

SAFE-World Project/Initiative Summary

Country: Honduras

Project/Initiative Title: World Neighbors Guinope/ Cantarranas Programmes

Nos. farmers: 3,000

Hectares: 6,000

Agro-Ecological Zone: III

Improvement types

1x	2	3x	4	5x	6x	7	8	9x
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A. Key Impacts

A1 - Productivity

	Before/Without	After/With	% change
Maize	800 kg/ha	2400 kg/ha	200

D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative

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E. Project Narrative

World Neighbors in Guinope and Cantarranas, Honduras

The Guinope (1981-89) and Cantarranas (1987-1991) Integrated Development Programmes were collaborative efforts between World Neighbors, the Ministry of Natural Resources, ACORDE (a Honduran NGO), and the Catholic Relief Services (for Cantarranas only). Both programmes focused on soil conservation in the areas where maize yields were very low (400 kg/ha in Guinope, and 800 kg/ha in Cantarranas), and where shifting cultivation, malnutrition, and outmigration prevailed. Both illustrate the importance of developing resource-conserving practices in partnership with local people. All the achievements were because farmers themselves were convinced that the changes were in their own best interests.

There were several common factors in the success of these two programmes. All forms of paternalism were avoided, including giving things away, subsidising farmer activities or inputs, or doing anything for local people. They both started slowly and on a small scale, so that local people could meaningfully participate in planning and implementation. They used a limited technology, mainly green manures together with some physical soil conservation measures. These technologies were appropriate to the local area, and were finely-tuned through experimentation by and with farmers. Extension and training was done largely by villager farmers who had already experienced success with the technologies on their own farms. This meant that a maximum number of villagers could be reached.

In Guinope, 1500 farmers in 41 vilages tripled yields of maize (some have increased by 7-8 fold) after adopting the new technologies. Land fertility has increased with the increased use

of chicken manures (700 truckloads are imported per year), green manures, contour grass barriers, rock walls and drainage ditches. Farmers have also diversified crop production: once maize and beans production exceeded family needs, they began to reduce area planted to these crops and to plant others, such as coffee, oranges, and vegetable. 60 local villagers are now agricultural extensionists, and 50 villages have requested training as a result of hearing of these impacts. The landless and near-landless have benefitted with the increase in labour wages from \$2 to \$3 per day in the project area. Outmigration has been replaced by in-migration, with many people moving back from the urban slums of Tegucigalpa to occupy houses and farms they had previously abandoned, so increasing the population of Guinope. The main difficulties were in marketing of new cash crops, as structures did not exist for vegetable storage and transport to urban areas.

In Cantarranas, the adoption of velvetbean (*Mucuna pruriens*), which can fix up to 150 kg N/ha as well as produce 35 tonnes of organic matter per year, has tripled maize yields to 2500 kg/ha. Labour requirements for weeding have been cut by 75% and, where a small amount of herbicides used, eliminated entirely. The focus on village extensionists was not only more efficient and less costly than using professional extensionists, it also helped to build local capacity and provide crucial leadership experience.

Sources: Bunch, 1987, 1990, Bunch and Lopez, 1994