CENTER FOR PROMOTION AND CONSULTANCY IN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND TRAINING FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

PRODESSA.

PROJECT

Strengthening the economic and social dynamics of the families of Chacra Seca.

Financed by: Winds of Peace Foundation.

León, March 2019.
I. General Project Information:

- **Name of the organization:**
  
  Center For Promotion And Consultancy In Development Research And
  Training For The Agricultural Sector
  
  (PRODESSA)

- **Project title:**
  
  Strengthening the economic and social dynamics of the families of
  Chacra Seca.

- **Technical Team responsible for the implementation.**
  
  Lic. María Eliza Díaz.
  Lic. Jeronne Vladimir Herrera Tapia.
  Ing. Yimy Ramon Rojas Ocón.

- **Project implementation dates.**
  
  March 2018 to February 2019

- **Geographic location.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>Communities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>León</td>
<td>León</td>
<td>13 communities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Report supervisor:**
  
  **Alfredo Miranda Díaz,** Director, Telefax: 2772-4686,
  Email: prodessa@turbonet.com.ni

- **Dates for the period of this report:**
  
  March 2018 to February 2019

- **Date of presentation of report:**
  
  March 2019.
II. INTRODUCTION.

Location: Context in which the action took place. Objectives and target group.

The project was carried out in the village of Chacraseca, which is located east of the municipality of León, Nicaragua. It is approximately 100 Km2, divided territorially into 13 communities, which in turn are subdivided into sectors or hamlets of between 2 and 6 per community. The communities that were accompanied in the process are: Boca de Cántaro, Mojon Sur II, Mojon Sur I, El Recreo, La Bolsa, Raúl Cabeza, Las Lomas, Las Mulas, Miramar, Paraíso, Puerta de Piedra and Pedro Arauz Sur, with the active participation of 471 women and 107 farmers.

Chacra Seca is a mostly peasant territory, their principal productive activities are small scale agriculture (corn, cassava, sorghum, white beans, sesame seed), and to a lesser extent ranching. None of these activities has intensified, nevertheless, those who practice them have improved their growing and production techniques, thanks to the connections established with the groups of farmers organized by community with public and private institutions, around the needs for knowledge and improved services.

The actions implemented were directed at the improved capacity of the population in the definition and construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives which would ensure access to food and increase economic income in their homes, as well as expanding the networks with local actors that would allow them to improve the economic and social dynamics. Based on the reflection process which was accompanied in the 13 communities of the territory of Chacraseca, 74% of the women and 81% of the men were involved, actively participating in the meetings for the identification and analysis of economic alternatives, village encounters, encounters with support actors and in negotiations over the proposals that were constructed.

Likewise work was done on the implementation of the productive and non productive economic initiatives that were identified and analyzed, that would ensure increased income and access to food in their homes.
III. Analysis of fulfillment of activities planned on the calendar

Objective 1.
Strengthen the economic, social and political dynamics of the families of Chacra Seca that would allow ensuring food security for the beneficiaries, increasing family income and adapting to the effects of climate change.

1. Result 1.1: Improved capacity of the population in the definition, construction of productive and non productive economic activities that would ensure access to food and increase income in their homes and articulate with local actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned activities</th>
<th>Activities Carried out*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 meetings for identification of problems at the community level with women. A meeting for identification of problems at the community level with men.</td>
<td>33 Meetings with women for the identification of problems at the community level. A meeting of Identification of Problems at the community level with men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Village encounter of farmers to share problems identified.</td>
<td>1 Village encounter of farmers to share problems identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Meetings of women for the construction of solutions at the community level.</td>
<td>21 Meetings of women for the construction of solutions at the community level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
<td>Construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 meetings for the construction of solutions with farmers. Construction of solutions for adaptation to climate change, proposals for training and conversations, articulations with Support Institutions and Material.</td>
<td>16 meetings for the construction of solutions with farmers. Construction of solutions for adaptation to climate change, proposals for training and conversations, articulations with Support Institutions and Material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Village Encounter of Women to share the construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives done at the community level. Village consensus around proposals. Definition of intercommunity work groups.</td>
<td>1 Village Encounter of Women to share the construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives done at the community level. Village consensus around proposals. Definition of intercommunity work groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 activities of support to the work of the Negotiation Commissions.</td>
<td>19 activities of support to the work of the Negotiation Commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Encounters with Local Actors for the establishment and coordination of actions.</td>
<td>16 Encounters with Local Actors for the establishment and coordination of actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IV. Analysis of compliance by result.

**Result 1.1: Improved capacity of the population in the definition, construction of productive and non productive economic activities that would ensure access to food and increase income in their homes and articulate with local actors.**

The actions planned and executed were directed at the improvement of the capacity of the population in the definition and construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives that would ensure access to food and increase the economic income in their homes, and connect with local actors. The 13 communities which are served in the Chacra Seca territory were accompanied starting with the reflection.
process. In this process 74% of the women and 81% of the men were involved. They have participated in the meetings for the identification and analysis of economic alternatives, village encounters, encounters with support actors and in the negotiation of the proposals constructed.

