Water Supply Improvement
San Carlos, Honduras

Project Cost
$47,000
Funds Needed
$33,000

Chapter
Greater Lansing Professional Partners

Background
San Carlos is a small community located about 10 km southeast of Olanchito in the Department of Yoro, Honduras.

Twenty years ago, the community installed their existing water system with the help of a loan from the Catholic NGO Caritas, which has since been repaid. At that time, the community included only 23 homes. Now there are over 100 homes with an estimated total population of about 800.

The Need
The water supply improvement project in San Carlos will involve help from enthusiastic community members and will provide a new water storage tank, a protected reservoir, a reliable drinking water distribution system, and water treatment for the entire community. The current system leaks, has decreasing water pressure and is not available to all homes. The improved water quality will help diminish diarrhea, parasites, and intestinal infections common to San Carlos.

The EWB-USA Response
Partnerships
The Greater Lansing Professional Partners Chapter has partnered with Alfalit-Olanchito, a non-governmental organization (NGO) local to San Carlos, and the community of San Carlos to design and install an improved water supply system. The partnership became official on June 25, 2007 in front of an uncharacteristically well-attended community assembly as the formal agreement was signed stating that San Carlos will take responsibility for gathering materials, labor, and long-term maintenance, while EWB-USA and Alfalit-Olanchito will partner to make the project a reality. The US Peace Corps has also contributed to the project by providing volunteer assistance to Alfalit. Students and adults alike were given leave from school and work to attend this meeting indicating the community’s commitment to this project.

Assessment
An assessment trip was conducted in June 2007, and consisted of a health assessment; a geographical positioning system (GPS) survey; flow measurement; water quality testing; a survey of elevations; visual inspection of the distribution system; and discussions with officials and other residents of San Carlos.

The health assessment revealed ailments common to contaminated drinking water and elevated infant/child mortality rates. Water quality testing confirmed that the source water is not potable. Despite poor water quality, the source water is plentiful and the topography will provide for a gravity flow system.

Implementation
An implementation trip was conducted in July 2008 during which the drinking water storage tank was constructed and a pilot sand filter was installed to provide water treatment in the interim.

Design of the distribution system and treatment system are underway and a follow-up trip to install these components will happen as soon as this portion of the project is funded.

The travel team is looking forward to another opportunity to build relations amongst the partners and provide important water supply improvements.

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