some of the 450 cedar trees to be planted as part of the reforestation efforts in San Miguel.

The women of San Miguel have made the last payments on the enterprise loans taken out for an embroidery project and their bird-raising project on time. With this proud accomplishment, the women feel prepared to take out another loan to continue to grow these projects. The women continue to show their cooperation with the ideological guidelines of Agros and hope to be granted a larger loan in the future.

The first steps in planning a textile project have been taken by several successful artisans of San Miguel. The participants hope to incorporate designs and fabrics of a higher quality in their blouse embroidery.



An example of the work of the women's embroidery project.

Several members of San Miguel show interest in revitalizing a previous tilapia project started within the community. At the end of September three people met together to discuss the possibilities surrounding the production, consumption and sale of the fish. Presently, those involved will be challenged with assigning tasks, taking greater responsibility in financing and commercialization, upgrading the tilapia cage design and distributing the cages to the community. The scope of the project is still under discussion and Agros staff is supportive of their efforts.

Community Education and Training

The enthusiasm expressed by the last Service Team visit in August from Sammamish Presbyterian has motivated even more the members of San Miguel to continue collaborating with Agros in the diverse productive, educational and cultural activities offered. The visit further strengthened the friendships between the community and the team.

Member of Mexico's Board of Directors, Marcela Laguna Morales led an interactive dialogue on gender issues in which men and women of San Miguel and the Sammamish group participated. The discussion covered unique yet equally valuable qualities of the male and female.

The Agros staff has entered into an informal partnership with governmental doctors and nutritionists in order to provide nutrition guidance and infant health checks for the community.

The collaboration amongst the schools of San Miguel is opening new opportunities for a stronger presence in the community. The schools would like to share and hopefully inspire new visions for the future of education, health, and natural and economic resource stewardship.