



"WE PLANT THE SEEDS THAT ONE DAY WILL GROW"

REMEMBERING ROMERO

The handmade sign of greeting on the building's wall said, "Welcome Canadian brothers." As we entered, a crowd burst into applause. There were speeches of gratitude from community leaders and from a few chosen young men and women. A large mural with the photo of the revered national hero, Archbishop Oscar Romero, looked down over the buzzing room. The energy in the room was catching. This was a SHARE funded youth skills training workshop. We watched as a chef and his assistants guided the group of 25 young men and women through a recipe making a very large batch of dough.

"We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities."

While the cookies were baking, a group of farmers who had been patiently waiting and proudly watching the community's youth, led us to their well tended market gardens nearby and showed us the results of the SHARE support to their farming cooperative. "We received a micro credit loan to improve our enterprises and some seeds and plantings for this year's crops from the SHARE project," explained one farmer.

This project in El Salvador is generously funded by SHARE's donors and the Canadian government. At last, the project has been implemented after 2 years of planning in Canada and El Salvador: meetings with SHARE's Board of Directors, Project Committee, bookkeeper and finance officer, emails back and forth and face to face planning meetings with our southern partner organizations, long hours writing the proposal and the reports, and hours spent organizing many fund raising events. All this effort has at last culminated in SHARE's first visit to monitor the project. For a long time we had imagined what the youth component would look like, and now, at every stop on our itinerary during that day of monitoring, we were shown the results. It was exciting and gratifying!

"We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are the workers, not master builders."



ABOVE A large inspirational mural of esteemed martyr for the Salvadoran poor, Oscar Romero, looks down on a baking lesson at a youth training centre. This SHARE project provides youth education, leadership and vocational training to hundreds of young adults in El Salvador and Honduras.

BELOW The SHARE project includes many young men and women in family food production. Inputs and training are funded in 95 communities.

Inequality and social exclusion are affecting the large youth population struggling for their place in the developing country of El Salvador, Central America. When youth are unable to attend school beyond primary grades due to poverty and lack of access, when society cannot invest in their youth and offer even small economic opportunities, large numbers are under challenged and unengaged in their communities. These factors have led to an alarming rise in crime through the increase in gang membership, high rates of violence and illegal youth migration. (Source: USAID website)

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LEFT Young men learn metal work making metal food grain storage silos, a common system for storing a rural family's corn crop. MIDDLE A young man with basic building skills may be hired in his community for day labour, supplementing family farm income. RIGHT Out of school youth receive certification for primary education in community literacy circles.

WHY A FOCUS ON RURAL YOUTH?

"We are traveling through the most dangerous district of our country with 2 prisons near here full of gang members," said Antonio, the project worker who was directing us to our next monitoring stop. It was unsettling to see the prison guards dressed in full military gear and we realized these outside guards were protecting the prison from an exterior threat. Our Canadian translator was riding in the open back of the truck engaging Antonio in discussion, eager to learn about the complex social conditions here. We had read about the violence in this country but that was theory and now this warning had our translator scampering out of the open back of the truck and into the cab at the next stop. Better to be safe than sorry.

In El Salvador there are 60,000 gang members aged 12 - 25 years recruited from the swollen ranks of unemployed and undereducated youth. They are the children of war who lost parents, their homes and stability in the conflict and in the years of precarious recovery. In their life of crime they might earn \$5 to deliver a stolen cell phone to those higher up the gang chain, \$100 to transport a bag of drugs or \$25 to extort from a fellow citizen. However, the majority of Salvadoran youth struggle to find honorable work, laboring in the large informal economy risking violence and extortion from the gangs. They aspire to work in a low paid industrial job or in the 'sweatshop' apparel industry earning approximately \$160 a month. The lives of the families of farm workers, who earn sporadic day labour at less than \$5/day following seasonal agriculture work, picking coffee and cutting sugar cane, are even more challenging.

(Source: A. McAnarney, Truthout.org, Oct. 2013)

SHARE's project is helping to keep youth working meaningfully in their rural communities by providing hope and opportunity.

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SHARE's project is addressing these pressing needs by providing lessons for literacy certification up to grade 6, basic training in vocational skills such as baking, carpentry, masonry, metal work, sewing, jewelry making and many opportunities to engage in agriculture. Introductory skills in a trade may get a young man a few days work in his community to supplement farm income. Having some basic training may motivate a young woman to make and sell baked goods earning money for school supplies, children's school fees, medicine or a bag of beans in the "hungry months" between harvests. The youth in the SHARE project are developing a skill that may provide some family income and a reason to stay and contribute in their rural communities.

"We lay foundations that will need further development".

