

Annual Report 2011

Early, 2012

Dear Friends:

I recently had the opportunity to visit with many of the project's participants and heard their stories first hand. I would like to share some of them with you.

Marta Vasquez was given five fava seeds (broad beans) three growing seasons ago. They were from a small package of donated seeds that the project distributed evenly among the women in her community. Three of these germinated and produced half a pound of beans. Marta then dried and saved them.

The next season she planted them and this time they yielded about twelve pounds of beans. She shared some with her mother and sister; they cooked and ate the beans, pods and all.

She sold about nine pounds of beans in the market for 25 cents a pound. And again she saved enough to replant. This time she sowed them at the start of the dry season in a small plot of land moistened by the runoff water from her pila (kitchen sink) behind her house.

The plants did very well. She harvested thirty-seven pounds of the nutritious bean which is an excellent source of low fat protein (24%) and of fiber, folate, and manganese.

The beans fix nitrogen in the soil an added bonus. All of this from five seeds.

Marta's story illustrates on a very small scale the multiplier effect of many aspects of the impact of Project Harvest's work in Guatemala.

Another example of the multiplier effect is the story of Paula Velasquez's family corn harvest.

Paula Velasquez and family were able to fertilize some of their corn with the worm compost they are producing with the support of the project. The results after using the worm compost contrasted significantly from the corn without this organic input. The size of the cobs improved and the amount of corn they were able to store and preserve added to their food security.

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Marta Vasquez



Paula Velasquez's mother



Ana Baten and her mom

Project Harvest Guatemala
A project of the Niagara Warehouse of Hope

Rosa Cac Uz and her family had nothing a year and a half ago. But over that time they have built an above ground nursery, a worm composting container and a water catchment system. They terraced their land for a garden, incorporated organic material (broza) and installed an irrigation system. They did all this with the project's support. They can now grow nutritious vegetables. This was illustrated during my visit to Guatemala when Rosa presented to our team a basket full of broccoli as a gesture of appreciation.

These stories and other stories inside this report demonstrate the women's thrift, ingenuity, energy and a desire to improve their food security given the opportunity provided with some additional resources, support and knowledge. You will enjoy reading their stories.

As we move into 2012 we know from the stories and testimonies like the ones featured in this report that we have created a model that can be replicated and multiplied in many other communities and organizations.

We also believe that Project Harvest, an organic entity itself, is always in the process of learning new ways of working and improving our model.

We have begun the process of strengthening the organizational ability of the project's participants to eventually join with others to create a more just world.

This work will continue as it is vital. It is with this hope that we will be working in the coming years. "When families have enough to eat and women have a voice there will be much hope for the future".

We hope that you will be able to continue to support us. Your past and future support to Project Harvest is very much appreciated.

Many thanks,

Paul Lemieux

The Story of...

Ana Batan. I am 31 years old. I joined Project Harvest in 2006 because I needed help. I have an eleven year old daughter Simiona who is in 3rd grade. I also look after my 70 year old mother, as well as my 35 year old sister who has suffered from a mental handicap since birth.

When Simiona comes home from school, she helps me by feeding the animals; she also works for others as a day worker.



Rosa Coc Uz and family presented to project harvest's team a basket full of broccoli as a gesture of appreciation.

When I joined Project Harvest, I began with a small 3 terrace garden measuring 3 square metres. I planted cabbage, cauliflower, radishes, swiss chard, cilantro, alfalfa, and other vegetables. (In Guatemala people eat alfalfa as a vegetable).

Two years later, in 2008, Project Harvest helped me build a cistern, 7 metres long by 1 metre wide. I did the excavating, and Project Harvest donated the liner (pool liner), nails, corrugated metal roofing, plus the necessary supervision and instruction.

Then one year later, in 2009, I widened my garden to 6 terraces, measuring 12 metres by 1 metre altogether. I planted 100 cabbage seeds, 100 cauliflower seeds, 100 onions, spinach, swiss chard, beets, and radishes.

At harvest time there were sufficient vegetables for all our family needs, with enough left over to sell in the market.

I sold 50 heads of cabbage, and 50 heads of cauliflower at 3 quetzales each for a total of 300 quetzales (app. C. \$43.00). I am so happy because with the help of Project Harvest not only does my family have better nutrition, but also a little extra money with which to buy such needed items for the kitchen as oil, sugar, salt and soap.

I have been talking about a dry season harvest where there is little rain and where I need to use the sweat hose irrigation system. But I also harvest a good crop from a second planting in the winter months, or the rainy season. At both harvests, whatever is not consumed or sold is fed to the animals.

With the worm composting, initiated by Project Harvest, we have excellent fertilizer. We feed the worms rabbit manure which has also been distributed to us by Project Harvest. The worm compost is a big reason we have such a wonderful harvest.

The Story of...

The Project has certainly improved my ability to participate, as well as my sense of self-worth. And from this has come my desire and necessary energy to improve myself. So I took the decision to learn to read and write. I registered in a literacy course given by an organization in our community. I am delighted that I can now sign my name, and I am able to use my signature.

The Project has taught me so many things: how to plant, how to prepare organic fertilizer, how to prepare the soil for planting. This is truly a school. My neighbours in the project all say the same thing. We are all proud that we can sell our produce in the market so readily and mainly because it has better flavour than those already sold there.

