



End of Project Report for Water Engineers for the Americas (WEFTA)

July 29, 2013

The collaboration between Habitat for Humanity Guatemala (HFHG) and WEFTA has allowed low-income communities in Guatemala to experience the benefits of reliable water and sanitation services. This project provided water filters and latrines to 122 families in the Caserío Ixcamal community in San Marcos, helping approximately 610 individuals. This report describes project activities, including the delivery of the water filters, the educational training session and the final community ceremony to celebrate the completion of the project. Also in this report are selected family stories of community members whose lives have improved thanks to this collaborative project. HFHG would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank WEFTA for their profound contribution to the future health and well being of these 122 families.



Project Activities



Delivery of Water Filters and Training Session

On June 20th 2013, 122 water filters were delivered to the Ixcamal community. On the same day, participant families attended an educational training session on the use and maintenance of the latrines and water filters, and on sanitation and hygiene. Present to give the

training were Moisés Velasquez, from the HFHG San Marcos affiliate office, and Fidel Mazariegos, from the operations department of the HFHG national office. These trainings are a key component of all HFHG projects and are integral to the Habitat for Humanity philosophy. We believe that educating families on issues of sanitation, health and hygiene is essential if they are to integrate latrines and water filters into their daily lives, as education helps to develop a deeper understanding of why the products are important to their families' health. For this reason, it is compulsory for at least one member of each participating family to attend these educational sessions.

Project Completion Ceremony

On July 24th 2013, a small ceremony took place to celebrate the successful completion of the project. Among those present were beneficiary families, members of the Committee for Community Development (COCODE) of Ixcamal, the auxiliary mayor of Ixcamal, and representatives of HFHG from both the affiliate office for San Marcos and



the national administrative office of Quetzaltenango. The ceremony was a great success, with both local COCODE members and project beneficiaries taking the microphone to express their appreciation for and the importance of this project for the community.



Family Stories

The Juan Pedro Pojoy Pablo Family

Apolonia (33), her husband Juan (38), and their two children, Julieta (10) and Rubecy

(8), live up on a hill in Ixcamal, San Marcos with Juan's parents, his brother and brother's family. Juan supports the family as an elementary school teacher and as a seasonal farmer. He is also currently the mayor of Ixcamal. Apolonia is one of the leaders of the group of forty women who helped bring new, improved latrines and water filters to their village.

This women's group had gathered to identify the issues their community faced. They realized that most families were living with inadequate latrines or without any service at all. Apolonia's family, for example, was using an old run-down latrine that offered little privacy and protection from the rain. Together they decided that it was time to be proactive in order to address this community-wide problem.

Apolonia was part of the first, small contingent of women who traveled to the city, San Pedro Sacatepéquez, to visit the local Habitat affiliate office. The affiliate administrator was then invited to meet with all forty women in Ixcamal. At their first meeting they wanted to know, "Why can't you help us do something about our latrines?" This unanimous question really got the project underway.

They decided that the families of all forty women would receive new latrines and water filters, but they didn't stop there. These women also talked with neighbors and held meetings, until eventually, 82 additional families in Ixcamal signed up to participate in the program, making a total of 122 beneficiaries. In constructing the latrines, the individual families were in charge of digging the three-meter hole and building the stall from wood or corrugated metal sheets. In Apolonia's case, her husband did the labor with his brother, and they also assisted a single mother with the construction process for her latrine.

Apolonia speaks of this as a collaborative effort. Noting the women group's accomplishment with pride, she told us that "everything is great...all of us are very satisfied."

With one successful community project under their belts, Apolonia tells us that the forty women are taking their organizing to new levels. This planting season they have started a community garden on Apolonia's father-in-law's land, growing "vegetables, radishes, and cilantro" to better

nourish the children. She also hopes that in the near future, they can work with Habitat again to build smokeless stoves.

The Santos Alejandro Pérez Temaj Family

Amelia and Santos live with their five youngest children in the picturesque countryside of Ixcamal, San Marcos. Santos feeds the family by farming his land with his sons.

In the past, the family would build a latrine in the open area around their home, and when the hole was full, they would cover it up and build in a new spot. Six years ago, they built their last latrine, which had definitely seen better days. The door had partially fallen off and the roof of corrugated metal sheet was rusted. So when the opportunity to have a new latrine with Habitat for Humanity presented itself, the family jumped at the chance.



Santos, the fifteen-year-old son, and Erwin, the twenty-year-old son who has his own home across the road, built the latrine together. First shoveling and pulling dirt and then building the wooden stall around the new cement base. At the time of our visit, the only thing lacking was the door which Santos would soon make, and the pipe which would be quickly completed.

The family was not comfortable cutting a hole for their pipe in their brand new piece of metal sheeting. As

such, the mason in charge of building all of the concrete bases was asked to instruct them in retrofitting the pipe to a 90 degree angle out of the spacing in their stall. Erwin, the twenty-year-old son, says that he is going to buy an extra elbow and also do the same for his new latrine.

On behalf of all the beneficiary families, Habitat for Humanity Guatemala thanks WEFTA for its contribution to the development of clean water systems in the community of Ixcamal. This project was a great success within the community in terms of participant interest and involvement and implementation. It has also provided them with a momentum to start new projects that will empower the community as a whole. HFHG hopes that we can continue to support the members of Ixcamal to the best of our capacity. This collaborative effort is a new direction for HFHG, and we are pleased that this project will serve as a prototype as we move forward with smaller, targeted projects that address the most pressing concerns of those in extreme poverty in Guatemala. We hope to work together with WEFTA in the future to continue to bring much needed water and sanitation services to communities such as this one. Currently, HFHG is making a concentrated effort to ask our local affiliates to identify communities like Ixcamal that are in need of community-wide support and demonstrate the cohesiveness and initiative to undertake similar projects such as this. Again, thank you to all those at WEFTA for helping to spearhead this holistic, community-based model of development and wellness that we hope to spread throughout Guatemala.