

DEVELOPMENTS @

World Neighbours Canada Society

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Kunauri village thriving 18 years after TSS's first water system installed

Many a development group has come into a Third World village and installed a pump or other water system only to discover several years on that the system no longer functions. The pump broke and parts were unavailable. Or perhaps the villagers fell to fighting over the resource or others pilfered so much it was of no use to anybody.

So it is fair to ask, what is the fate of the water systems World Neighbours Canada has been supporting in Nepal?

We asked our Nepalese partner TSS (Tamakoshi Sewa Samiti) to go to the first water system they installed and report on its function and the state of the village.

The village is called Kunauri and is located about one hour walking distance from Manthali, the TSS headquarters for Ramechhap district. Almost all the inhabitants are of the Majhi caste. Their main occupation was fishing in the Tamakoshi River from which they also carried household water.

In 1990 the village lacked the most basic infrastructure for health, education, potable water, irrigation or road access. There were chronic food shortages with the villagers able to grow only a quarter of the food they needed. The poor worked as porters to earn food.

TSS chose the village for its first water system because of it was considered the most neglected and poor. The 29 families of Kunauri were offered non-local construction materials, transport of the materials up to the end of the drivable road, and technical support. At that time the road from the capital Kathmandu ended 40 kilometres from the village.

Thus to pick up and bring back the pipe, fittings and cement required an 80 kilometre hike. For every sack of cement villagers had to walk three days, one day to the road head and another two days with a 50 kilogram bag of cement on their back. In addition the villagers had to collect and prepare sand and gravel for the concrete, dig a trench for the line and construct both intake and outlet pipe stands.

Eighteen years later the water system still functions and the village is greatly changed. When there were repairs to be made, the villagers made them because it was their system that they laboured to install. Neighbours did not steal from it because the issues of access and location of stand pipes was all negotiated with the entire village before any work began. In fact the system has been subsequently extended so that it serves 55 families.

TSS Program Coordinator Suresh Shrest-



The village of Kunauri beside the Tamakoshi River was the site of the first TSS water system in 1990. World Neighbours Canada's nine year involvement with water systems in Nepal has always been part of a larger integrated program run by our partner TSS. Our donations are used to purchase locally unavailable materials for the water system which is TSS's entry point for other work such as savings and loans groups, income generation and health activities.



The people of Kunauri still make good use of the water system installed 18 years ago. The current World Neighbours Canada project in Nepal has expanded beyond water systems and now includes providing the pipe and water trap for simple latrine systems. All the families in Kunauri have now installed latrines.

WORLD NEIGHBOURS CANADA SOCIETY

World Neighbours Canada supports local organizations that share some basic principles:

- * build on traditional knowledge and values to help people to analyze and solve their own problems.
- * encourage and train local leaders and organizations.
- * rooted in the tradition of neighbour helping neighbour.

ha sums up the improvements in the village over the last 18 years:

"There has been now big changes in Kunauri. TSS has implemented a number of integrated programs such as drinking water, irrigation, income generation, community health, saving and credit, and education. They have stopped drinking river water. They now have a 300,000 litre irrigation pond that can irrigate their barren land around the year to grow seasonal and off-season vegetables and crops. They have their own Saving & Credit Cooperative Or-

ganization. They have regular saving habit and deposit at their co-op. Kunauri Co-operative provides loan to its members for different purposes. Every household has latrine. There is a primary school initially helped by TSS and it is now being run by government. All the children go to their local school as well as English medium private school in Manthali. The living standard of families has been comparatively improved. The socio-economic condition of Kunauri villages has been improved."

New staff and more resources for La Esperanza project

LA ESPERANZA UP TO SPEED

CIDA has approved a three-year grant for World Neighbours Canada's La Esperanza Project in Honduras and the project is gearing up for a busy year.

The team has been brought up to full strength. Of first importance was the hiring of a health and nutrition specialist. (See story below) who will bring the reality of gender balance to the team and comes with a rich background in motivating villagers to make meaningful changes in the health outcomes of their families.

Project Coordinator Victorino Rivera will have access to funds to further capitalize the savings and credit groups, to purchase a vehicle to move people and materials between the villages, and to be able to bring expert workshops and programs to strengthen work of the project.

VISITORS TO CANADA

Part of the agreement with CIDA provides funding for engaging Canadians in the issues of development. World Neighbours Canada does this by giving members of the project team with the opportunity to visit British Columbia to meet with Canadians in our homes, schools, churches and Rotary Clubs.

An invitation has been sent to Elmer Lopez and Victorino Rivera to visit us during the first two weeks of October.

This will be a second visit to Canada for both men. Elmer was here in 2006. Victorino's last visit was in 1992 when he was coordinator of World Neighbours Canada's

first project in El Socorro.

The team will visit Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, Kamloops and the Sunshine Coast where local World Neighbours supporters will arrange opportunities to meet and hear from those on the ground in Honduras.



Working on food security

Project coordinator Victorino Rivera (right) has been working with Luis Enrique Avidez of the community of El Guano to plant potatoes. The project baseline study indicated that half the families surveyed were short food for at least two months each year. Last summer's rain damaged the corn and beans prompting a move into winter crops. Six other villagers have started experimenting having seen the success in their mountainous zone.

POSSIBLE NEW PROJECT

With the successful attainment of CIDA matching funding for La Esperanza, World Neighbours Canada is exploring other opportunities in Central America. Mesoamerica coordinator Elmer Lopez has been investigating an area near the famous Mayan ruins at Copan on either side of the border between Honduras and Guatemala. The villages are populated by a Mayan people called the Chorti who long predated the national boundary between these two Central American nations.

A World Neighbours Canada board member, Michael Newman, will join Lopez and other members of his management team for a visit to the proposed villages in August. The visit will also include stops at the CEASO training centre at El Socorro and the La Esperanza project.



A highly experienced addition

The newest addition to la Esperanza project is Health Coordinator Balvina Amador. Holding a Bachelor of Health and Nutrition she began her career with Vecinos Mundiales in 1993 with the Santa Cruz project (1993 - 1996) and then continued with El Chile project (1996 - 2000) and El Aguila project (2000 - 2006) where she was responsible for community and reproductive health programs with an emphasis on hygiene, nutrition, improved stoves, reproductive health education and creating organizations based on voluntary health volunteers. La Esperanza will be her first project funded by World Neighbours Canada.

In addition, Vecinos Mundiales is providing, outside the World Neighbours funding, the addition of Jorge Unanzor as a facilitator to work with the savings and loans groups. With the final addition of a part-time accountant/office assistant the team for la Esperanza is complete.



"We will build the classrooms ourselves"

The people of El Guano, the largest village in la Esperanza project urged Vecinos Mundiales not to rent an office but rather to put the same money into a permanent building. The villagers provided the labour and skills with the understanding that at the end the project, usually six to eight years, the community will own the building. This same strategy was successfully followed in World Neighbours Canada's first project in El Socorro (1990 -1998) where the former project office is now a full time nurse's station funded by the government. The current building will provide housing and office space for staff as well as classroom and working space for the co-op and savings and loans organizations.