

**GMC R Annual Report: Year 1 (January 15 – December 31, 2011)
CAN-UCA San Ramon-VIDA AC**

**Project in Youth Leadership and Education for Sustainable
Agriculture and Food Sovereignty**



1. Project Goals

Overall Project Vision:

To empower local youth leaders to develop school and community gardens as spaces of education and community capacity-building to promote a culture of healthy and sustainable food production, preparation, and consumption among local families.

Annual Goals, Year 1:

- Trust, team-building, and collaboration systems among project stakeholders will be established.
- Teams of youth in each partner community will be trained to co-facilitate local food projects with CAN partner organizations.
- A dynamic network of partner organizations, youth promoter teams, international food movements, and US fair trade organizations will be formed to support the capacity building of project teams. This will occur through multidirectional exchanges, internships, and short-term field courses.
- School and gardens launched and effectively functioning as spaces of community learning and practice around sustainable and local food cultures.
- School and adult curriculum developed and garden curriculum guidebooks designed.

- Families and schoolchildren will be trained and capacitated in local and sustainable production/preparation/consumption techniques.
- Teachers, local community leaders, and local model farmers will be incorporated into the project.
- Fruit tree nurseries will be established and running.
- The community network of farmers will be trained to implement sustainable food production practices on-farm.

2. Achievements and Outcomes: Year 1

A. Outcomes for Year 1

The work of the first year of the project focused primarily on five main areas: establishing the project structure and communications systems among CAN, the UCA San Ramon, and VIDA AC along with revising of initial planning; capacity-building of the youth promoters and organizational staff; completing the diagnostic studies in both locations; establishing school and family gardens and identifying needs to make them sustainable in the long term; and engaging US students in the projects on the ground.

The detailed outcomes are as follows:

Project Structure and Communications

- **Project Launch, Orientation, and Planning Session in Santa Cruz, Jan. 31-Feb. 1:** The project coordinators from VIDA AC (Clara Palma) and the UCA San Ramon (Yadira Montenegro) arrived to Santa Cruz two days early for El Intercambio (an annual meeting of CAN internship coordinators), to participate in the project launch. The goals of the two day launch were: to develop a collective vision, orient coordinators to project logistical requirements for budgets and reports, complete a six-month global project plan (see Appendix), build a trusting project management team among CAN-Santa Cruz, the UCA San Ramon and VIDA AC coordinators, and develop ongoing communications strategies. The goals of the orientation were achieved, and the project coordinators returned home after the Intercambio exchange was over in mid-February to begin follow-up work with their organizational project teams.



- **Project Basic Operational Document developed:** this document, which contains basic guidelines for roles, reporting procedures, and budget management requirements, was developed by Heather Putnam with input from partner organizations. It was shared with project coordinators during both the project launch and the CAN visits to Veracruz and San Ramon.
- **Initial CAN visits to Veracruz and San Ramon to finalize communications systems:** In March, Robbie Jaffe visited VIDA AC in Veracruz, and Heather Putnam visited UCA San

Ramon. The achievements of these visits are as follows: team-building with project coordinators and youth leaders selected as project promoters; introduction of the youth promoters to the CAN network and the project vision and timeline; prepare youth leaders for the youth course in Santa Cruz in May; finalize and sign MOUs with partner organizations; review and answer questions about first 6-month workplans and budget requirements for first disbursements to partners.

Capacity building

Capacity building work has centered primarily on the youth promoters. It began with the initial 8-day Youth Intercultural Agroecology Course in Santa Cruz in May 2011, and focused on training of youth promoters in:

- Basic agroecological principles and practices
- Food Sovereignty: Problems and Strategies
- Basic Research Processes and Skills
- Alternative food systems and markets
- Nutrition and food preparation techniques, including recipes
- Leadership skills and network building

On the ground, youth promoter training continued throughout the year:

- **At VIDA AC:**
 - Youth promoters were selected and participating in ongoing capacity-building during the first half of the project year. Multiple trainings and workshops were completed for farmers and youth in the following themes: (see appendix for list of all project activities, workshops and outcomes in both communities in Veracruz)
 - Garden planning
 - Making fertilizers
 - Double-digging
 - Direct planting and fertilizing
 - Seeding planting
 - Transplanting and crop association
 - Carbon and calorie plants
 - Migration and youth
 - Nutrition, food preparation, and recipes

In the second half of the year, youth promoters have been facilitating workshops, performing ongoing monitoring of the gardens established in each community, and have participating in performing the various activities associated with data collection and analysis for the diagnostic study.

