



## SEWING SEEDS, HARVESTING FAITH: HOME GARDENS WORK!

In 2007 churches working with ENLACE identified the need for food security in their communities. In response, ENLACE began to design home garden projects that addressed chronic malnutrition and economic hardship throughout rural El Salvador. While the specifics differ in every location, all home garden projects are led by the church and managed by the community association. Traditional as well as improved varieties of vegetables, herbs and spices, fruit, fish, and poultry are all cultivated on the land around a homestead. Since 2008, more than 325 people have participated in 11 different communities.

One thriving home garden project is located in the village of La Loma. A few years ago, local pastor Felix Amaya started home gardens with members of his church. After harvesting their first crop of tomatoes, many people in the community became interested, resulting in a new dynamic between the church and community. This relationship demonstrated to the church that growing food was not only a way to meet nutrition and economic needs, but a way to connect meaningfully to their neighbors.

*"We started with seven people, ended up with 17 families... The gardens have given us...a beautiful community fellowship along with growing what we eat. We are becoming more friendly as a church, and we are taking away the fear that people have of the Church."*

Pastor Felix believes that being a gardener is part of his Christian mission and made room for the training center and greenhouse at his home. Pastor Felix also provides space for families that don't have their own land and has now taken on the role of master gardener teaching new gardeners every season.

The people of La Loma still face challenges, but through the leadership of the local church, strategically supported by ENLACE and its donors, these challenges have become opportunities to grow together; Opportunities to sew vegetables turns into a harvest of health and faith.

### **\$250 FEEDS A FAMILY FOR A LIFETIME? REALLY? REALLY!**

*Here's How...*

Donations given to the home garden program provide gardeners with materials (such as seed and seedlings) and ongoing training (such as how to create seed banks and make organic fertilizer). ENLACE agronomists provide weekly help and expertise. The church hosts seminars and workshops and serves as a constant, encouraging presence in the community. Once gardeners participate and experience the joys and relief that come with the ability to meet their family's nutritional and economic needs, they become empowered. As they expand their own crops, they teach their children and other family members and neighbors their new skills. In these and many other ways, **home gardens are long-term and multifaceted solutions to material and spiritual poverty.**



# PROFILES OF TRANSFORMATION: ANA GLORIA AND DINA



Ana Gloria Joaquín de Morales always had a green thumb. For years, she had cultivated corn and many kinds of medicinal plants in the yard around her home. However, Ana Gloria didn't

feel she had the expertise

to do more with her talent. Three years ago, Ana Gloria was invited by a local church to participate in home garden projects in the village of El Espino. The results went beyond her expectations and encouraged her to branch out.

*"I started with 10 tomato plants...Today I have two tanks with tilapia and chickens...In the gardens I already have 229 tomato plants, 35 pepper plants, and I planted 10 cabbage heads...These are critical times when a dollar is hard to come by, but if there's no cash you don't worry because you have food you can eat."*

Ana Gloria's yield hasn't come just from food. Training workshops have given her new friends, and she even decided to begin attending church again, something she hadn't thought of doing in years. And due to her green thumb and training, she has quickly become a confident and well-respected leader, establishing a greenhouse on her property that serves the entire community.

Until a few years ago, Dina Velasquez had never planted anything in her life. When a local church member invited her to attend a home garden seminar, she said she didn't want to waste their time.



Like many poor women in rural El Salvador, Dina suffered from low self-esteem and depression. With the heavy weight of isolation and a sense of worthlessness, a garden didn't seem to be an answer to her troubles.

After friendly and insistent encouragement from church members, she finally decided to attend. As a result, Dina says that her life was transformed. Along with providing food and income for her family, Dina's flourishing garden has helped alleviate stress and manage her depression. "When I saw my plants were growing, it was wonderful to me. Since...we started to cultivate, I can hardly remember what depression was like."

Three years later, rather than feeling worthless, Dina enjoys sharing her produce and knowledge with her family and neighbors--giving her more opportunity to develop strong friendships and empowering her in leadership. "I have learned to better relate with people...and thanks to God I am tasting the satisfaction."

## \$250 HELPS TO FEED A FAMILY FOR A LIFETIME

Home gardens offer one of the best ways to give to the poor with good stewardship in mind. Providing a poor family with food helps in the short term. Providing them with ongoing access to food along with empowerment, confidence and economic stability through the local church is an approach that changes lives long into the future. Will you partner with us?

### I WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT!

- \$500 - Help feed two families
- \$250 - Help feed one family
- \$50 - Help feed one person
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