



nexus

SPRING/SUMMER 2012
VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1



The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Rainbow of Hope for Children to partner with COMUS Coffee Co-operative, El Salvador, in a five year program to improve production, processing, and marketing for grassroots coffee producers.



Email Edition

COMUS - a shining example of a grassroots NGO

A fitting partner for Rainbow of Hope for Children and CIDA

In 2009, Rainbow of Hope began its relationship with COMUS, (The Association of United Communities of Usulután), a community based organization in one of the poorest regions of El Salvador, San Francisco Javier, Usulután. COMUS is a non governmental, non-profit organization with no religious or political affiliation. It was founded in 1990, after the civil war, to defend human rights of the civilian population and to organize communities, helping them to meet their basic needs. For the last 19 years, COMUS organized programs for 44 communities (25,000 people) in San Francisco Javier, Usulután, to help people with health care, community education, micro-credit, ecological brick production, environmental education, organic agriculture, and organic coffee production. COMUS is a shining example of a grassroots NGO, developed and run by the people it assists.

See feature story on COMUS in our 2010 Spring/Summer Nexus ps. 5-7 on our website:

www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca

ULTIMATE GOAL OF TRAINBOW-CIDA-COMUS PROJECT

To improve the long term economic and environmental viability of the local, community owned coffee processing plant and to increase the capacity of the (COMUS) to effectively and sustainably implement its rural development programs to improve the food security of vulnerable rural families in the Department of Usulután, specifically the areas around the municipalities of San Francisco Javier, Ozatlan, Tecapan, San Augustin, Jiquilisco and Berlin. Huge impact.



Left picture, Rainbow of Hope's Treasurer, Richard Forer, (on right) is fascinated by Jamie Coutt's lesson in the COMUS organic coffee seedling nursery.

Below, these COMUS leaders explain the work of COMUS helping local farmers struggling to complete with large corporate and multinational plantation owners.

MATCHING GRANT

This project will be Rainbow of Hope's largest with a budget of \$1,088,870. Our share will be \$272,217 and CIDA's share will be \$816,652.

With the Contribution Agreement expected soon to be in place, CIDA will match donations to this project 3:1.



FOUR CHILDREN HIT BY LIGHTENING AT LA LOMA, EL SALVADOR

We were sad to hear that 4 children from La Loma, El Salvador, whom we visited last November, were struck by lightning when walking home from school. Three of the children, though hurt quite seriously, are pulling though quite well. However, Maria Roxanna is in treatment for neurological problems. La Loma is a very isolated and close knit community, so the whole community is suffering.



Maria Roxanna, Richardo Elizabeth, Manuel Antonio, and Daysi Lorena, all your friends from Rainbow of Hope for Children in Canada send you greetings and best wishes for a speedy recovery.



Here we see Hank at his finest, with the first nations people he loved. He shines with the Mayan teachers of Guatemala on their visit to Canada in 2004. Hank painted the huge social justice mural in the background which is still on display at St. Joe's High School, Edmonton, where he taught for many years and where our NGO was founded.

HANK ZYP

MAY 15, 1935—April 21, 2012

Hank and his wife, Tillie, founded our NGO in 1975. He served as CEO until 1999, then as a director until last spring. After several years of struggling with health, Hank is with us now, only in spirit. His message for us was "Ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference". Hank saw himself as a very ordinary man. He was profoundly extraordinary. Artist, poet, author, and friend of the impoverished and downtrodden, Hank gave every ounce of himself to social justice which he understood as awareness, conscientization, and action. Hank left us a remarkable legacy, and we express our gratitude for his work with Rainbow of Hope for Children. Unless designated otherwise, donations in his memory will be given to the "Building Citizenship through Music Program" in Managua, Nicaragua, a program that was dear to Hank's heart and to which he helped initiate.

LIKE YOU

Like you I
Love love, Life, the sweet smell
Of things, the sky blue
Landscape of April days

And my blood boils up
And I laugh through eyes
That have known the bud of tears.