At the UCA San Ramon:

- Youth Promoters: After being selected, the youth promoters attended three trainings introducing them to the project and their expected roles. They then received basic training during the first half of Year 1 in tree nursery management, and received materials to help them learn the basics of nursery management, garden management, and organic agriculture. A plan and training guide for monthly trainings was developed for the youth promoters for the second half of the year. The trainings for the second half of the year included:
 - Best practices in food security and sovereignty
 - Law 693, the recently enacted Nicaraguan Law on Food Security
 - An Exchange on Irrigation Systems and Water Catchment Systems

- Field Days focused on organic fertilizers and composting techniques, and organic fertilizers and insecticides.
- Follow up training on garden management

The eight youth promoters in San Ramon are not yet facilitating trainings with farmers or other youth, but are preparing for this work, which will be a major focus on Year 2 of the project.

Diagnostic studies/Monitoring & Evaluations Systems

- The diagnostic studies in San Ramon and Veracruz are near completion. The process began in the first quarter with the collaborative development of the diagnostic process.
- After two rounds of input from partner organizations and researcher liaisons, the Diagnostic Study section of our Project M&E Protocol was completed at the end of April.
- At the same time, CAN worked with the UCA San Ramon and VIDA AC to design research instruments, which include a survey, focus groups and interview questions. The instruments were based on those developed for and used in the Las SEgovias project, but were adapted to the distinct contexts of both San Ramon and Veracruz, while still maintaining that the data collected would be quality and the results comparable with other CAN food security/sovereignty studies. The result was first complete versions of research instruments with both organizations in June.
- Field-testing of the instruments took place in June. Heather Putnam participated in the training of the youth promoters, field-testing and evaluation of the survey instrument in San Ramon in June. The additional grant received from GMC R to support the diagnostic in both organizations and report writing at CAN was partially disbursed to support the unanticipated activities associated with the diagnostic. Funds will be further invested the development and implementation of the M&E plan in Year 2 of the project.
- Data collection was completed by both organizations by the end of November 2011, and analysis is in progress.
 - In San Ramon, the UCA contracted with Igor Fridman to complete data entry, preliminary analysis of the diagnostic study data. The preliminary diagnostic reports were presented to the youth promoters and to UCA San Ramon staff in two separate workshops in early December to get their feedback into the results. At the writing of this report, preliminary reports are being revised based on the feedback we received, and further interpretation of the data is being added as well to complete the analysis. At the same time, UCA and CAN staff are developing draft action plans to be presented to each of the eight cooperatives in March, where each cooperative will discuss, have input into, and approve the final action plan for their cooperative, to be implemented over the following three years.



- In Veracruz, surveys and focus groups were completed in November, and VIDA AC staff and researchers are in the process of finalizing analysis of the data. Workshops to share the results back to farmers are planned for February, and final reports and action plans are expected in March.

Establishment of Gardens and Tree Nurseries

• In Veracruz

- Demonstration gardens and tree nurseries established and functioning as spaces for training and food production: two sites were selected and established, one in each municipality of Huatusco and Ixhuatlan del Café.
 - **The Agroecological Garden in Guzmantla:** This garden in the Telesecundaria Efrén Rebolledo, was planted by 60 students between the ages of 12 and 18. The students are from Guzmantla and Matlaquiahuit. The teachers and the students are very excited about the garden project, and have set aside two hours, two days per week for garden work. The garden continues to produce and is being used for workshops.
 - **The Agroecological Garden in Tepetzingo:** The garden was established in the patio of the new SABER Agroecological Center. This center (and the garden) are a place where youth from very poor families who have left school are receiving trainings in agroecological techniques for food production.

