



World Neighbours Canada

www.worldneighbours.ca

Spring 2023

STRIVING FOR SELF-RELIANCE AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

One of the pitfalls of helping people in need is the risk of creating dependence on external support. Further, the uncertainty of politics and economics in developing countries makes it unwise for rural families to rely on government or on single sources of income. At World Neighbours Canada, we strive to increase self-reliance so that people can sustain livelihood improvements after a program ends.

This year we are approaching significant milestones in self-reliance in Honduras and Nepal. World Neighbours Canada has supported our local partner organization, Vecinos Honduras, in the Azabache area of south-central Honduras for 12 years. It is called the Michael Newman Program, in honour of a late World Neighbours Canada director who was deeply committed to alleviating poverty in the area. People have learned to grow better coffee, raise healthier children and operate their own community organizations. Now Vecinos Honduras has phased out its direct support in Azabache and is focussing on other parts of the country, especially the dry southern corridor.

In Nepal, World Neighbours Canada has, since 1989, supported the local organization Tamakoshi Sewa Samiti (TSS) in building water systems in Ramechhap district. These robust systems collect water from springs and convey it to villages in buried PVC pipes. Women and children, the traditional carriers of water, save hours of time hauling water from faraway sources. TSS ensures that each community takes responsibility for its water system – first providing labour and local materials for construction, and then taking on operation and maintenance. Now most communities in the district have functioning water systems and achieving the goal of easily accessible water for everyone is within reach.

In Burkina Faso we are making solid progress. Financial support and training for family-based sheep-fattening enterprises has provided the basis for women farmers to achieve better income and food security, despite the terrorist violence that has affected most of the country. The many challenges facing people in eastern Burkina Faso necessitate a self-reliance strategy with multiple elements. Besides livestock, World Neighbours Canada local partner APDC is working with farmers to increase water infiltration in fields and produce vegetables for market, among other programs.

In the difficult landscapes in which we operate, self-reliance cannot be achieved without support. We rely on thoughtful and concerned Canadians to recognize that respectful assistance aims to give people the knowledge and the means to overcome the obstacles they face, not to make them dependent on outsiders. I urge you to continue to support World Neighbours Canada and our overseas partners in the struggle for self-reliance. Please give generously – while we are making measurable progress, the need is great. It is simply not fair that so many families – our global neighbours - live in poverty and can barely feed their children.

Sincerely,

Bruce Petch, Executive Director (volunteer)





Nepal: More clean water closer to homes

By Gordon Carnes, Nepal Program Coordinator

Close to 600 people in 106 households residing in three villages in Ramechhap district of Nepal now have access to clean drinking water with the construction of new gravity-flow water systems. With funding from the Gay Lea Foundation, World Neighbours Canada and the Rotary club of Aldergrove, the project was finally completed in February of this year. Delays due to the COVID pandemic, transportation issues, monsoon rains and new reporting requirements from the Nepali government were capably overcome by our local partner, Tamakoshi Sewa Samiti (TSS).

Supported by TSS's technical expertise, community ownership was facilitated by the formation of water user committees to plan, organize, construct and maintain the systems. Local materials and labour were contributed by community members and were valued at almost 50% of the total construction costs. 10,000 meters of pipe was placed in hand-dug trenches. Along with the construction of intakes and reservoirs,

thirty public standpipes were built to service the three communities. An operation and maintenance fund was established by each water user committee, with each household contributing a set amount to ensure sustainability of the systems.

Since 1989, World Neighbours Canada in partnership with TSS, has helped to facilitate the construction of water systems throughout Ramechhap district.

By not having to carry water from traditional water sources, women and school age girls have benefited from less strenuous work and more time to devote to other endeavours. Further, improved hygiene from having water readily available benefits everyone in the family.

The support of the Gay Lea Foundation in completing the latest three water systems was especially appreciated, along with their patience through all the delays that were encountered in completion of the project.

Thanks to the Gay Lea Foundation, close to 600 people in 106 households now have access to clean drinking water.



Digging a trench for a water system in Nepal.

Honduras: Collective responsibility for community development

By Gabriel Newman & Judy Gray
WNC directors

This February, we had the honour of visiting three Vecinos Honduras projects, two of which are coming to an end this year and one that is just beginning.

The two projects that are wrapping up are in the Azabache and Choleteca districts, where Vecinos Honduras has spent 12 and eight years respectively. WNC has been supporting final activities before leaving the region. These activities include ensuring entrepreneurs, credit unions, and farmers' collectives understand their legal and administrative responsibilities. When meeting with some of the collectives and credit unions, we were struck by the confidence of the participants.

One farmer spoke about how no-one can take away from the learnings they have gained—learnings in aspects of life such as health, confidence-building, community development and cooperation, water, and agriculture—and that they will continue to apply these learnings. Another striking aspect was what Vecinos Honduras executive director Carlos Vijil called social economic development. This methodology instils that all collective enterprises,



Members of the collective in Majada.

even if they only involve a few people, have a mission beyond personal gain. They must also include community responsibility. The credit union and the farmers' collectives we spoke with all discussed the benefits for themselves as well as their responsibility to the community. For example, the credit union in Claveles, Azabache is supporting the local health committee in building a health unit and hiring a nurse. In Trojas, Choleteca, another collective said that they will continue to support the maternal child health program,

and in Majada, Choleteca, a new farmers' collective used some of their funds to support the widow of one of their members.

This social economic development methodology not only provides resilience for the members, it also provides ongoing resilience for the community.

We are pleased that World Neighbours Canada is supporting the strengthening of these organizations, and we look forward to the expansion of these approaches in the new communities.

Leave no-one behind - control group trained in Burkina Faso

By Judy Gray, WNC director

Our partner organization in Burkina Faso, APDC, is following up on an experimental project in entrepreneurial sheep-fattening that was completed in August. They are providing training for 30 control group women who, during the experimental phase, received training in the technical aspects of animal care, but none of the sessions on financial management, entrepreneurship and gender equality. These women were not nearly as successful with the fattening activity as the innovator group. Many made no profit when they sold their animals, and yet almost all were keen to continue with the activity.

Of particular interest to these women were the entrepreneurship and gender equality sessions. After the entrepreneurship session, one woman said, "I thought I had to have a lot of money, to know how to read and write to succeed in my activities, but now I understand that I can also succeed if I get up with courage and determination, I can change my life and that of my family just with the little means that I have at present." (Mrs. Thiombiano Tani). The gender equality sessions were appreciated by the

women and their husbands. One husband said, "When you don't have the chance to follow these kinds of training, it's always difficult to understand certain things. For me, the woman could not lead or give her best like the man, but now I know her importance when she is allowed to express herself and when she is respected, she can do very great things for her home and even for her community."

As well as training the control group, APDC staff have continued to visit the 110 innovator women, encouraging them to put into practice the knowledge they acquired. Despite difficulties with communication, excessive rainfall, and the ongoing issue of illiteracy, nearly all the women are continuing their sheep-fattening enterprises.



Celebrating new learning - how to become successful entrepreneurs.