

NEXUS

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Ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference



MOVEMENT OF RURAL WORKERS AND FISHERWOMEN OF ALAGOAS (MMTRP-AL), BRAZIL DARE TO DREAM - DARE TO VOICE THE DREAM

These are the MMTRP-AL women learning about and building board tankers (special cisterns) to store water. With enthusiasm and joy, these women are engaging in the first stage of "Women and Young People Building Water in the Alagoan Hinterland."

Drought is affecting the entire state of Alagoas, especially the low-income populations that survive from family farming and fishing. Alagoas is a state in the northeast of Brazil touched profoundly by the compassion of Alphonse Gerwing, a long-time director of ROHFC before he entered eternity 10 years ago. His spirit still lives in the hearts of these women, as does the continuing support of Rainbow of Hope for Children Society.

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THE DROUGHT SITUATION IN ALAGOAS AND THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

The heart of Brazil's northeast is the Sertão (big desert), vast distances of arid or semi-arid land frequented by long droughts and sometimes torrid floods. The women say that the drought affecting the entire state of Alagoas is caused by the giant plantations of eucalyptus, which are replacing sugarcane. The massive plantations, owned by elite families, do little for the people who sell their labor for little more than free. The drought, that started in 2012 and worsened in 2016, is one of the severest in the last hundred years, according to some researchers. With the withdrawal of government social programs that had minimized the effects of drought and prevented loss of human lives, the situation has been aggravated. The women watch the destruction of their achievements and their plans in anguish. The growth of the number of families again living on the streets and the return of hunger and misery is disheartening and they wonder what next right will be lost when they wake up.

BUILDING WATER IN ALAGOAN BACKLANDS PROJECT



The women and youth learned to make plates to be used on the walls of cisterns.

The major purpose of the current project is to train the women and youth to build cisterns. The objectives are to improve the quality of life through the construction of cisterns to save clean drinking water, to create and strengthen women's groups and help them enter the paid labour market, and to work with women's and youth groups to build community and provide training.

First, a workshop on gender and feminism in women's health was held on November 22 with 12 women. They discussed the attitudes of men of the various generations in rural areas. Older men are more sexist than the younger generations, where the younger ones already understand that they must divide household chores with their wives. Younger women are also more aware of the importance of sharing household chores and know more about their rights.

The second step was to build board tankers, a type of water reservoir that the people of the semi-arid region of the Brazilian northeast have developed. Its inventor was an illiterate farmer called Manoel Apolônio, of the state of Sergipe, next to Alagoas. The board tanker is a covered cylindrical form which is half-buried and allows the capture and storage of rainwater from drainage from the roofs of houses and stores water for human consumption. It has a special coating made of white lime which protects the stored water from evaporation

and from contamination. The size of the cistern varies according to the number of people in the house and the size of the roof. In this project they measure 1.5 meters on a 360° circumference. Each cistern built was a stage of learning and improvement of the participants.

Project participants were selected through dialogues held at group meetings. The women worked 8 hours a day and each tank took 9 days to build. The women participating were from the communities of Ducks, Capim Açu, Salgado cdo Lino, Red Hill and Low Rooster.

Then the process was discussed so that the women and young people could remember all the steps of the cistern building process:

1. Calculate the amount of material for construction of each tank.
2. Cut the irons for production of structures.
3. Fabricate plates and beams supports.
4. Fix the plates and make the moorings.
5. Make the plaster inside.
6. Make the floor of the cisterns with reinforced concrete.
7. Mount the covers and place the support beams.
8. Make the plaster on the outside.
9. Place the doors.
10. Paint with white lime.
11. Put in the gutters.



INTERCHANGE AND PROJECT MONITORING

The project evaluation was held on December 27, in the Salgado do Lino community, in the municipality of Mata Grande. The 25 participants discussed their experiences in the training and as cistern builders, as well as who benefited from cisterns. Frequent difficulties mentioned were: lack of experience in building; poor health on the part of the women in the course; reconciling course time with domestic activities; the lack of appreciation of their work by their communities; lack of recognition of the women's abilities; and male chauvinists of the communities wanting to interfere in the process and saying that cisterns would not be safe because they were built by women.

Other difficulties were: excessively high temperatures slowing down the work rate; modelling cement plates for tank structures; measuring bases; and the lack of water. However, after the formations and meetings on gender relations, feminism, and appreciation of women's work, many of them overcame the difficulties and proved to themselves, their communities and the macho men that they have the ability to do the work.

All those present said that the project was very good for improving their skills as builders of cisterns. They discovered that they have the ability to construct cisterns even better than some men. Those who had the cisterns built on their properties were amazed that even a little rain was enough to collect water in the cisterns that they helped to build. They felt happy that in their homes, thanks to the project, there was clean, fresh water to drink. They have gained a lot of experience and are proud of it.

The MMTRP-AL thanks Rainbow of Hope for Children Society and Alphonse Gerwing Charitable Foundation for their financial support and, above all, their moral and unpretentious support.



