

RESILIENCE

A Publication of Project Harvest

Winter 2018-2019



The Birth of New Communities

a neighboring village. He was so impressed that he asked how he could get his group of 40 women involved.

After some discussion and upon agreeing to reciprocal commitments, Project Harvest began to work with an initial group of six families. They have already had their first harvest and some have already sold excess radishes at the market. More women are interested

New groups are excited to join Project Harvest. With 100 sq. feet of garden and the support of Project Harvest promoters, a family is able to harvest nutritious vegetables for themselves, with additional harvest to sell for cash income. In addition to learning new horticultural techniques, they also learn about their rights as women, the right to participate in their community, the right to food, and the right to a dignified life. Neighbors see these good thing and want to be part of it. The following examples illustrate this dimension of Project Harvest's strategy for growth.

El Centro

Don Amilcar, a local pastor in El Centro, had tried to obtain support from two government-led agencies for a group of 40 women desperate to grow their own vegetables. It was to no avail; he got minimal backing from the agencies. Shortly thereafter, he coincidentally walked past one of the Project Harvest vegetable gardens in La Libertad,

and waiting to join, as soon Project Harvest resources are available.

Parracana

Ana Leticia was 13 years old when her mother enrolled her in a women's group to learn how to grow vegetables. After two years, she got married and moved 30 kilometers away and took her knowledge with her. Thirteen years later, she has had six children and raised such a successful garden that it inspired her neighbors that they asked her if she could teach them how to have a garden like hers. Ana Leticia liked the idea of organizing a group of 20 women in her community of Parracana, but she needed the support of her original teachers who are all linked to Project Harvest. She met with Project Harvest representatives and they agreed upon a way forward.

Today, Ana Leticia is the leader of a new Project Harvest group.

PROJECT HARVEST - GUATEMALA
EMPOWERING RURAL SUBSISTENCE COMMUNITIES

E-mail: project.harvest.guatemala@gmail.com **Website:** projectharvest.org

Address: 17 Pancake Lane, Fonthill, ON, Canada L0S 1E2 **A Federal Registered Charity n BN 82145 3503 RR 001**



Letter from the Coordinator and Chair

Dear Friends and Supporters

In the last three years Project Harvest has grown from working in six communities to working in thirteen. This expansion has occurred with the help of a small group of dedicated volunteers in Canada who have operated as its Board of Directors, through the generous charitable donations of many individuals as well as some sponsorships, and most importantly because of our dedicated Guatemalan team of administrators, promoters and community leaders.

It has become evident that to continue to expand in Guatemala the project must grow in Canada as well. This has made it imperative therefore that Project Harvest develop a **strategic plan** that will form the backbone of future growth. This spring Cristina Vanin, Ph.D., facilitated strategic planning sessions with the Board. We clarified Project Harvest's mission statement and determined its priorities and **goals for the coming three years**.

Our three year strategic plan focuses on four priorities for our work in Canada. They are to:

1. Move from an operational Board to a governance Board of Directors.

2. Develop and implement an education plan.
3. Expand fundraising efforts.
4. Strengthen and expand our communications.

The work that still needs to be done is to set out the specific objectives required to fulfil the goals, and then to begin to implement the plan, evaluating it on an ongoing basis.



For the past 13 years, an operational Board has shouldered the work of our education, fundraising, and communication efforts with a help from a number of our supporters. To ensure the sustainability of Project Harvest as it grows, this work needs to be delegated to working committees. We need Board members who have the skills required to govern, and establish committees of volunteers to take on the operational work.

Please become a part of the Project Harvest family, either as a prospective Board member or **as a member of the fundraising, education, or communications committees**. If you are interested please do not hesitate to contact us!

Sincerely,

Paul Lemieux

General Coordinator

Andrea Kelly

Chair of Board

Facing another Food Crisis in the Dry Corridor of Guatemala

We have repeatedly read and heard that the negative effects of climate change are suffered most severely by the poorest families. This has been the reality since 2010 for communities in Guatemala's dry corridor. They have suffered droughts, some years more severe than others.