I believe the world is beautiful
And that poetry, like bread is for everyone.

And that my veins don't end in me
But in the unanimous blood
Of those who struggle for life.

Love,
Little things
Landscape and bread,
The poetry of everyone.

-Hank Zyp

"As you may appreciate I am neither a guru nor an oracle but only hope to animate a serious examination of the malaise which threatens the planet earth and its inhabitants so that we may be inspired to transform our individual and collective findings into lasting healing action."

-Hank Zyp

BRAZIL: From Gloom to Land of HOPE by George Bunz

Brazil is a land of contrast, a nation with a burgeoning economy, fledgling democracy, and one of the world's greatest disparities between the rich and the poor (UN Report 1996). I first visited Brazil with Al Gerwing in 1999. Almost everywhere we encountered poverty, crumbling roads, dirty streets, tent cities, and we heard much about low school attendance, crime, violence, and depression. People spoke of corruption in governments and expressed little if any hope. On our visit, April 2012, the signs of change were evident in the infrastructure of roads, bridges, new housing, restaurants and bathrooms, cleanliness of streets, and reconstruction and construction in cities. The popular President Lula introduced modest social programs of food and housing for the poor, policies that are said to be maintained by his successor, President Dilma. Indeed, new regulations do abound for children's well being, but we hear local organizations are given no resources to carry them out. To citizens struggling with low wages, seasonal jobs, no health care, housing in-the-waiting, high levels of crime and violence, there is cynicism. Some say the new policies for children and modest social programs are to impress the G8 nations so they will welcome Brazil to the family of the world's most wealthiest nations. I see vast socio-economic disparities but the gap is shrinking. I sense a social consciousness building in human rights, environmental awareness, anti-corruption and an increasing passion and capacity of the media to expose corruption. I hope I am not too optimistic.

EL SAUCE SECONDARY SCHOOL RAINBOW ORGANIC GARDEN PROJECT

Written by Profesor Cástor Artiga and Brenda Carpio and translated by Eddy Brooks, El Salvador

As part of the Action Plan for the Rainbow Minifarm Project back in 2010, we focused on children to see if exposing them to gardening could be more effective than working only with adults. For the educational component of the project, the children would be excellent to expand the knowledge behind organic agriculture and environmental sustainability. So the organic garden project at El Sauce School, started in February 2010, aiming to teach children a more environmental suitable method for agriculture, also to use the garden as a healthy source of organic food for the children, and finally to have an academic cross over into the school curriculum. The school could act as a model for any other educational institution in the country.



El Sauce School is a government state school in Sonsonate, El Salvador with 1600 pupils divided in 2 daily shifts, kindergarten, starting at age 4 to ninth grade, age 16. Our organic garden is using nearly 800 sq. meters of once derelict school ground. Our students transformed the land that now is used for compost area, vegetable beds, mandala, a water system, a green house, vermiculture, and native plants seed bank. The importance

of the organic school site is based on:

- ♦ High quality nutritional vegetables recommended by the ministry of education for the school kitchen.
- ♦ The rescue of lost moral values through working on the land and care of the environment. (El Salvador has one of the worst teenage gang cultures in the world.)
- ♦ The pedagogy and culture of the garden is seen as a tool for the prevention of violence and anti social behaviour.
- ♦ The garden is an education tool for cross over curriculum work as well as mixed ability and child centred learning.
- ♦ The garden is an educational model for other institutions, which is already seen by the number of important visitors it has received. Including the Ministry of Education and the University of El Salvador Department of Agronomy.

Our method “bio intensive” for ecological cultivation focuses on small scale sustainability for self consumption and mini commercialization. We aim to work with nature to give good production in a small space with low water inputs. We try to use only native seeds and organic fertilizers, so the minifarm is almost totally self-sustainable.