▪ At the UCA San Ramon

- Tree nurseries: After selecting areas, clearing them, acquiring seeds from different sources, and distributing necessary materials, the tree nurseries were planted, a total of 20,000 seedling bags filled and seeded. Technicians are frequently visiting the nurseries to offer technical assistance to the 8 cooperatives managing them.

- We originally started with 20 family gardens in four cooperatives. After receiving materials and tools, as well as wire for fencing for their gardens, they prepared the ground selected for the gardens and planted seeds for seedlings to plant in the gardens. The first garden harvests began in July and continued until the end of the season and the beginning of the coffee harvest in November. During the year, one woman left the garden project due to a threat of violence from her husband if she continued to participate; this was a tragedy, and the lesson learned was to involve the whole family in the project, not just the women. At the same time, the youth in the Ramon Garcia cooperative took the initiative to start their own gardens, even though that cooperative was not originally included in the cooperatives receiving assistance or training in gardens. The result is that currently there are 22 functioning family vegetable gardens, and new ground has been



cleared for the next planting. The youth have been involved in distributing seeds to the families in their respective cooperatives and in assisting families to clear ground. At the current moment garden activity is low since the coffee harvest has the priority.

Student engagement in Projects

- A CSUMB Fieldcourse in participated in the project in San Ramon for two weeks in June 2011. The 19 students spent the first week learning about the UCA San Ramon, coffee and agriculture, and the issues around food security and sovereignty in the region and at the community level. During the second week of the course, the students worked alongside farmers planting fruit trees on farms and transplanting vegetable seedlings in various family gardens. Also during the summer of 2011, four interns from the University of Santa Clara and UCSC participated in the UCA's work and had some involvement with the youth promoters working in the food sovereignty project.
- Two interns from UCSC (Moti Philips and Samantha Shattuck) participated in the project in Veracruz during the 10-week Fall Quarter. Their involvement centered mainly around a mini-study on experiences with migration among families in the two communities, using a workshop as well as interviews to gain a larger view of the reasons people migrate away from their communities, and other dynamics around outmigration in the region.

Other highlights:

- **Water catchment systems at the UCA San Ramon:** To address the major challenge of access to water among project beneficiary families, GMCR funded a small grant to pay for water catchment and irrigation systems for 20 families. The UCA has moved forward with implementing this project by coordinating an exchange on November 22-24 with another community involving both promoters and farmers, focused on alternative water catchment and irrigation systems. The UCA is currently completing at the writing of this report an inventory of each family's needs in terms of water access and irrigation, and will be installing the individualized systems and performing training with the families after the completion of the coffee harvest in February 2012.
- **Food Security Exchange and Forum at the UCA San Ramon:** The UCA San Ramon and CAN hosted the exchange of GMCR food security projects in August 2011. The experience was especially beneficial to the UCA project manager and staff technicians, as it increased their awareness of possible strategies and techniques that can be implemented in their own project, and was thus immensely important to the ongoing capacity-building of the UCA project team itself.

3. Challenges

- The biggest challenge this year has been the different necessities and experience levels between the UCA San Ramon and VIDA AC. For instance, VIDA AC staff have extensive experience performing diagnostic studies and analyzing the data, while the UCA San Ramon has customarily contracted the performing of diagnostic studies in the past, and so lacks the direct knowledge of research processes. This means that CAN staff has been much more closely with the UCA San Ramon than with VIDA throughout the entire process of the diagnostic study (this is evidenced by four CAN staff visits to the UCA, and only one visit to VIDA AC). However, it also means that the UCA as an organization has gained immense skills to perform its own monitoring and

evaluation of the project after the diagnostic process is completed, skills that can also be applied to its other programs and projects.