In 2018 and projecting into 2019, **peasant families are facing a drought** that began in mid-July and lasted through August. More than 40 days without rain is a deadly blow for families whose crops of maize and beans depend on rainwater. It is predicted that the crop losses will be 100%.



As if that were not enough, the large coffee plantations which usually hire peasants to pick the harvest, will not be generating the same volume of employment because drought and pests have reduced their production by up to 50%. The final blow is that the international coffee market is paying the lowest prices for coffee in the last two decades.

Projections indicate that after the month of November 2018, the scarcity of food will be felt more drastically. Family food prices have soared, reaching \$36 per 100 lb of corn (compared to \$23 under normal conditions) and \$72 per 100 lb of beans (normal price, \$45).

Project Harvest, is trying to coordinate with other local, regional and national organizations to make use of Guatemala's legal framework to demand the right to food for these families who are at serious risk. In other words, we want the state to assume its role as guarantor of life and protector of its citizens and by providing emergency food in these times of crisis.

Guatemala Educational Solidarity Tour

Six delegates travelled with Paul Lemieux to visit some of the villages in which Project Harvest works.

The rocky, potholed highland roads are slow and dangerous, isolating villages, and limiting access to employ-



ment. In each village, we heard stories of life's daily challenges: extreme poverty, climate change, scarcity of arable land, water and medical care. We climbed steep slopes to reach gardens carved into mountainsides, their soil laboriously built from composted manure. The rainwater harvesting systems are vital to ensure the gardens' year-round success, so we heard many requests to help build more.

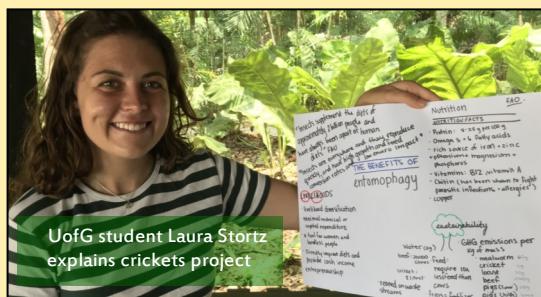
Several women told us how the Formation program helps them understand their rights, and builds their confidence to become leaders in their communities. Promotors Olga Tumax and Paula Velasquez have also helped women in Cuesta del Aire to understand their familial and custodial rights.

We were excited to attend the *encuentros*, two regional gatherings where participants from several villages met, many for the first time. They exchanged stories, shared a meal, and brainstormed on solutions to common challenges. Our delegates, with a bit of theatrics, demonstrated the role of Project Harvest's Canadian Bard of Directors, from fundraising, budgeting and communications to public education.

Most of us experienced health challenges related to food, water, or physical exertion. Still, we all agreed that the exposure deepened our understanding and commitment to Project Harvest's work in Guatemala.

University of Guelph Field School Tour 2018

"As part of the University of Guelph Field School on Social Business in Guatemala, 14 students and I had the opportunity to visit and interact with the people from three communities area where Project Harvest works. A "social business" is an organization which solves a social problem such as poverty or malnutrition, by using business solutions. This is a complex matter as students need to gain a detailed understanding of available inputs, knowledge, and skills for a business; they also need to understand the demand side of a business as community members can also be consumers. In the process of gaining that understanding we had the opportunity to learn a lot



about the communities, their customs, organization, and struggles. One business idea among the 14 ideas that emerged from the visit is to raise crickets fed by corn leaves and other greens to produce a protein powder supplement to help alleviate malnutrition. This idea has worked in other countries but will still require a lot of effort to bring to realization in Guatemala. This Field School puts students in contact with the real world where they can begin to hone their energy, creativity and commitment to contribute to improving people's lives. I want to thank Project Harvest for making this tremendous experience possible."