This “bio intensive” method is based on principles that can be adapted to climate conditions easily implemented with hand techniques and simple tools. The result is an ecological agriculture producing nutritious organic food and helps reconstruct and improve soil fertility in the process. Our hope is that this method offers a solution to the problem of food security for vulnerable families. It is a solution to environmental destruction and contamination, the waste of natural resources, the dependence on fossil fuel derivatives that are linked to climate change. With this background our method aims to grow all our food for a complete diet in the least space possible and minimum water input.

The profound preparation of the soil

Using techniques like double digging to 60 cm aerates the soil and gives better drainage

Use of compost

The soil is fertilized by compost, which can be used from kitchen waste thus recycling nutrients to the soil for the next crop cultivation. The compost has many properties that benefit the soil, like improving the micro organism life.

Use of seedlings

The seeds are sown in nursery beds or land trays to produce healthy seedlings ready to transplant for garden beds. Nurseries give a protective environment at a critical time for vulnerable seeds.

Close planting

Every bit of land is utilized by this close planting to encourage a beneficial mini climate; the same method is used when transplanting and where the beds are totally covered.

Association planting

A system of complementary planting uses all the mutual interrelationships between the different plants. Some plants will attract some beneficial insects, whilst others will drive plagues away. All plants have mutual relationships; we have to learn to utilize these for optimum production.

Crop Rotation

To help the fertility of the soil, we rotate each family of crops to avoid exhausting the soil.

Compost cultivation

Sustainability of the garden depends on the regular elaboration of compost; the bio mass carbon has to return to the ground to maintain its fertility. Therefore 15% of the kitchen garden must be targeted for grains that produce biomass like corn and sorghum.

Diet and vegetable cultivation

We aim for a complete and nutritious diet for pupils at the school kitchen. So to produce optimum cultivation of calories in a small space, 30% of the area would be crops with high calorie values like yucca, sweet potato etcetera and 20% is aimed at growing vegetables that give the mineral and vitamin requirements for the pupils. The rest of the land products are sold to the local market.

Use of open pollinated and native seeds varieties

It is important to use open pollinated seeds varieties, not genetically modified. These native seeds are our key to bio diversity, one of the most important roles of the project. The seeds are adapted to their particular microclimate so we preserve the local genetic biodiversity spread to better adapting to problems of climate change than commercial type seeds.

The integrating of all the principles.

The success of the bio intensive ecological method depends on the application of all these principles in an integrated manner to assure soil fertility and optimum results. Omitting one principle such as using close planting but not feeding compost) can rapidly negative effect the soil's fertility and production.

In reality when we started working the soil, the land was full of gravel, clay, rubble, a base subsoil highly compacted and very malnourished. Now we have 66 beds producing a variety of vegetables as: Yucca, Corn, Aubergine, Spring Onions, Onions, Tomatoes, Sweet Peppers, Cabbage, Carrots, Spinach, Lettuce, Mint, Parsley, Coriander, Celery, Chipilin, Beans, radish, peas, green beans Beetroot, Acelga, Colish, Coconut trees, Papayas, and bananas.



THE GARDEN IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

One of the main aims of the present ministry of education is the inclusion of activities using real life situation and problems so pupils can gain experience to develop knowledge and abilities to solve real life problems. Part of our plan for the school garden being based in a place of education is how to integrate the activities of the garden into the main school curriculum. We are finding that through this project we can help to rescue the child's identity and reinforce healthy traditional values that encourage responsible citizenship. A few project links to the school curriculum:

Mathematic exercise, a water tank leak:

The children had to determine the water flow through different leak orifices, using both radius and diameter of the water tank volume etc.

Infiltration test:

The children calculated volume, radius, diameter and speed the water is consumed by the soil.

Art and Creativity syllabus:

A mandala was designed and used as a productive bed. The mandalas are schematic and symbolic diagrams, some from antiquity representing the micro-cosmos, macro-cosmos and centre of the universe, holding symbolic power and energy including the Mayan 2012 ideals, for example.



These students do an exceptional job teaching about the plants and process and they take this learning and their enthusiasm to the community, building environmental advocacy.

