

## **Lomas de San Isidro Regional Report**

(October 2014 – April 2015)

***Dear Immanuel Lutheran Church friends:***

*We wish you well and hope that God keeps on blessing you wherever you are. We have prepared this report in order to thank you for your support and to let you know about last semester's accomplishments and their depth meaning in Lomas de San Isidro.*

*The donations we received along this period have been invested in the transformation of those who need it most in this community. During this time, we have worked directly with 198 boys and girls and 83 adults in education, health and nutrition and productive projects. We keep on establishing strategic alliances with several actors in the community such as schools and local churches to help in their empowering in topics like education, community health and nutrition and environmental care.*

*We would also like to share with you that the last term of 2014 was really difficult because the community center's renovation started in December, according to the local government's demands and the electrification process of the community that took place, light poles were realigned, which caused the loss of approximately 40% of the main classroom as well as the space where the water purifier was kept. Up to date, this maintenance process is still ongoing, so work dynamics have changed and some workshops have had to be postponed. Nonetheless, most activities are still being held.*

*Following this letter, we want to share some testimonials from the people whose lives are being transformed, as well as a detailed summary of the results achieved with this project.*

*Thank you again for your invaluable support! Without you, Transformation would be impossible to achieve.*

*Sincerely,*

*Marcela Salas  
Fundraising Manager  
Amextra AC*

## Testimonials

Jéssica Cruz lives in the Lomas de San Isidro community, she is 7 years old and loves to read. She had never participated in any contest until Amextra invited her to the spelling contest held in the community center. These were her thoughts about her experience:

**“I participated in the spelling contest because I wanted to have fun. I ended up fourth and received a beautiful flower in recognition for my effort. I felt great and am looking forward to participating in more activities like this one”.**



Magaly Reyes loves flowers and knows how to grow them, but never before had she grown her own food. She became acquainted with Amextra thanks to her mother, who had participated in our programs so she became involved little by little. Nowadays she is growing her own food in a backyard orchard as well as eating healthily and saving more money.

**“I started to work with Amextra in a backyard project recently. My mom introduced me to Mariana (Amextra’s coordinator), and since then, I have started growing potatoes and lettuce and producing my own compost. My children help me with these activities and I am very excited to start a bigger and more productive orchard”.**



Rosa Silvana has three children and is currently participating in Amextra’s Education for Peace workshops, held in public schools near the community center. Rosa is learning many valuable things thanks to these classes.

**“My name is Rosa Silvana and I live in Tecomatlan, I have three kids and I learned about these workshops thanks to their school. As a mother, I like learning new things that I can apply to family life, I love talking to my kids and creating a trustful environment.”**



Now we would like to share a detailed summary of each project's achievements.

#### STRATEGIC TOPIC: INCOME GENERATION

##### **PROJECT: Income generation by waste management.**

- 1 scholar center recovering resources in situ.

At the beginning of the 2014-15 scholar period, work in community schools was restarted; teachers that worked with us in the previous cycle were taken away from school projects, so there was no continuity to their work. Schools have very specific needs and contexts so Amextra's project proposals have to adapt to circumstances such as the lack of wastes to be separated and the lack of time and disposition from teachers to keep track and collaborate on the project.

The organic wastes and compost generation phases are still ongoing in the creation of gardens and school orchards. We are currently working in collaboration with the women in charge of the school's kitchen, for they manage the organic wastes used in compost; a school teacher is in charge of the reforestation project and there is another person in charge of the design and maintenance of the garden and school orchard.

#### STRATEGIC TOPIC: EDUCATION

##### **PROJECT: Homework Club**

###### 2014

31 kids attended school constantly for the last 3 months of 2014 in order to do their homework or receive specialized tutoring sessions.

The Homework Club has strengthened work habits in children that will help them achieve their own goals and set specific objectives such as paying more attention and increasing their grades. This will have a positive impact not only in their scholar skills' development, but also on their self-esteem.

###### 2015

In the first trimester of 2015, 23 kids have attended in order to do their homework or receive specialized tutoring sessions.

Soon, a computer area will be ready for them to use, and this will help them with investigation chores that require the use of a digital encyclopedia. Besides, kids and youngsters won't have to go coffee shops or other places outside their community in order to get their Internet-related homework done. This action will help eliminate some family expenses and provide the opportunity of receiving assistance in the use of the computers.

##### **PROJECT: Cognitive development (strategic games)**

###### 2014

33 children attended the community center in order to play some games. Last December the renovation of this center started so half of it was destroyed, which contributed to the limitation of activities that could be done.