4. Next Steps

The primary next steps for the global project are:

- Dissemination workshops with 8 coops at the UCA San Ramon, and with the two communities in Veracruz.
- Finalization of cooperative- and community-level action plans
- Development of work plans for next year that will focus on educational campaigns around nutrition and local food cultures, farmer and family trainings on agroecological practices, soil and water conservation, seed saving and banking, food preservation and preparation, and more.
- Preparation of gardens for next planting season
- At the UCA San Ramon, an exchange of promoters with the Food Security in Las Segovias project in February
- Reconstruction of first year of the project in March to evaluate methodologies and share them with other projects
- Elaboration of collaborative funding needs/plans for long term of 3-5 years.
- Development of long-term monitoring plan based on GMCR M&E Guidelines.
- Planning of student delegations to UCA San Ramon in June, and to Veracruz in December 2012.
- Preparation for multi-project Youth Exchange on Food Sovereignty planned for June 2012 in Esteli, Nicaragua.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Tables of All Project Activities and Participants in Veracruz, Mexico (August-December)

ACTIVIDADES REALIZADAS EN LOS HUERTOS FAMILIARES Y CON L@S PARTICIPANTES EN TEPEZINGO, HUATUSCO, VERACRUZ

ACTIVIDAD	FECHAS	RESPONSABLE	PARTICIPANTES
Taller de preparación de biofertilizante : abono orgánico por fermentación anaeróbica	12 de agosto	Carlos Guadarrama, Teresa Jácome, Jesús Jácome	Trece jóvenes con inicio de hortalizas en el proyecto SOBAL
Monitoreo de almácigos y prácticas culturales en el manejo de los huertos	Agosto-octubre	Teresa y Jesús Jácome	Trece jóvenes con inicio de hortalizas en el proyecto SOBAL
Establecimiento huerto, invernadero, captación de agua y aboneras en el centro de capacitación SABER*	Septiembre y Octubre	Laura Trujillo	Jesús Jácome, Octavio Avendaño, Pascual Jácome
Siembra de azucenas (Lilium) en el centro de capacitación SABER con cultivos biofumigantes y biofertilizantes	6 de agosto	Carlos Guadarrama	Jesús Jácome y Octavio Avendaño
Establecimiento del vivero agroforestal con: especies de sombra nativa, maderables, frutales, variedades de café adaptadas, palma camedor	15-30 septiembre	Laura Trujillo	Marcos Jácome, Jesús Jácome, Guadalupe Avendaño, Lucía Chacón

OBSERVACIONES:

* Este huerto será el centro de capacitación y experimentación de los cultivos y técnicas propuestas en la comunidad de Tepezingo y alrededores y está diseñado para cultivar de manera agroecológica las hortalizas comerciales, las hortalizas nativas, flores, aromáticas, y para el rescate de cultivos tradicionales como las razas y variedades locales de frijol, maíz, yuca, entre otros.

ACTIVIDADES	FECHAS	RESPONSABLE	PARTICIPANTES
Trasplante de árboles, embolsado y alineamiento de especies en el vivero agroforestal.	15-30 de noviembre	Laura Trujillo	Marcos Jácome , Guadalupe Avendaño, Lucía Chacón
Aplicación de encuestas a las familias participantes	agosto y septiembre	Laura Trujillo	Teresa Jácome, Jesús Jácome, Araceli Solábac
Desarrollar los 3 grupos focales: (Mujeres, hombres y jóvenes)	septiembre octubre	Laura Trujillo	Teresa Jácome, Jesús Jácome, Araceli Solábac, Luz María Avendaño
Desarrollar las metodologías de campo diagnóstico soberanía.	septiembre	Laura Trujillo, Carlos Guadarrama	Teresa Jácome, Jesús Jácome, Araceli Solábac
Análisis de datos sobre el diagnóstico de soberanía alimentaria en la comunidad	15-30 noviembre	Laura Trujillo, Carlos Guadarrama	Jesús Jácome, Teresa Jácome, Araceli Solábac
Intercambio de experiencias visita de Daniel Hermstad, reunión, planeación y recorrido huertos de SOBAL	22 de Octubre	Laura Trujillo, Carlos Guadarrama	VIDA A.C., Moti y Sam. cuatro jóvenes participantes en SOBAL
Intercambio de experiencias visita promotoras indígenas del sur de Veracruz**	21-23 de noviembre	Carlos Guadarrama	Cuatro jóvenes huertos de SOBAL
Siembra de invierno y establecimiento riego por goteo en SABER	15-30 Noviembre	Carlos Guadarrama y Laura Trujillo	Pascual Jácome, Octavio Avendaño

