



Nepal: The importance of seeds

Nepal program participants sharing seeds.

By Gordon Carnes, Nepal Program Coordinator

Despite the changing political landscape in Nepal, our NGO partner BBP-Pariwar has been active in the Ramechhap district of Nepal. The ongoing “Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods for the Community” project has achieved continuing progress.

The overall objective of the project is to improve livelihoods, food security and resilience of rural households through ecological agriculture, women’s empowerment, and sustainable income generating activities.

Additional women’s farmer groups have been formed and training including field visits to successful enterprises has been undertaken. Home nurseries for livestock fodder, tree plantation, promotion of biofertilizers, vermicomposting and seed conservation have also been undertaken.

Women’s empowerment has been a component of the project by leadership training, financial record keeping instruction, and enhancing farmer’s knowledge through training on livestock management.

By the promotion of commercial vegetable farming, cultivation of high value crops and supporting livestock activities, household income has been enhanced. Improved nutrition has been promoted through fruit plantation, kitchen

gardening practices and support for bee keeping and livestock rearing.

One example of adapting to climate change and improved agricultural practices has been providing material support and education in building “High Tunnels”. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations describes the practice as a method of reducing the impact of high and low temperature fluctuations and hailstorms that often affect crop yields, as well as to grow crops off season to guarantee food supply and enhance income. Efficient use of the available land and water resources along with the benefit of the crops less susceptible to insects, pests, and diseases is achieved.

The Ramechhap district is geographically challenging for travel and organizing training sessions, but activities were organized in accessible locations and coordinated with local leaders and group members to ensure better participation and implementation of the planned activities.

Farmer group members expressed strong interest and enthusiasm toward initiatives introduced through the project. The integrated approach combining training, practical support, and group strengthening has helped build their confidence to expand agricultural production and livelihood activities.

Burkina Faso: Cooking demonstrations a popular activity

By Judy Gray, World Neighbours Canada director,
with information from Rébéka Tankoano

Two grants that WNC received in the fall, from The Peterborough KM Hunter Foundation and The Wheeler Foundation, have enabled APDC (World Neighbours Canada's partner in Burkina Faso) to organize several popular cooking demonstrations over the past couple of months.

Coordinator Rébéka Tankoano shared: "The cooking demonstrations ... enable participants (women and their children) to learn how to combine foods effectively to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. The facilitators use picture cards to explain the nutrients (fats, carbohydrates and proteins) and vitamins found in our local cereals, oilseeds

and fruits. This helps participants better understand how to choose foods and combine them to create a diet rich in nutrients and vitamins."

This spring, APDC organized nine cooking demonstrations at nine locations. The total number of participants was 1,156, comprising 418 women and 738 children.

Awa Namoano, the coordinator from the village of Binadeni who are currently internally displaced in Fada, describes the activity: "The cooking demonstrations went very well at our site; this activity attracted a large number of participants (many women and children). During this activity, we learnt how to make a good combination to produce a fortified porridge for our children, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. It was so interesting because we didn't know this before. We were also taught how to properly cook this porridge over a fire...it was very interesting because everyone learnt how to prepare both liquid and solid meals, and at the end, we shared the cooked meals with all the participants and everyone ate well...even those who were unable to take part often ask me when the next session will be so that they too can join in (with big smiles and joy). On top of all that, this activity also helped to strengthen our relationships with one another, as we did everything together and it was so much fun and interesting for us and our children. We hope that APDC will come and run these activities regularly at our site; this is the participants' request. We are extremely grateful to APDC for their help; we learnt a lot and ate well that day. Thank you very much!"



Celebrating new learning - cooking demos.

Honduras: Research, development and banking of seeds

By Gabriel Newman & Judy Gray, World Neighbours Canada directors

Agroecology has always been at the heart of the work Vecinos Honduras does. Maximizing local food production is essential to the survival of these communities. That is why so much effort is being invested in researching, developing and banking seeds.

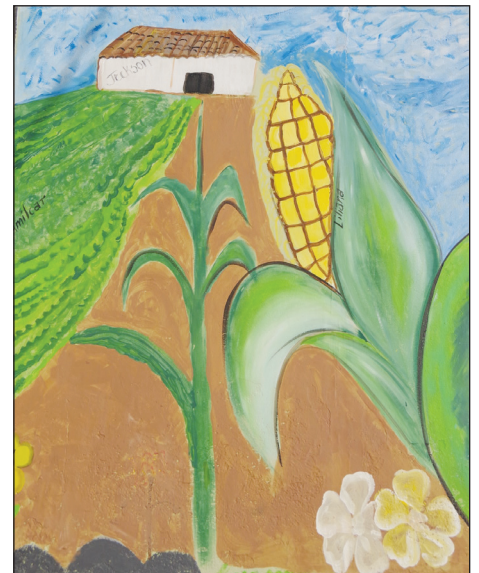
For the last six months of 2025, World Neighbours Canada has supported Vecinos Honduras' work in building resilient communities and maximizing seed production. Vecinos Honduras worked directly with 11 Local Agricultural Research Committees (CIAL), six strategic grain and seed reserves (four existing and two new) and 10 community health committees. This work directly benefited 331 people in 10 different communities.

The farmers involved in the CIAL and grain reserves received technical assistance and permanent training in the management of corn and bean research plots. This was run by the Agro-ecology Facilitator hired as a result of the WNCS funding. He

worked alongside the farmer/members to develop research plots to test out local native seeds and techniques. This is especially important because each community has unique environmental factors so farmers can not rely on a one size fits all approach. Sharing local farming knowledge and best practices allows farmers to learn ways of diversifying their crops, naturally fertilizing, and avoiding soil erosion.

Most communities have their own native seeds adapted to their climate and soil conditions. These research plots allow the farmers to test and compare results. Then Vecinos Honduras and these communities petition the local governments to protect these seeds. Through this research they were able to identify two varieties of red bean seed in the communities of Concepción de María, Isletas Abajo, Quebrada Grande and El Chaparral.

Once harvested the strategic reserves store the grains locally to ensure year round access to maize and beans, and to store and sell the grains when the market isn't flooded, allowing farmers



Art reinforces the importance of the crops.

to maximize their income. Finally, it ensures these seeds will be preserved for future plantings.

Organizing these research committees and grain reserve collectives takes considerable time and training to set up properly and will be around to benefit future generations.