This process which was accompanied has allowed the women and farmers to identify, analyze and implement other crops to generate income based on farming activities. The activities that the producers in this process have decided to carry out are: planting of marango for the sale of the seed and for beekeeping, for the production and sale of honey, and the establishment of a Community Seed bank.

The beekeeping interest group was defined in each one of the hamlets, having an initial group of 52 producers. With this group a field day was organized to get to know the experience of a beekeeper and beekeeping techniques, who shared all the requirements for the work, its profitability and the market that this product has. Later it continued with an evaluation and definition of the interest group, leaving it composed of 22 people.

For being a new activity, a theoretical-practical training process was developed, the basic management of the hive with beekeeping techniques, where 9 male producers and 4 women producers were able to finish the training process and later implemented the activity.

In the case of the alternative crop of marango, there was an approach made between the producers and the FUNDACION DIA organization, a business that is getting into this crop. This approach was made for the purpose of the producers learning more up close about the alternative of marango, the policies of the business, and the stability of the market. With this information that they shared, and the clarity about the policy of the company, an interest group was formed of 49 male and female producers, with whom the company was going to continue providing follow up for the implementation of the crop. The relationship between the foundation and the farmers will be taken up again with technical visits starting in March for each one of the producers to inspect the places where they are thinking of establishing the crop.

Likewise the producers were accompanied in the identification of the difficulties and construction of solutions for the productive and non productive activities that they are already doing. Within the crops that were accompanied and the support for resolving problems were:

Incorporation of varieties of grazing grasses that are resistant to drought, grazing seed was provided to launch the proposal and resolve the lack of feed for cattle in the dry season. Three types of grasses were tested, (Marandú, Mulato and Toledo). A total of 43 producers from 8 communities were involved in this proposal.
Recovery of the Early harvest Rama sesame seed variety: so that the farmers might recover the seed that they had lost through bad rainy seasons, a pound of seed was provided each producer, so that they might recover it and be able to have material available for the first planting season in May of 2019. A total of 52 producers were involved in this process of seed recovery.

In terms of the establishment of the Community Seed Bank, during an encounter with technicians from INTA this alternative was proposed because of the fact that in the territory there is a scarcity of varieties to reproduce which would be ideal for the short duration from the planting process to harvesting, and that would be flexible for the climate in the zone. The group that will carry out this activity is composed of 6 producers from 4 communities.

As part of the academic formation and space that is offered to students from UNAN-León so that they can enrich their knowledge based on their profession, we have had the collaboration of two practicants, one from Agroecology and another from Food Engineering. This latter one did a feasibility study with the group of women who are working on the making bread and baked goods, leaving his technical assistance to the group documented.

We also have the participation of a Social Work professional who has been directly involved in each one of the processes held during 2018.

**Result 1.2: The productive and non productive economic initiatives and actions directed at ensuring food security and constructed by the population implemented through the promotion of local actors.**

The actions planned and implemented were directed at the implementation of productive and non productive economic initiatives and actions that would ensure the availability of food on the table for families, for which group encounters have been held of solution groups at the community level, village encounters of women and producers, followup on the implementation of the productive and non productive economic initiatives, supply of biological and vegetative material, conversations with specialists, encounters with support actors and training workshop on business administration.

From the revolving fund that UMOCS manages contributions have been made so that 123 women might undertake their own farming and non farming economic initiatives. The economic initiatives that are being carried out with this financing are:

1. Pig raising 56.
2. Farming 31.
5. Sale of Tortillas 4.
The beekeeping group that finished their training were supplied with biological material (hives) and tools (Langstroth boxes, smokers, spatulas, clothing, honey extractor, sheets of beeswax, sieves) for carrying out the activity, accompaniment has been provided in the harvesting process, reinforcing the management of the apiary and accompaniment in the process of divisions.

As part of the planned activities with the beekeeping group, they have proposed continuing with the theoretical-practical reinforcement of the basic management of hives, establishing community nurseries to have flower diversification and generate better economic and environmental earnings. So far 2 nurseries have been created.

The results so far are: 13 families from 6 communities who are carrying out practices of management of this activity, divisions have been done, which has allowed the number of hives to be increased. Likewise, honey harvesting was done with ranges from 2-3 extractions from each apiary, a second stage of doing divisions is approaching, in accordance with the interests of each beekeeping family.

Another one of the initiatives implemented is the Sesame and Corn Community Seed Bank, in coordination with INTA producers were provided materials and improved seed for planting. They did a harvesting of each variety during 2018 and have sold them. For this year 2019 the groups is being accompanied in the organization of their annual activities.