** Estas cuatro promotoras de la ONG Decotux A.C., trabajan en comunidades indígenas nahuatl y popoluca del sur de Veracruz con un proyecto de soberanía alimentaria similar al que desarrollamos con CAN-VIDA.

ACTIVIDADES REALIZADAS CON LOS JOVENES Y FAMILIAS PARTICIPANTES EN LA COMUNIDAD DE GUZMANTLA, IXHUATLAN DEL CAFÉ, VER.

ACTIVIDAD	FECHAS	RESPONSABLE	PARTICIPANTES
Monitoreo y Seguimiento a Huertos	Agosto- Noviembre	Carlos Illescas	Juan Jiménez Claudia Illescas
Desarrollo de las cartas descriptivas para los talleres con grupos focales	Agosto	Clara Palma Martínez	Carlos Illescas Claudia Nallely
Ejecución de 3 talleres con los grupos focales para adentrar a las familias en el estudio de diagnóstico a realizar: (Mujeres, hombres y jóvenes)	Agosto- Septiembre	Clara Palma Martínez	15 familias participantes en el proyecto de Sobal, Mujeres y hombres de la comunidad de Guzmantla, pertenecientes a los grupos organizados de VIDA A.C.
Siembra de Malanga en huertos Familiares	Septiembre	Carlos Illescas	Juan Jiménez Claudia Illescas
Colecta de semillas para realizar vivero	Septiembre Noviembre	Carlos Illescas	Jóvenes y familias participantes en el proyecto

Taller de migración con grupo focal de jóvenes y migrantes en la comunidad de Guzmantla	Septiembre	Samantha Shattuck	20 personas que habían migrado y familiares, Clara Palma Martínez, Ernesto Illescas Marín, Moti Phillips.
Ejecución de 8 talleres de cocina, como parte del diagnóstico: 1. Se llevaron a cabo 4 talleres con recetas de lo que las personas de la comunidad comían antes, y por que dejaron de comerlo 2. Se llevaron a cabo 4 talleres con recetas nuevas y recetas actuales.	Agosto - Noviembre	Clara Palma Martínez. Gabriela Illescas	15-20 mujeres de la comunidad de Guzmantla.
Intercambio de experiencias visita de Daniel Harmsdat, con Familias participantes en el proyecto y directivas de los grupos de mujeres de la Loc. De Guzmantla. Recorrido por los diferentes proyectos que acompaña VIDA A.C.	Octubre	Clara Palma Martínez	Equipo VIDA, Ixhuatlan. Asociados de vida
Sistematización de talleres con grupos focales.	Noviembre	Clara Palma Martínez	Clara Palma Martínez Gabriela Illescas Palma. Claudia Nallely
Sistematización de recetas y elaboración de recetario	Noviembre	Gabriela Illescas	Clara Palma Martínez Claudia Nallely Gabriela Illescas Palma.
Aplicación de encuestas a las familias participantes en el proyecto de la comunidad de Guzmantla	Septiembre – Octubre	Clara Palma Martínez	Carlos Illescas, Juan Jiménez Cruz, Lucía, Gabriela Illescas, Cinthia Quiroz Ernesto Illescas
Desarrollo de una base de datos y sistematización para manejo de información	Noviembre	Claudia Nallely Illescas	Claudia Nallely Illescas
Análisis de datos	Noviembre	Clara Palma Martínez	Carlos Illescas, Juan Jiménez Cruz, Lucía, Gabriela Illescas, Cinthia Quiroz Claudia Nallely Ernesto Illescas Palma

Appendix 2: Summary of Activities Completed in San Ramon, Nicaragua

Continuamos en el proceso del proyecto con la participación de las 8 cooperativas, de estas 5 están con huertos, como es el caso de la cooperativa Ramón García que ha iniciado.