"I am most grateful to Project Harvest for all the help I have received, the opportunity to learn new things, and to be able to improve the lifestyle of my whole family. We eat better, and we have learned to eat new types of food. For instance, we used to be afraid to eat rabbit meat, and now we love it, especially since we have learned the value of protein in our diet."



Ana Baten examines her cabbages for possible bug infestations.



Ana Baten planted sufficient vegetables for her family's needs and had a surplus to sell in the market.



Ana Baten and project promoter Paula Velasquez chat about her crops outside her home.

"I have fresh vegetables all year round, even in the dry season."

Cirila Garcia at 63 years of age is one of the oldest participants in Project Harvest. She has nine children, 7 girls, and 2 boys. She has 44 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren. Here is her story as she tells it:

The father of my nine children abandoned me for another woman with whom he has another family. I struggled all by myself to provide food and clothing for my children, as well as keeping a roof over our head.

In the year 2006, an organization by the name of Project Harvest came to my community, and I joined them along with 19 other participants to form a community garden. This project had many advantages. The harvesting is done as a group when the group leader brings us all together for that purpose; the harvest is then divided equally among all participants.

However, in addition to our community garden, and with the help of Project Harvest, some of us have been able to start a family garden (individual garden) close to where we live.

Working with Project Harvest has brought so many good things and so many additional benefits. For instance, with the installation of a cistern and rainwater catchment system, I have fresh vegetables all year round, even in the dry season. I encourage my children to create and plant their own garden. We harvest and eat fresh vegetables whenever we wish. The garden assures us of a better and more varied diet. We are even able to sell the surplus in the market.

My daughters in law and their children (my grandchildren) have also joined the family garden project of Project Harvest. Each of them creates, plants and waters his or her own garden.

I am very happy and content to be working with Project Harvest. I get all excited when the Canadians from the Project come to visit. The help we receive is enormous, and I thank God for all of it.

The Project has taught us how to work a garden, how to harvest fresh vegetables all year long, as well as giving an opportunity to the younger generation to learn all about gardening.

I am the oldest of the group but I have all the energy I need to do this work. I love it when we have visitors from Project Harvest in Canada because then they can see the results of the work we do with their help.



Cirila Garcia at 63 years of age is one of the oldest participants in Project Harvest.

Thanks!

One of our institutional supporters, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), featured our work in their 2012 calendar. MCC is currently supporting us in one community with a three year funding commitment.

In November of 2011 Project Harvest was visited by Katrina Simmons and Terry Asma of 2020 Studios. They came to meet with and document the lives of some project participants. They produced a video documentary called **Harvesting Hope** which contextualizes and personalizes their struggles and hopes for a better future. We appreciate their hard work and commitment with us to improve the lives of Guatemalan women and their families.

(The video can be viewed on our web site).

In December the project received recognition from the Guatemalan government's Ministry of Agriculture (MAGA). They visited some of the communities where we work in the Chiquimula area and immediately supported us with a donation of large water storage containers with a promise of future material support next year.

A representative of MAGA said *"You can see that the situation of the families is changing; they now know how to produce a diversity of food and can count on this throughout the year. This has only been possible because of the work of Project Harvest."*



Project Harvest - Guatemala
REVENUE EXPENSES & ASSETS for 2010 and 2011

	Totals 2010	Totals 2011
REVENUES		
Donations from individuals	18,526.62	24,622.14
Grants from Institutions	29,850.97	36,392.87
Total Revenues	48,376.59	61,051.01
EXPENSES		
Program expenses in Guatemala	59,103.80	53,880.52
Administration in Guatemala	1,330.67	2,407.33
Administration in Canada	682.47	743.78
Total Expenses	61,116.94	57,031.64
Excess of revenues over expenses	(12,740.35)	3,983.37
Assets at beginning of the year	42,004.12	29,263.77
NET ASSETS* - END of YEAR	29,263.77	33,247.14

*Represents start up funds for next calendar year.

Project Harvest: Report of Work Completed in 2011										
The 2011 Work Plan COMPONENTS – for 6 community groups with a total of 223 families										
1. Establishment and maintenance of Family and Communal Gardens		2. Soil Conservation / Fertilizers: • Manure: cow, chicken, rabbit • Worm composters • Worm compost		3. Seeds / Nurseries	4. Barriers: • Retaining grasses • Fences • Shading material • Mulch	5. Trees • fruit • forest	6. Small Animals: • Rabbit cages • Rabbits • Chicken coops • Laying hens	7. Rain Water catchment systems	8. Irrigation	9. Educational workshops
# of family size gardens	# of community size gardens	# of bags of manure (chicken or cow) integrated into soil	# of worm composting systems initiated	# of above ground nurseries constructed	# of protective fences constructed	Pruning and educational maintenance workshops this year	# of rabbit cages constructed	# of rain water catchment systems built	# of systems installed	# of educational workshops on different themes
161	4	314	15	11	8	ongoing	8	17	11	28

For more information contact: Project Harvest/Proyecto Cosecha
82 Norfolk Street, RR #4, Waterford, Ontario, N0E 1Y0, Canada.
E-Mail: project.harvest.guatemala@gmail.com
New Website: <http://www.projectharvest.org>

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