###### 2015

35 children have attended the new community center and are adapting quickly to the changes. We are trying to come up with new games and activities so that kids want to come more often and invite their friends.

**PROJECT: Cinema club**

2014

26 kids attended our improvised cinema. This activity is important for children's education because it allows them to become acquainted with different realities and perspectives that give them hope and provide ideas on how to react upon different circumstances. Unfortunately, this activity was temporarily suspended due to the lack of space, nevertheless, we are looking for ways and new spaces to continue with this dynamic.

**PROJECT: Spelling-bee contest**

2015

10 kids participated in this contest, a very important activity that helps children acknowledge the importance of spelling and grammar in their language and recognize that in order to succeed in something you have to work hard for it.

It was surprising to see that the participants' ages varied from 7 to 14 years old; it was interesting to involve children in an activity that has an academic nature but from a playful perspective. Children were excited to participate and experience the emotions that healthy competition brings along.

**PROJECT: Peace Education**

2015

140 kids and 4 teachers participated in the peace education workshops held in the community's Frida Kahlo elementary school. The first phase of this workshop was provided to 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th grade boys and girls, so it was difficult for us to work with so many children and keep their attention. Nonetheless, we had the support of Elida Hernández, a student who is currently carrying out her social service practices with us. This workshop seeks to fight the increasing violence rates lived within the community, hoping that kids will replicate peaceful behaviors in their own environment.

**"Taking care of myself" workshop for women**

2015

42 mothers of children attending Frida Kahlo elementary school participated in this workshop whose purpose is to support kids and strengthen the lessons learned in the peace education classes. In this way, we are making sure that children live a peaceful environment both at school and at home. The topics revised in class were: self-esteem, assertive communication and conflict transformation.

The main problem detected in this workshop was that troubled children's mothers are not involved in the school activities their kids participate in; this damages their behavior and makes it more difficult for them to revert positively.

**First aid capacitation**

2015

14 family parents attended this capacitation held in David Alfaro Siqueiros kindergarten. In this sessions, people share experiences from which anyone can learn new things. We recognize the importance of having basic knowledge on how to save the lives and/or physical integrity of those who surround us.

STRATEGIC TOPIC: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND NUTRITION

**PROJECT: Alternative health workshop: herbology**

2014

9 women are recovering knowledge and practice on traditional medicine. During this workshop, we were able to observe that when women have their own space, they are more relaxed, learn better and share more about their experiences, knowledge and family traditions.

2015

10 women are receiving capacitation in order to take part in the herbology medicines productive project; there are many women who attended the 2014 workshop and are interested in joining. When the workshop is over, we will start to elaborate this products, which will be sold with the help of Amextra's commerce team, who are in charge of selling honey products made in Chiapas.

The purpose of this project is to provide the tools needed to empower this women financially, without them having to abandon their family routines.

STRATEGIC TOPIC: ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

**PROJECT: Backyard orchard/School orchard**

2014

2 families finished working on their orchards along with Amextra; they graduated and continue to take care of it on their own. School orchards were left in charge of school janitors for the vacation period.

2015

4 families are receiving capacitation on the creation and maintenance of their orchards. This is one of the most complicated activities, for it involves great trust and eagerness to do things right. This program is available throughout the year and there is a lot of promotion towards it. This year we will open an alternative workshop named "Medicine Orchards" in which people will create their own "living drugstore" by harvesting medicine plants.

The school orchard will be taken care of towards the end of the year; right now the land is being prepared with organic wastes in order to increase the possibility that the orchards grown will live longer (in 2014 most of the harvested plants died due to soil deficiency).

## **NON-PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES**

### **Day of the Dead Celebration:**

2014

19 kids and 2 women

The Day of the Dead is a traditional Mexican celebration very close to the heart of this community's children. Although Amextra works hard to preserve and recover our traditions, this year we took into consideration these kids' wishes which were to have a celebration that was closer to the Halloween approach. We improvised some makeup techniques to disguise adults as monsters, later we showed the "Corpse Bride" movie. This activities are not only fun, but also nurturing for children for they allow them to have a good time while strengthening their values.

### **Limits and permissiveness talk**

2015

21 women attended this talk held in the Carmen Serdán kindergarten. Elida Hernández, who was performing her social service at the time, is specialized in family topics, so this activity was organized under some teachers' requests. This talks seek to guide mothers in themes concerning discipline, upbringing and parenthood.