Model building:

The children are encouraged to design and conduct a model of the garden. They had to measure the site and garden and allocate each one of the designated areas they were encouraged to use their creativity.



T-Shirt Competition:

The children who worked at the garden organized a competition to design a t-shirt of symbolic design that best represents for them the garden ideals.

From the “budding” stages of the project several pupils showed so much enthusiasm that they became the main protagonists in developing and driving their project forward. Some worked hard preparing the land whilst others prepared the compost. They were ready in less than 90 days. The pupils even organized their own board of directors to set guidelines and conduct all the activities of the garden, thereby encouraging responsibility too. It really was a token of the love for nature from this student community!

SHARING OUR LEARNING WITH VISITORS

National University of El Salvador.

We received students and teachers of the Agronomist department; their interest focused on reconstruction of the soil through organic fertilizers. The Nutrition Department focused on double digging and the capacity for well dug soil to produce a variety of nutritious, high quality crops in small spaces.

Local Public Schools:

The garden received several visitors from pupils and teachers of the Sonsonate area schools. Our pupils welcomed them and explained why they liked the project and how they got involved in it.

The Farmer to Farmer Association.

A group of farmers came to see how the “bio intensive agriculture” functions. We had a significant interchange of experiences and knowledge.

Canadian environmentalist and consultants

Clara Qualizza, a director of Rainbow of Hope for Children organized the visit. They constructed a house for a poor family when they were here. The children explained the 4 basic steps of the bio intensive method and the Canadians interacted with our children teaching them how to play hockey, and then they played a game of soccer together.

Ministry of Education and Individual Visitors:

The garden has received visits from the Regional Office of Education and various individuals, including the manager of the organic movement in El Salvador, the owner of a Peruvian Restaurant, who values organic produces to offer his clients.

These visits have not only raised the school profile but also the level of importance of the organic method. The students have learned how much interest these organic methods are having from sections of their country and internationally too. They are appreciating their work so much more!

A POEM TO THE GARDEN

by Ronald Pacheco Grade 9 School leaver 2011.

Goodbye my beautiful garden, I will leave you happy
seeing you flourishing,
My head held high, because from you I have learned so
much of nature

You always will remain in my mind like the remembrance
of the scent of fresh picked veggies that
Have just been picked or planted, the purity of the wind
and sunrays.

That refreshes and illuminates our everyday, life working
the land that every day gets even better.

I always will remember the smile of those that work
every day to make you even more beautiful and protect
you, my dear and unforgettable garden. !!!

THE TRANSFORMATION NEVER STOPS.

Finally, Lic Rivera the headmaster has been so generous in allowing not only the projects development but also his school infrastructure, such as the store room for tools, the seed bank room and classrooms used for garden activities. Nothing could have happened without his support and guidance.

We at Rainbow of Hope also appreciate the leadership of teacher, Castor Artiga, who has been a strong teacher advocate for the project in the school, as well as the entire staff for their advocacy, integrating the garden into the school curriculum, instruction and learning.

From Here and There We Keep in Touch with Each Other

To Hank

When we from Preda in the Philippines came to visit
and perform our play Hank, so fully human,
said it was his greatest day.
He wept, He smiled,
He laughed and cried ,
He danced and danced with us ,
He hugged and embraced with all the love
greater than the stars, for the people
he cared for most- the poorest,
the downtrodden, the hungry and the lost.
His life was lived for them, a champion for their cause.
Hank had his heroes, celebrated in mural, his art,
his writing and in the example of his life.
His spirit will live on, and now steps up the artist
so Hank can take his rightful place where all will
know he is one of them and stands among the greatest.

Shay Cullen 27 April , 2012

It is so thoughtful of you, Shay, for taking the time from your incredible work at the Preda in the Philippines to write this reflection about Hank. Also thanks for the update on the Boys home and new Girls home and the stories of their rescue from abuse. We will try to include a few of these in a future Nexus.