- Amigos de Bonn, con Huertos y viveros con la participación de 4 familias
- Silvio Mayorga; con los componentes de huertos y viveros con 5 familias
- Sixto Sánchez, con los componentes de huertos y viveros con 4 familias
- Sofio Sánchez, con huertos, viveros y participan 5 familias.

- Ramón García con huertos y el componente de viveros con 4 familias
- Danilo González con el componente de viveros
- Denis Gutiérrez con el componente de viveros
- Simón Bolívar con el componente de viveros

22 familias cuentan con sus huertos, en este periodo se han obtenido la cosecha de las distintas hortalizas establecidas en las parcelas, entre zanahorias, cebollas, chiltomas, ayotes, pepinos entre otras.

Se realizó el establecimiento nuevamente de nuevas áreas de hortalizas, actualmente en proceso de crecimiento, se realizó la entrega de semillas a promotoras/es quienes han garantizado la entrega a las familias beneficiarias a la vez han brindado el seguimiento continuo a las áreas de los huertos y las coordinaciones con técnicos de la UCA.

Cabe mencionar el buen trabajo desempeñado por promotoras/es en las cooperativas han brindado la coordinación de los eventos de los huertos y los viveros, así como el seguimiento a las áreas con las familias beneficiarias.

DIFICULTADES:

- En lo que respecta a los huertos, se presentaron problemas de hongos dados a la afectación de las lluvias, lo que podemos decir que obtuvimos una cosecha de un 70 % de las áreas.
- vimos en algunas cooperativas que las familias no querían consumir algunas hortalizas de los huertos en especial la Zanahoria, no les gustó, en este caso contamos con dos familias que no la quisieron consumir la regalaron y otra parte la vendieron.

VIVEROS:

- Se ha establecido 14,933 de las plantas frutales, forestales y energéticas en las 8 cooperativas que habían quedado en viveros en septiembre., las áreas establecidas se ha garantizado el seguimiento por parte de los técnicos y de promotoras y promotores del proyecto, el estado de las plantaciones se encuentra en buen estado fisiológicos.
- Se realizó como práctica la poda a las plantas frutales injertadas, separando el patrón del injerto.

CAPACITACIONES:

Se realizó día de campo en una de las cooperativas beneficiarias del proyecto, con la participación de las 8 cooperativas con **26 personas** entre promotoras/es, mujeres beneficiarias de los huertos y de los viveros, donde conocieron como prepara las aboneras orgánicas, bio fertilizantes, e insecticidas naturales.

Se efectuó intercambio de experiencia en Carazo – Nandaime donde conocimos la experiencia de trabajo de la Empresa IDEAL de sistemas de riego alternativos para trabajar con los huertos, , participaron beneficiarios de las 8 cooperativas un total de 16 personas.

Fue interesante haber conocido esta experiencia, con esta empresa se está realizando el diagnóstico en cada una de las áreas donde se va a establecer los sistemas de riego en 5 cooperativas, las lecciones aprendidas del evento es que el grupo beneficiario consideraron los sistemas de fácil uso y no complicada esta tecnología.

La empresa asume el compromiso de acompañarnos con días de campo, para mostrar la tecnología al resto de las familias beneficiarias que no participaron en el intercambio y a la vez efectuar el montaje en cada una de las áreas.

Aprendizajes de los/as Promotoras/es;

- han aprendido a realizar trabajos en equipo
- como experiencia elaborar abonos orgánicos, insecticidas orgánicos, biofertilizantes
- conocer sobre ley 693 sobre seguridad y soberanía alimentaria y nutricional
- conocer sobre sistemas de riego
- realizar podas en plantas injertad