Likewise 263 families established family gardens of vegetables (tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers), which were managed principally by women.

For the maintenance of the crops, the women in the drier season used potable water to irrigate the plants and thus be able to have produce. Tomatoes and peppers were the crops that more than 75% of the women were able to harvest even under adverse climate conditions.

The issue of the production of vegetables was noteworthy to a good number of families, nevertheless, the climate conditions are unfavorable factors for undertaking this initiative, which is why more specialized work is required for this type of activity as a generator of income.

Concretely, at least with all the women organized in the initiative for simple bread and baked goods, a systematic process has been carried out of preparation and support in
the construction of ovens and utensils for making the product. In terms of the market, a study was done in the village and this has demonstrated it to be a good option.

Another one of the topics that has been accompanied with the families in the territory is the adoption of fruit trees as a crop, which can be exploited economically, because of the proximity of the existing market. In this activity there are 504 families involved, who have made the purchase of the following fruit trees: Rosa mango, avocado, nancite, citrus, mamón, tamarindo, guayaba and water pear. Citrus is a crop that the 504 families have incorporated in their areas, because of the fact that it is one of the crops that has more demand in the market and that is why there are women who take responsibility for its commercialization.

V. Analysis of fulfillment of goals.

Result 1.1: Improved capacity of the population in the definition, construction of productive and non productive economic activities that would ensure access to food and increase income in their homes and articulating with local actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Fulfillment of indicator.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Number of women and men who participate in the reflection processes on</td>
<td>81% of the farmers (87 men). 74% of the women (349 women) participe actively in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the definition of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
<td>process of reflection, definition of economic initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Number of productive and non productive economic initiatives contracted by the population during the reflection process.</td>
<td>4 Economic initiatives constructed: Beekeeping and Planting of Moringa; sale of sesame seed; sale of corn seed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Number of Encounters with local actors for sharing, building and evaluating the process of the construction of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
<td>16 Encounters with local actors for the construction of the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Number of validation tests of new crops and farming technologies done by groups of women and farmers.</td>
<td>3 Validation tests of new crops done: Papaya, Early harvest Rama sesame seed and Brizantha Mulato, Marandú and Toledo grasses for grazing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Number of professionals and students from majors related to the rural area participating in conferences, professional practices and internships.</td>
<td>2 Students from UNAN-León did professional practices during 2018 improving and putting into practice their skills. 1 Professional in internship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result 1.2: The productive and non productive economic initiatives and actions directed at ensuring food security and constructed by the population implemented.
through the promotion of local actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Fulfillment of indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Number of productive and non productive economic initiatives implemented by families of Chacra Seca.</td>
<td>9 productive and non productive economic initiatives implemented by families of Chacra Seca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Number of encounters with local actors for sharing, constructing and evaluating the implementation of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
<td>19 Encounters with local actors for sharing, constructing and evaluating the implementation of productive and non productive economic initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. **Difficulties.**

Social and political context: is one of the principal problems developed in the processes, given that it paralyzed different activities to be done in the territory, like: transportation of negotiation commissions to public and private entities, availability of the population in the participation of the multiple activities carried out.

VII. **Conclusions.**

The accompaniment process has contributed to the fact that the families of the village of Chacra Seca analyze and implement new economic activities that would allow them to increase income to the home. In this period women and farmers were able to promote 9 economic activities.

A total of 123 women and 9 men were able to carry out at least one of the nine activities that were analyzed during the meetings.

New knowledge has been generated for undertaking the new farming activities, which allows the producers to strengthen their confidence in the care and management of the farming activities.

Women and farmers have been creating and strengthening the network of relationships with contacts, internal and external, from their community and with public and private support actors.

The capacity for adaption of the families in the face of the variability of the climate has been obvious, they have been incorporating early harvesting varieties (corn, beans, sesame seed, grasses and cassava), which has allowed them to ensure a
harvest. Likewise, they have incorporated fruit trees into their production units for consumption and sale of their produce.

As part of the academic formation and space that is offered the students of UNAN-León so that they might enrich their knowledge based on their profession, we have had the participation of two practitioners, one from Agroecology and another from Food Engineering, who were involved in the accompaniment processes with the target groups.

VIII. ANNEXES.

• Photos.
Theoretical-practical training process - Beekeeping.
Practice in hive management in the hives of Apolonio Calero from the community of Miramar.
Delivery of Langstroth boxes to Dora Méndez from the community of Las Lomas.
Delivery of sheets of beeswax to Lea Munguía from the community of Boca de Cántaro.
Family garden established by a woman from the community of Las Lomas with Martha Alston.
Conversation with INTA on preparation of feed for pigs and cattle based on cassava waste.
Women from different communities of Chacra Seca receiving their loans from the Revolving Fund of UMOCS to promote economic initiatives.
Women’s commission from the community Mojón Sur Nº 2 purchasing fruit trees.