Dear Mr. Bunz

We very much appreciate your last update you sent us. We would like to thank you for giving us information which we read to the whole school. We think that the money is being used wisely and it is going to an excellent cause. We like this program because not only is it a community service, it helps the environment. Our grade 5/6 class really enjoy "Wash 'n' Squash" and hope to continue helping the needy children all over the world.

Grade 5/6 class
Theresetta School, Castor,

Thanks for your kindness and consideration throughout my journey with you through Central America as well as thanks for inviting me to accompany the delegation to Brazil. Unfortunately I am unable to make his commitment but hope to on a later date. I am enclosing a cheque for La Loma School project for solar power and computers etc.

Henry Spenrath, Edmonton, Alberta

Special wishes and blessings to Rainbow of Hope for Children. Also special blessings for President George Bunz and all the officers and directors for your good volunteer work. Elaine and I are very much aware of your accomplishments in developing countries. May God reward you for your work well done.

Henry & Elaine Zimmer
Muenster, Saskatchewan

Thank you for sending me ten extra copies of the NEXUS. We have given them to friends. Keep up the blessed work with Rainbow of Hope for Children.

Sincerely,
Jim Noonan

Dear George,
I was touched personally by your presentation following the CWL meeting. I have corneal disease called Fuch's Dystrophy. I was born with the gene responsible for this rare eye dystrophy. The progression of this corneal disease is monitored though a special microscopy test administered at the Royal Alex Hospital in Edmonton. There is no cure for Fuch's Dystrophy. Successful cornea transplants should restore my vision but there are no guarantees. I am grateful for today's technology, health care, insurance, and a pension plan. Please accept this donation to go towards eye care, "Sight to the Blind" project in India.

Lorraine Maguire
Wainwright, Alberta

Our students have been collecting pennies to send to you for your building schools. They have learned that even such a small amount as a penny which many people throw away as useless has a value in some other nations and that it can be put to good work. The catastrophe in Haiti has brought their awareness to the forefront. Please accept our donation of \$137.30 and put it to work where you believe it will do the most good.

Marius and Candyce Paul &
Students of the Home Front
School, Beauval, Sask.

It is good to hear from you Marius. I enjoyed teaching you 50 years ago, and what a treat to receive a gift from your students now. Thanks so much. George

RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF:



Our donors, Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation, and Wainwright Rotary. You are a rainbow of hope for people in despair in several countries.



Canadian International
Development Agency

Government of Alberta
Culture and Community
Spirit Program

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

NEXUS BY EMAIL

Dear supporters,
We are starting to deliver the Nexus by email. If you received your NEXUS by email but prefer it by mail, please email us. If you received a copy of NEXUS by mail, and you wish us to email it, please email us at rohfc@telus.net and we would be happy to put you on our email list. If you prefer not to receive the NEXUS just let us know.



RAINBOW OF HOPE PROGRAMS

1. Sight to the blind, Trivandrum, India
2. MMTRP-AL (Rural women workers and fisherwomen in Alagoas), Brazil
3. School of family agriculture, Bahia, Brazil
4. Citizenship and values, Grota da Alegria, Brazil
5. PREDA protecting children, Philippines
6. Organic agriculture training, El Salvador
7. Organic coffee cooperative in El Salvador
8. Indigo/Sewing Centre, El Salvador
9. La Loma School/community projects, El Salvador
10. Building citizenship with music, Nicaragua
11. Rainbow of Hope College Cunén, Guatemala
12. Reconstruction & education, Chíncha Baja, Peru
13. PAMBE Pre-school, Ghana, Africa
14. Kinyambu school library, Kenya, Africa
15. Ussango School in Tanzania, Africa
16. Community capacitation in Jamaica
17. Disaster relief fund
18. Unrestricted: (where most needed)

We are grateful for your support. Your gift will be acknowledged with an income tax deductible receipt.

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ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 28, 2012, 2:00 PM

**Change for Children Office
2nd Floor 10808 124 Street**

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Come join us!

**We thank our friends at CFC for letting us
use their office to hold our Annual Meeting.**

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