Kurt Annen, Associate Professor of Economics

Project Harvest - Guatemala / Financial Statement 2016	
ASSETS, REVENUES & EXPENSES	Totals 2017
ASSETS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR	
Assets at beginning of the year in Canada (1/1/17)	55,372.82
Assets at beginning of the year in Guatemala (1/1/17)	64,396.60
Total ASSETS at beginning of the year	119,769.42
REVENUES FOR FISCIAL YEAR	
Donations from Individuals	52,482.98
Donations from Institutions	21,956.16
MCC Grant for Regular Program	22,840.71
MCC Grant for Emergency Program	0.00
Rotary Club Grant for Regular Program	54,572.18
TOTAL REVENUES for fiscal year	151,852.03
EXPENSES FOR FISCIAL YEAR	
Program expenses in Guatemala (excluding MCC and Rotary)	54,116.97
Program expenses in Canada	2,032.26
Administration in Guatemala & Canada	6,925.67
Fundraising in Canada	2,730.09
MCC Regular Program	38,309.50
MCC Emergency Program	34.00
Rotary Club Regular Program	66,067.95
Total Expenses for fiscal year	170,216.44
Excess of revenues over expenses for fiscal year	-18,364.41
ASSETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	
Assets at the end of the year in Canada (12/31/17)	64,128.55
Assets at the end of the year in Guatemala (12/31/17)	37,276.46
Total ASSETS* at the end of the year	101,405.01
* Represents start up funds for next calendar year.	

New member of Guatemalan Team and Board Resignation



Paula Velásquez is a Mayan Quiché teacher. Paula has participated in Project Harvest since childhood. She was trained as an agricultural promoter, passionate about education, & committed to development, especially with indigenous and rural women.



We are saddened that Herman Plas has resigned from the Board of Project Harvest. We shall miss his dedication, his loyalty, and most of all his enthusiasm for the work of Project Harvest. Thank you Herman and God bless.

Please Donate!

Online at: projectharvest.org

Or **Project Harvest-Guatemala**
by Mail: 17 Pancake Lane, Fonthill,
Ontario, Canada L0S 1E2



E-mail us at:

project.harvest.guatemala@gmail.com



www.facebook.com/project.harvest2



Visit our **NEW Website:** projectharvest.org

Thank you for supporting our work!

You, our donors and supporters, are a vital part of Project Harvest's work. It is your generosity that allows our team in Guatemala to continue to improve the lives of subsistence families.



To make a donation see the 'Please Donate' section above. Project Harvest is a Canadian Registered Charity and will promptly issue a receipt for your tax-deductible donation.

All of us, in both countries, extend a big, heartfelt **"THANK YOU"** for being part of the Project Harvest Family.

PROJECT HARVEST— Guatemala

BY THE NUMBERS - Fragile Family Economy

The families with whom Project Harvest works are within the segment of the rural population that is called extremely poor. Under normal conditions, **when everything is in balance** and when there are no droughts, floods or other natural disasters, families must carry out a series of precarious activities in order to survive.

Project Harvest empowers rural families to cultivate vegetable gardens that enable them to put more food on their tables and to draw in more cash income from the sale of extra produce. As well, Project Harvest empowers them to become organized so they can challenge the structures that keep them poor.

The following tables show the impact that the additional Project Harvest vegetable garden has on the annual income of a poor, rural Guatemalan family:

The Basic Food Basket for a family of 4.7 members (2,262 calories)

Note: Rural families range from 6 to 12 members

\$7,750.00 per year*

CASH INCOME PER YEAR:

ACTIVITY	BREAKDOWN	INCOME PER YEAR
Sharecropping on rented land to sow corn and beans	Rent: 10 plots of land (400 sq. m. per plot) @\$5.45 = \$54.50	\$273.00 sale of ½ of bean crop**
Working on coffee or sugar plantations	90 days of work @\$9.09 per day	\$818.00
Producing handicrafts for sale i.e reed mats or hammocks	Reed mats: Cost of palm: \$1.81 Sale price: \$2.18 Profit per mat: \$0.37	\$18.00
TOTAL CASH INCOME PER YEAR:		\$1,109.00**