“The entire project that you have financed to MMTRP-AL guarantees the strengthening of women's self-organization and the growth of awareness of the women who participate in this movement. Therefore, it is always a pleasure to send the reports, taking into account the expenses of the money you send us, because we know that each donation that arrives at the Rainbow of Hope for Children and is sent to MMTRP-AL has a meaning of sharing, solidarity, and sisterhood. Even though the world is going through such a troubled time, with wars and other violence, you continue with this primordial work for the construction of a world that is fair, without inequalities, without violence, without hatred, without war, without any kind of discrimination and prejudice. Thank You!”

~ Maria José de Silva (Zezé), Project Coordinator

PREDA FOUNDATION IN THE PHILIPPINES RECEIVES AK SHALOM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

The 2017 AK Shalom Award by the working group Shalom – For Justice and Peace at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany has been awarded to Fr. Shay Cullen and the Preda Foundation in the Philippines. The prize has been awarded annually since 1982 for extraordinary commitment in the field of peace and human rights.

Fr. Shay Cullen, 73, a Columban Missionary from Ireland, has worked for justice and peace in the Philippines since 1969. The award is for the work of 54 staff, social workers, therapists, administrators and educators in defending human rights and the work for Peace.



Preda is active in the rescue and care of abused children from jails, abusers and brothels. They give the victims of abuse a safe home with: protection, education, values formation, affirmation, empowerment and healing therapy, and restoring the self-esteem of the victims of abuse and violence. It takes legal action against child abusers and campaigns for the rights of the child through main street media and the social media.

The news and writings of Shay are found on www.preda.org, and stories in ROHFC NEXUS Fall 2002 and 2004, Spring 2006, Fall 2007 and Spring 2010 on our website www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca. Rainbow of Hope has an account open for Preda and invites donations for a future project to help children who are victims of abuse in the Philippines.

REPORT FROM GHANA — ALICE AZUMI IDDI-GUBBELS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAMBE-GHANA



www.pambeghana.org

Rainbow of Hope For Children (ROHFC) agreed to provide \$6,000 Canadian dollars to support the Nutrition, Health and Sanitation project at the La'angum School in Bumboazio, in northern Ghana for one year (April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017).

FOOD AND NUTRITION

The lunch programme continues to play a key role in the lives of the students of La'angum Learning Center (LLC). The hot lunch they can count on every school day, their only meal for the day, makes a huge difference in these young students' ability to learn and enjoy school. Corn and beans cooked together in a tomato sauce with dried fish, vegetable oil and spices is a favourite and both students and teachers look forward to it on Tuesdays and Fridays.



Volunteers cooks cleaning corn to cook for 266+ people!

With less than \$10 US we are also able to provide all 266 students and their teachers a piece or two of the fruit in season. It is mango season now.



Have you been served?

Our Lunch Program Coordinator, Wuni Baani, had an accident with the Motor King and is off duty for now. The school 3-wheeler (Moto King) is used to cart food stuffs to school as well as water to serve the kitchen. We have hired a temporary person to work with the volunteer cooks to ensure the smooth running of the lunch program.



FIRST AID AND CLEANING SUPPLIES



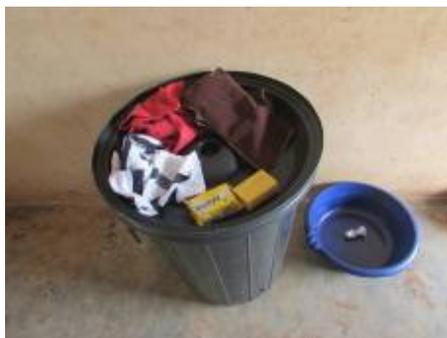
The first aid station serves as the first point of call before going to the clinic in Langbinsi or even further to Nalerigu for medical attention, if necessary. The products include over-the-counter medicines such as Ibuprofen for fever and pain relief, and penicillin tablets and ointment and other disinfectants for cuts and wounds.

Teaching Assistants James Adambila and Mary Ayaaba continue to administer the first aid program in the school. While malaria has subsided somewhat, CSM (cerebral-spinal meningitis) has become more prevalent, especially among children and young people. This flares up during the hot season (March–May) every year and can be fatal if not diagnosed early and treated. Thus, we are particularly attentive and making sure that any complaints of headache and neck pains are checked out at the clinic.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTHCARE

The impact of the funding ROHFC provides for the annual premium for cover under the NHIS (National Health Insurance) is immeasurable. It truly gives students access to basic healthcare, including hospitalisation, outpatient care, and medication.

Rainbow of Hope for Children also makes it possible to promote key hygiene and sanitation practices such as hand washing and general cleanliness. Thank you!



HEPATITIS B SCREENING AND VACCINATION

We embarked on a new health care activity in the school in April 2016: Hepatitis B screening and vaccination. This liver disease is becoming quite serious in our country. In fact we lost one of our teachers a few years back to this disease. Fortunately, the vaccine is now widely available in health facilities around the country. However, like most health insurance, the National Health Insurance (NHIS) does not cover this preventive care.

