

# Village Update

Villa Hortencia I, Guatemala



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Agros uses 20 indicators to measure the impact of our work in Agros communities. Indicators measure predetermined outcomes, such as improved access to water, that are hoped to be achieved through Agros' work and make up the greater vision of Agros, to restore hope to the world's poor. The seven indicators below are measured on an annual basis and are now included in each quarterly Village Update.

## ANNUAL INDICATORS OF VILLAGE PROGRESS (June 2009)

Founded: 2008

### Development Level: Progress through the Agros Development Model



### Economic Indicators:

#### Diversification of income-generating crops:

*2 types of crops sold to provide income*

*43% of people have livestock*

#### Participation in commercialization of products:

*75% of people commercialize their products*

### Community Indicators:

#### Access to water for domestic use:

*100% of families have water at 0-100 meters from home*

#### Presence of health promoters in community:

**Yes**

#### School-aged children attending school:

**100%**

#### Leadership Positions Held by Women:

**47%**

Maria, 42, and her husband Juan, 40, are active members of the Agros Guatemala community Villa Hortencia I. Maria and Juan have five children—they are proud that the oldest three are in elementary school. Together they are very happy to be involved in Agros building, planting and living with their neighbors. "Over the last few months, we have worked together to build composting latrines. For us, this is an achievement since we have never had projects like this that helped our family. Two months ago, we also were connected to the water system, another one of our goals with Agros. This year we planted 4.3 acres of corn as well, and will have enough for our daily food needs all year."

## Community Organization

The leadership in Villa Hortencia I is a hard-working and highly active group of people that understands that working together is the only way to achieve their goals. This quarter, leadership reviewed the process of proposing project ideas to potential partnership organizations. Leadership is currently in the process of presenting their first project.

The community also participated in their first evaluation, consisting of family surveys and three focus groups for women, men and leaders. 95% of the families participated in the survey and expressed the positive impact of the Agros Model in their lives. The results from the evaluation are helpful in showing community success as well as providing valuable feedback to continue to improve the work of Agros.



## Housing and Infrastructure

A challenge in the community has been the condition of the roads and homes. The roads have deteriorated quite a bit and the

families living in wooden homes are in need of improvements to keep out the cold.

The families, such as Maria and Juan, are extremely pleased to have finished construction on many of the composting latrines and efficient cook stoves. This last quarter ten latrines have been completed, providing sanitation, improved hygiene and health, and beneficial compost for crops. Efficient cook stoves improve family health as well, funneling harmful smoke out of the home to avoid respiratory illness and loss of sight, raising the hearth to prevent back pain and burns, and burning less fuel to prevent deforestation.

## Sustainable Economic Growth

A productive initiative in Villa Hortencia I is scheduled for the upcoming months to provide both training and confidence to farmers new to growing tomatoes. The materials needed to build a demonstrational greenhouse have been purchased and once the structure is built, interested families will learn how to grow this nontraditional, income-generating crop.

A group of ten families has been organized to purchase bean seeds and prepare an area in the community reserved for food security. Next quarter the families will begin to receive training in order to improve bean production and ensure enough food year round.

The women participating in the Community Bank in Villa Hortencia I received technical assistance and training for their respective small businesses this quarter. With access to credit and support in their economic endeavors, these women are empowered to generate income and provide needs for their families.

Despite the difficult economy, families are working hard to ensure diversification and food security in their community. This quarter,

six families each planted 500 cabbage, 500 broccoli and 500 cauliflower plants. These vegetables will provide both an important source of nutrition and income for the group in the coming months.



Families with fruit trees have been learning how to care for their trees and increase development and production through use of fertilizers. With this information, the families are guaranteed fruit for income and nutritious consumption in about three years, not to mention the benefits of reforested land.

To continue diversifying families' skills and productive projects, Agros staff and the community have built a chicken coop for egg-laying hens. With training and accompaniment from Agros, this project will provide valuable protein and a source of income for the involved families.

## Community Education and Training

Nutrition has been a primary focus in community health over the last quarter as men, women and children learn about the importance of childhood nutrition, especially in the early years. Mothers are learning how to give their children medicine to remove parasites, a common problem that robs the body of nutrients, as well as how to provide healthy meals. For younger children, parents are learning the benefits of breastfeeding and how to pair milk with healthy, solid foods as their children grow. The last of three workshops was facilitated by a medical team from the Nebaj health department, providing more in-depth information for the participants to serve as examples and leaders for the rest of the community to follow.

Youth in the community participated in a workshop about drugs and sexual health this quarter. Six youth took away important information regarding healthy lifestyles, saying no to drugs, and sexually-transmitted diseases.

Teachers in the Ixil region participated in a workshop this quarter about ways to integrate recycling in their classrooms and communities at large. Each school received four multi-colored containers to easily identify and sort different materials, such as glass, paper, compost, and trash, and the teacher in Villa Hortencia I will be passing these lessons along to the children for a cleaner, healthier environment.