

Dear WSHEA,

Thank you so much for the money raised last year during your convention. Please see the two final reports where we have distributed your money. These projects both were a bit shy of their grants and the money received from WSHEA allowed us to complete the projects.



We just completed a water project for the community of San Miguel Ricon with 50 homes finally having water.

The San Miguel Rincón water project was a challenge to finalize. Etta Projects insists on local government involvement in all our infrastructure projects but that one piece can be the hardest. Although the actual physical work began in June of 2018 and should long have been completed within 4 months, we are just now declaring the system complete. In this project the municipality had promised to pay 40% of the project, the families agreed to 15% and Etta Projects would cover the rest plus all the education regarding maintaining their system, training a water committee and holding hygiene workshops in the community and schools. There were several occasions when the municipality could not make their commitment per our timing and so installation was put on hold until the government could follow through with its next payment.

Etta Projects firmly believes that governments and community must be engaged physically and financially to own infrastructure projects. This approach addresses several issues that relate to the sustainability of the project.

1. If the NGO/grantor covers all the project it is possible to create dependency by communities and governments who come to expect a savior NGO/grantor.
2. That also tends to overflow into maintenance and repair of the system with communities and municipalities waiting for NGOs to repair system when they break or problems arise. With a partnership between EP, the municipality, the community and the families, the expectation of savior is eliminated.
3. Our education program also clearly identifies the owners of the system and the responsible party for the system as the community with support from the municipality. The community is equipped at the end of the project to administer and care for their system and they are prepared with the resources when that system fails.
4. This engagement with the municipality helps communities begin to communicate with their own government and creates, in some cases, one of the first partnerships they have had with their government to get services to their communities. The success of this project increases the likelihood of future project success through government-community relationships.

We do not give up when it gets difficult or when the municipality fails with its share. However, as you can imagine, coordinating all this is the hardest part of installing a water system in a rural community. Patience is always in great demand as one has to be willing to wait and be persistent and diligent in pursuit of the end goal. Such has been the case with the San Miguel Rincón water project.

It took the Municipality a while to do the excavation to lay the pipes and then the excavation equipment broke and as it is the only one they have we had to wait for repair. Everything takes longer than one might think but at long last all the excavation was completed and the plumbers returned to complete the project. Additionally, the municipality has had difficulty fulfilling its part of the agreement financially which has stalled the project at times as well.

During the wait we have continued with the educational elements of the project with several community meetings. We have worked with the community to form and train a water committee who will be able to maintain the system administratively, physically and financially. We have also entered into the school for several trainings on hygiene and water conservation.

We are proud to say after a long wait this project is complete and 50 new household have access to clean water.

Here are a few stories that have been written as a part of this community's water story.

Every community where we install water systems must have 6 dedicated people who serve as the water committee. It is this committee's job to keep the water flowing in their community and to collect the fees that allow them to do so. Etta Projects' one rule is that two members of this committee be women.

We believe in the power of women and know that communities who have women as leaders are more successful. The water committee of SMR is a good example of this participation of women. This committee has two women, who are very active and always prepared to make sure their community has water. Both seek to solve problems and their work is well defined, organized and active. They want to improve themselves and continue contributing to the community. Doña Pura and Doña María are the motivators that kept the community moving toward its goal. They would always track the plan for what work needed to be done and make sure the community members were there to do their share. They are true community leaders and seek to bring progress to their community.

Next to these ladies is another community champion. Omar, a young man from the community who accepted the challenge of being the committee president. He travels many miles to go to a local university and will soon graduate in engineering. Since he started the project he has stepped up to be the assistant of our plumber Luiz. Omar likes to practice plumbing installations and feels this would serve him on his resume too. Omar worked tirelessly when our plumber was in the community. His involvement in this way has a great benefit for the project because he will also be able to help with future repairs.

This committee is strong and these trained community members will make sure their system works through good maintenance and repair.

[Full committee in training and Maria, Pura and Omar working on community layout of pipes.](#)



Every household connection comes with a water meter and there is a new tower for a larger gravity fed tank.



During the workshops at the school of San Miguel Rincón, an enthusiastic helper came forward and asked to be a part. Lorena Vaca Torres is 11 years old and she graduates from primary school this year. Next year she will keep studying at the school of Rincón de Palometilla, 8.5 miles away from her home.

For the first workshop, without waiting for the teacher to tell her, she came to Jorge, our hygiene facilitator, and said she could help with anything needed. After that workshop they spoke and she said: "I used to help in a children's group in my other community; we created stories for other children about taking care of the environment and the planet". She had her favorite story. She asked if she could read one of her stories for the next workshop. So the next week Lorena shared her story about the care of the regional tree Toborocho, also called the

pregnant tree. For her, taking care of the plants and trees starting from childhood is very important. She would like to belong to a group that fights for the environment. She was delighted to help us teach the kids about caring for their water and teaching about hygiene and hand washing. Lorena is already a community leader and we suspect she has many good things to do for Bolivia.



Workshops are not just opportunities to create present leaders but also to create future leaders.