



The Medicinal Garden of Tomasa Oseguera

Doña Tomasa lives in Los Laureles, El Guano in Honduras. Her interest in medicinal plants was stimulated when she went to a meeting in Guatemala. She had always been interested in using traditional medicine and on



Doña Tomasa uses plants for medicinal purposes.

that trip she received instruction how to go about incorporating medicinal plants. She brought her first rosemary plant back from that excursion.

For the most common ailments such as colds, headaches, and stomach problems, Doña Tomasa was able to show me plants that would help cure or alleviate discomfort. She had anise that was good for the stomach, and rosemary that helped with headaches and wounds (handy remedies when the nearest doctor is in the city of Danli, an hour and a half journey by truck). The other fascinating thing about her medicinal garden was that everything served multiple purposes. The fruit trees not only provided fruit but many had

medicinal properties, provided shade for the coffee plants, and prevented soil erosion.

I asked Doña Tomasa in what other ways Vecinos Honduras had assisted her and she mentioned training in organic farming, and also the "Caja Rural", the local micro-credit program. She received a loan from the Caja Rural to make improvements to her house and her farm. She explained that they were poor and would have no way of managing to pay for it without the loans.

Doña Tomasa and her family exemplify sustainable agriculture as well as the preservation of traditional knowledge to use as part of a more productive future.

This is an edited version of a report from Vecinos Honduras.

From desert dates to soap: Development in the Sahel

Imagine what a difference it would make to a woman's life if she were able to earn a little money of her own through the creation of a saleable product and then sell that product at a local market. That's just what some Burkinabe villagers have been able to do: they have learned how to extract oil from desert dates and then use that oil to make soap (to learn more about this process, check out the link on our website: www.worldneighbours.ca)

Recent reports from APDC, World Neighbours Canada's partner organization in Burkina Faso, have provided details about the project. In addition to the forest products initiatives such as the soap making, the villagers are pleased with the achievement of a local radio broadcast about forestry clearing laws and protection measures, improvement in agricultural yields through the use of green manure, and animal health improvements.

In spite of these positive advances, the pace of progress seems agonizingly slow. The reality is that for every step forward, there are slips backward and according to the APDC report, there is not yet sufficient dynamism and motivation among those who have been trained as village leaders. Women in particular face multiple challenges as they seek to change their roles in the community.

Despite the setbacks, the positives outweigh the negatives and APDC has been candid in its assessment of where progress is occurring and where there are still obstacles to overcome. In this difficult physical and economic environment, the road to development is long and arduous and requires patience and commitment.



Soap making from the desert date. Photo from www.treeaid.org.uk

Drinking Water System built by locals, Rotary support

Tamakoshi Sewa Samiti (TSS) in Nepal is a remarkable organization and World Neighbours Canada is privileged to work in partnership with them. Yet another village water system has been built in the district of Ramechhap by local people with support and guidance from TSS. The location is Jagirgaun, about 55 km from Manthali (the district capital). The project has just been completed, serving the small village of 25 houses and 138 people. Many of the villagers are Dalits – socially ostracized, lower caste people – who do not tend to get a lot of government services.

The village is spread out over the mountain side, so women had to walk varying distances to the traditional water source to access water before the installation of stand pipes. Women would need up to 60 minutes to walk, queue, fill, and return home with 20 litres of water – and the average family would need about 8 of these 20 litre vessels per day. Some women, needless to say, spent the majority of their day getting water.

Now, the maximum time anyone will spend for the return trip to one of the 4 public taps will be 15 minutes.

The pandhera, or traditional water well, was used as the water source for the new system. Now there is a new intake and reservoir at the pandhera, followed by 2800 metres of hand dug ditch and piping, to 4 public taps spread throughout the village. All the planning was done by a new nine-member Water User Committee, and the physical labour was all done by the villagers themselves – approximately 270 person-days of construction work all together.

This water system was co-sponsored by Aldergrove Rotary Club and Rotary International, and a plaque acknowledging their support is on the reservoir and each of the stand pipes. Even though World Neighbours Canada is no longer getting matching funds from CIDA, we are still able to help our friends in Ramechhap. Neighbours helping neighbours – a very successful model.



Indigenous women learn from each other in Guatemala

A project working with Chorti and Xinka women in Guatemala to improve food security and learn techniques to deal with violence has come to a successful conclusion.

The partner organizations were Consejo Nacional Indígena Maya Chortí Honduras (CONIMCHH) and Asociación de Mujeres Indígenas de Santa María Xalapán Jalapa (AMISMAXAJ). The project exemplified the tremendous learning that can take place by bringing people together – “cross-visits” and farmer-to-farmer exchanges have been a major part of World Neighbours methodology for decades. CONIMCHH provided training on raising free range chickens and implementing the “Pase de Cadena” technique to women leaders in AMISMAXAJ. In return AMISMAXAJ provided workshops on alternative therapy and healing from violence for women leaders from CONIMCHH.

The Pase de Cadena technique means that after the first participating families produce many chickens, they will pass along the same number of chickens to 81 new families. In addition, these families will transfer their knowledge by providing training to the new families. Training includes poultry vaccination and production of homemade blends of feed.

Violence is pervasive in Guatemala at many levels and indigenous women often face violence in their communities and their homes. Chorti

women participated in a school for healing and transformation of fear, led by Xinka women. The techniques applied during the workshop were aqua therapy, deep breathing and connection with the sacred elements of the cosmos (water, air, fire and nature). Fear and oppression experienced in the life of the women were replaced with happiness and power. There was a combination of oriental practices and the indigenous community's world view.

From a report by Floridalma Lopez, project coordinator.



Vaccinating chickens in Guatemala.