In collaboration with the Ghana Health Services in our district, PAMBE Ghana covered the cost of screening all the students and the three-dose vaccination exercise over three months. Nine of our students were found to be infected and had to undergo 3-months treatment. We have now made it part of our regular health program to screen and vaccinate all new incoming students to our school.



The support provided by ROHFC for this nutrition, health and sanitation project makes an immense contribution to the health and wellbeing of the students of the La'angum School and its community. With a hot lunch assured daily and basic health care taken care of, the children are eager to come to school every day and ready to learn. Thank you!

ECO-TOILETS IN PACHACUTEC, PERU — JOE GUBBELS

About ten years ago, many families from the area of Lake Titicaca moved to the coast of Peru in search of work and squatted on the only land that was available. Some of the families formed the community of Pachacutec, which currently consists of 88 families. Two or three families live in the same house made of bamboo reeds. Due to unemployment and low wages, these families find it very difficult to improve their living conditions.

The Municipality installed a water line on the main “street” but the supply of water is intermittent, and there are no plans to build a sewage system as their houses are built on a protected Inca Ruin. As many as two to three families share a single house and an outdoor latrine, which is unsanitary, unsafe, and poses serious health risks.



For this reason, a project was developed to assist Pachacutec community to build and use an improved system of waste disposal, which is hygienic and safe. An eco-toilet is a hygienic, waterless-composting human waste disposal system, which is being used in many South American communities that do not have a sewage system. This odourless system is very efficient, and human waste can be properly composted to make it suitable for growing crops.

The project supplied construction materials and technical advice. Community members provided unskilled labour. We conducted organizational, interim, and final meetings with participating community members to ensure that the project was successful. They worked together to solve the problem of the disposal of human waste. An underlying aspect in this project was to assist the women and girls to live in a healthy environment.



The local health clinic staff supported this project, which complimented their other health enhancement programs. Volunteer medical personnel gave orientation and demonstration sessions in the proper use and maintenance of the eco-toilets to ensure continued hygienic conditions.

This project, completed in November 2016, was quite a challenge for the organizing committee and the 88 families who are

sharing the 26 eco-toilets. The community of Pachacutec is very grateful to Rotary Grande Prairie for funding and Rainbow of Hope for Children and its local partner, Amigos de Siempre, for administering it.

Four other communities suffering from a similar situation as Pachacutec, requested eco-toilets. We received a matching grant from Alberta Community Initiatives to construct an additional 56 eco-toilets in these communities. This project will be completed by May 2017.



RAINBOW OF HOPE RECEIVES PLAQUE IN RECOGNITION FOR ITS CONTRIBUTIONS.

On December 11, 2016, the regional government of Ica, Peru, Regional Education Department, presented a plaque to **NGO Rainbow of Hope for Children** in recognition for its valuable support and contribution in the development of education in the region of Ica.



Governor Fernando Cillones & Joe Gubbels — Regional Celebration of Educational Achievements, including Choir

The governor of the region of Ica presented this plaque to Joe Gubbels to recognize the support and the contributions the Rainbow of Hope Society has given to education in the region of Ica.

The official presentation was made in the Plaza in the presence of the public and representatives of government departments, business and industry.



Presentation of Peru plaque by Joe Gubbels to ROHFC board of directors and officers. Front row: Cherry Dumalagan; Peter Van Winssen; Theresa Zyp; George Bunz; Joe Gubbels; Charles Matt; Guy Werbicki. Rear row: Clara Qualizza; Gilles Verret; Patrick Hessel. Missing are Mary Anne MacDonald and Connie Gerwing.

One of the marvellous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.

~ Jean Vanier

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
JUNE 17 AT 1:30 P.M.
BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH HALL
906 - 6 AVENUE
WAINWRIGHT, ALBERTA**

Please come and learn more about the work of Rainbow of Hope for Children.

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PROGRAM OF RAINBOW OF HOPE

1. Reducing avoidable blindness, Indonesia
2. MMTRP-AL (Rural women workers and fisherwomen in Alagoas), Brazil
3. School of family agriculture, Bahia, Brazil
4. PREDA protecting children, Philippines
5. El Sauce School organic agriculture, El Salvador
6. COMUS sustainable coffee cooperative, El Salvador
7. High school & university scholarships, El Salvador
8. Disaster reconstruction & education, Chincha Baja, Peru
9. PAMBE Ghana education, nutrition and health
10. Kinyambu Primary School, Kenya
11. Nzavoni Primary School, Kenya
12. Bilingual Bicultural College, Cunen, Guatemala
13. Ussongo Primary School water project, Tanzania
14. Ussongo Preschool
15. Disaster relief fund
16. Undesignated: where most needed

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We thank you for offering a gift to one of these projects and are pleased to acknowledge your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Kindly send your donation to:

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NEXUS: Produced and edited by Connie Gerwing and Jan Schmitz in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Rainbow of Hope's Head Office in Wainwright, Alberta, Canada. The expressed views of the authors are not necessarily the views of the NGO.