IMPACT OF VEGETABLE GARDEN – sale of produce (Annual income per crop):

Radish cultivation	50 bunches @ \$0.55 x 5 crops per yr.	\$137.50
Onion cultivation	91 bunches @ \$0.91 x 2 crops per yr.	\$165.50
Coriander cultivation	50 bunches @ \$0.36 x 5 crops per yr.	\$90.00
Broccoli cultivation	100 plants @ \$0.91 x 1 crop per yr.	\$91.00
Cabbage cultivation	100 plants @ \$0.91 x 1 crop per yr.	\$91.00

ADDED NEW INCOME FROM A GARDEN:

\$575.00

Percentage of increased cash income with a 10 x 10 meter garden

51%

Please Note: The value of the corn (10 qt. @\$27.27= \$272 and beans (\$273) and the vegetables (\$545) that families produce for their consumption, plus their income from the sale of vegetables (\$575), plus cash income from other activities (\$1,109) has a cash equivalent ± **\$2,774**. This is still **less than half (35.8 %)** of the stated amount that a family needs for the **Basic Food Basket (\$7,750)**.

* National Statistics Institute of Guatemala (INE), 2018 <https://www.ine.gob.gt/sistema/uploads/2018/02/07/20180207113729PpeJD6t0ZLsvO4KnHftP4XnCDeTbS0Mv.pdf>

** Half of bean crop and all of corn crop is for family consumption – it lasts about 6 months of year

*** Income for all cash expenses for food not grown (salt, sugar, rice, etc.), clothes, school materials, transportation, medical needs, etc.



Fragile Fabric of a Family

The Mendez family is typical of those who live in the dry, rocky region called the "dry corridor" of Guatemala. The family consists of eight members. (Younger families in the community are smaller; older families larger – up to 12 members.) The mother of the Mendez family, Rosa, is illiterate. The father, Juan, attended school but, in prac-

combine farming with several other activities. If there is a good rainy season and things go well, they can harvest enough corn and beans—the basis of their diet—for their own consumption for up to eight months. Then, Juan and the other men of the community must go further afield to look for agricultural work in the sugar cane or coffee



tice, he is functionally illiterate. The boys of the family get to spend more years in school than the girls.

The Mendez family are small landholders: they own very little of their land. They own two plots of land measuring approximately 800 square meters. This area provides sufficient space for a precarious house and a garden. Other families in the community own between one to four plots of land.

The Mendez family, like other small landholders in their community, lease additional land—typically between 10 and 15 plots—on large properties close to their community in order to cultivate corn and some beans. The crops grown from May and August are for family consumption. A second crop of beans is planted between August and December; half of this harvest is then sold to add to their cash income (see **By the Numbers**).

With so little of their own land, survival is very challenging for the Mendez family. To survive, they must

plantations for up to three months in order to generate more cash income. Rosa also contributes marginal income by hand-crafting mats. In a day's work Rosa could earn \$0.36.

This is under ideal conditions, when everything is in balance. Often, however, a drought or lack of job opportunities in the coffee or sugarcane fields disrupts this fragile balance. At times like these, Juan gathers and sells firewood and Rosa looks for work washing clothes. They will likely run out of harvested corn and resort to buying it by the pound with the money they have earned. They stop buying sugar and cooking oil, and their diet becomes limited to tortillas, chili, and salt. They may reduce their three meals a day to two, or in times of crisis they may eat only once a day.

The support provided by Project Harvest's family gardens and formation program offers hope and empowers families like the Mendez's to improve their lives and create a better future.

PROJECT HARVEST - GUATEMALA
EMPOWERS RURAL FAMILIES THROUGH TRAINING
IN FOOD SECURITY AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

E-mail: project.harvest.guatemala@gmail.com

Website: projectharvest.org

Address: 17 Pancake Lane, Fonthill, ON, Canada L0S 1E2

A Federal Registered Charity BN 82145 3503 RR 001

