

# Village Update

La Esperanza, El Salvador

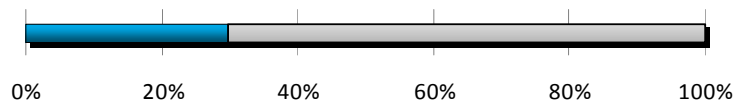


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Agros uses 20 indicators to measure the impact of our work in Agros communities. Indicators measure predetermined outcomes, such as improved access to water, that are hoped to be achieved through Agros' work and make up the greater vision of Agros, to restore hope to the world's poor. The eight 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: 2003

**Development Level:** Progress through the Agros Development Model  
(100% reached when community has paid off their land loans)



## Economic Indicators:

### Diversification of income-generating crops:

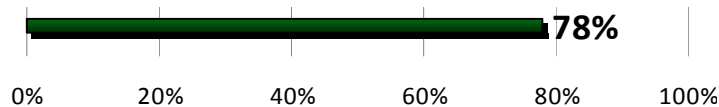
*2 types of crops sold to provide income*

*86% of people have livestock*

### Participation in commercialization of products:

*75% of people commercialize their products*

### Enterprise loan repayment rates:



## 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:

**A trained Health Committee** is active in the community.

### School-aged children attending school:

**84%**

### Leadership Positions Held by Women:

**54%**

The women who started the first chicken project in La Esperanza are excited as they begin seeing the fruits of their labor. The chickens they bought have produced twenty new chicks, eight of which will be saved to lay eggs, and twelve for the families' for food. The women also plan to keep the four roosters so that the flock can continue to grow. The women gather about twenty eggs a day to sell to families in the community and to a local bakery.

## Community Organization

La Esperanza leadership has faced many challenges this quarter. In November, Hurricane Ida hit the region. The consequences included soil erosion, loss of basic grain crops, and washed out areas. Agros provided for some of the most urgent needs through an emergency fund. It will take the community some time to

recuperate and many of the families are wary about taking additional loans as they do not want to fall into debt.

### **Land Ownership**

To counter the effects of Hurricane Ida, farmers are trying new methods of seed planting, soil conservation and drainage systems. These new techniques will allow the muddy fields to dry out faster and decrease risk of plant disease.

Three new families will move into La Esperanza this quarter. The last plots of land will be assigned through a raffle.

### **Housing and Infrastructure**

The drip irrigation system providing for 1.7 acres was completed this quarter and the well providing water for this system is near completion. Now the community has both drip and sprinkling irrigation systems, covering a total of 2.6 acres.

Many of the roofs and floors of the families' homes were damaged by the hurricane. Additional funds donated were directed to purchase materials to improve the homes. Other major damages included limited road access to the community and a damaged water pump that cut off the running water supply during the last few months. La Esperanza leadership and Agros are working together to find ways to cover the cost to solve these problems.

### **Sustainable Economic Growth**

Families are working to reestablish food security and healthy diets through their individual plots and vegetable gardens. Hurricane Ida destroyed approximately 3.5 acres of basic grains for two families in

the community. Seven more families will plant new gardens in the upcoming months.

Twelve families benefited from a tractor donated to the region from partnering organization Fomilenio. The families are working on 1.3 acres of land and have planted tomatoes, bell peppers, jalapeño peppers, and cucumbers. Families are also maintaining the plantain project which they hope to soon expand to an additional 1.7 acres. Through these projects and with the assistance of Agros and Fomelio, the producers have learned how to maintain high levels of nutrients in the soil, apply proper irrigation methods, use new equipment, and grow and commercialize organic products. Some of their production was sold this quarter.

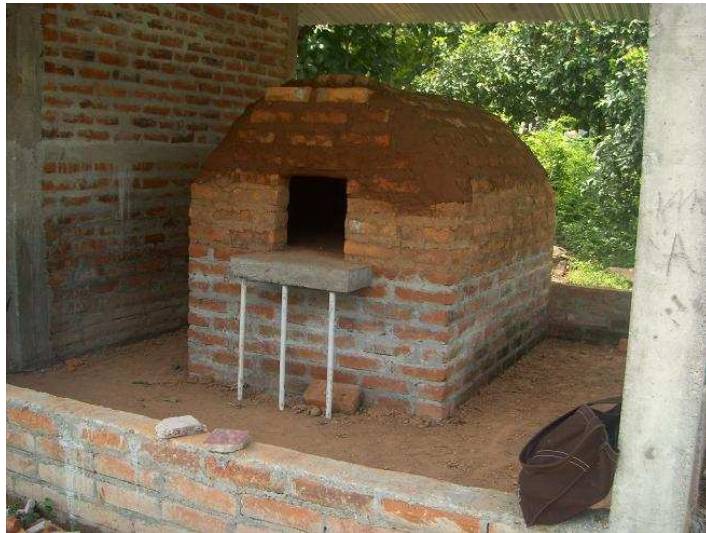
Families participating in livestock projects planted more pasture to harvest and dry to ensure adequate food in the dry season. The group also learned how to treat cattle against parasites and keep milking sites clean through hands-on trainings and demonstrations. They are hoping that with careful care their animals will remain healthy and produce more milk and meat, increasing family income. The sheep project has grown by 20% and soon the twenty-two animals will be sold.

Due to the hurricane, most of the papaya crops were lost. Participants in this project are hoping to find a way to drain the water from the field to start planting again.

As mentioned above, the women involved in the community's original chicken project have earned enough income to cover feed and medicine expenses for the birds. The chickens are producing eighteen to twenty eggs a day. Twenty new chicks have been born and the project continues to grow. The women working with the second chicken farm has not had as much success since the birds have not developed as well as the first group. Agros has provided

the women loans to feed the chickens and they are hoping to sell the chickens to repay their loans and start again with a new flock of improved chickens.

The women in the bakery group are pleased with the results of their newly-built bread oven. The women take turns baking and selling fresh bread every other day in nearby communities and are looking forward to improving the facility by adding shelves and bigger counters to improve working conditions. The proceeds are divided up evenly among the women and help pay their families' water and electricity bills.



### Community Education and Training

Women in La Esperanza were offered gynecological exams and cancer screenings this quarter. One of the women going through a high-risk pregnancy was given food to help provide additional

nutrition for her baby. New baby and adult thermometers were added to the community's first aid kit as well.

Hurricane Ida also affected community health and left many sick and discouraged. A visit from two doctors and one nurse was greatly needed and appreciated as families were treated for colds, coughs, sinus infections, parasites, skin diseases, and more.

The children and teens of La Esperanza participated in a workshop to increase their awareness of children's rights. The Women's Committee sponsored the event and provided food for all the participating boys and girls.

Sixty-five children aged 2-16 years old attended a vacation bible school offered through the local church this quarter. The kids were divided up by age and participated in games and lessons. The day ended with a bowl of *arroz con leche* (rice pudding) and freshly baked bread.

The Women's Committee held two meetings this quarter with all of the women in La Esperanza to reflect on their impact as a whole in the community. During these meetings such as these, mothers and daughters in the community planned activities such as the gynecological exams and other health events, vacation bible school, the children's rights awareness event and school supplies distribution that benefit the entire community.