The project also strengthens the future for food security in 95 rural communities. Young farmers are receiving agricultural training and inputs to set up small farm enterprises. A select group will benefit from additional training to become agriculture experts and to train other farmers in their communities. This "farmer to farmer" approach is critical in the absence of government agriculture training and resources.

"We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise."

The SHARE project also includes leadership training for young adults from rural communities. Motivating young adults and giving them the skills to be leaders today and into the future

and to advocate for their communities are keys to progress in these needy rural communities and land settlements.

SHARE's project with its focus on young adults is keeping hundreds of youth hopeful and actively involved in working to improve the lives of their families and rural communities.

Thank you to all of our donors for helping to make this exciting work happen! Our efforts and funds are helping to fulfill Romero's vision for his beloved Salvadoran people.

"We are prophets of a future not our own."

The words quoted in this article have been attributed for years to Oscar Romero but are now thought to be from "Step Back and Take the Long View" usually called The Romero Poem or Prayer written by Bishop Ken Untener.

"Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.

Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all.

Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty."

– Words of Oscar Romero, martyr for his country's poor.

ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO, CHAMPION OF HIS PEOPLE, WAS ASSASSINATED IN 1980 WHILE PREACHING AGAINST POVERTY, SOCIAL INJUSTICE, ASSASSINATIONS AND TORTURE IN EL SALVADOR. "IF THEY KILL ME I WILL RISE AGAIN IN THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR. MAY MY DEATH BE FOR THE FREEDOM OF MY PEOPLE."

A SUMMARY OF SHARE'S WORK IN 2013



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1. Fifth generation of “pass on” goats, **Brazil**
2. Inputs for community gardens, **Guatemala**
3. Micro credit loan funds, **Brazil and El Salvador**
4. Improved pig shelters, **Guatemala**
5. Supplies for women’s kitchen gardens, **Guatemala**
6. Community corn grinders for remote communities, **Guatemala**
7. Eco stoves in communities, **El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala**
8. A bull for the dairy herd, **Guatemala**
9. Household water filters in villages, **Guatemala**
10. **Belize** high school scholarships for 45 students
11. Funds for Organic Growers’ Conference, **Brazil**
12. Hand dug well, seeds, trees for jatropha oil production, stove building, **Haiti**
13. Many poultry projects in several countries
14. Irrigation projects (pumps, hoses, wells) in **Bolivia, Honduras, El Salvador, Cambodia**



4 REASONS TO SUPPORT S.H.A.R.E.'S WORK

1

SHARE is a volunteer organization. Donations are spent on worthy projects in needy communities.

2

Your donation can be applied to SHARE's large project which receives 3:1 matched funding.

3

Using SHARE's "pass on principle" your donation will be multiplied many times.

4

Each project is vetted by SHARE's Project Managers and the Project Committee before approval by the Board of Directors.

S.H.A.R.E. HAS MANY WORTHY PROJECTS WAITING FOR FUNDING

- tools • seeds • fruit trees • poultry
- cows • goats • pigs • irrigation
- training in agriculture
- stoves • household water filters
- adult literacy lessons
- vocational training for youth
- leadership training for youth
- high school tuition fees
- micro credit for rural enterprises



Provide hope and opportunity with a meaningful gift. Gift cards are sent to the recipient if you request and provide information.

Help SHARE plan for the future; consider a legacy gift or regular givings to SHARE.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

We thank all of SHARE's volunteers, promoters and donors, whether individuals, groups or foundations. If you attended our fund raising events or donated to these events, thank you! We also thank: Ellen and Ray Thomson and family for hosting the Annual Corn Roast for Scholarship funds, Copetown Lions Club and their SHARE dinner committee, Mark Cullen for continuing his matched funding in the Mark Cullen Challenge, Justus Choir from Streetsville for their concert, Retired

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Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

Affaires étrangères, Commerce et Développement Canada

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DONATE

Online at: www.shareagfoundation.org

Or by mail: **S.H.A.R.E. Agriculture Foundation, 14110 Kennedy Road, Caledon ON, L7C 2G3**

COMING EVENTS

MAR. 22, 2014 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at 1:15pm, Mayfield United Church, 12496 Dixie Road, Caledon, ON (North of Mayfield Rd.)

SHARE News is published twice a year.

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PROJECT OFFICERS Bob Thomas, Les Frayne

PATRON Mark Cullen

WRITERS/EDITORS: Marg Frayne (519-843-3274 margfrayne@hotmail.com), Laurie Weber, Trish Murphy

DESIGNER: Jay Dart

TELEPHONE: 905-838-0897

or toll free: 1-888-337-4273

FAX: 1-905-838-0794

CHARITY NUMBER:

BN: 13150 7428 RR0001



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