



## Project Profile

### Honduras

#### El Limon

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##### Population 440

All of the people living in El Limón are subsistence farmers: they produce just enough food for their own tables. The people of the community were among the 22 percent **(1)** of Honduras' rural population that did not have access to safe drinking water and among the 59 percent **(2)** that did not have latrines or toilets.

##### Old Water Source

Before their water project was complete, the people of El Limón gathered water from several local water holes which they also shared with pigs and other farm animals in the community. When we visited El Limón for the first time in 1991, we encountered several girls collecting water from one of El Limón's contaminated water holes.

##### New Water and Sanitation System

El Limón's water system consists of a concrete-capped mountain spring, a main water transmission main, water distribution piping, and individual household taps with drainage. Each family also has a latrine.

##### Project Activities

Our partner organization worked with the people of El Limón for two years on their water project. It is WaterPartners' philosophy and the philosophy of our partner organization that the water system itself is the culmination of an entire public health and community development project that unfolded over the course of this two-year period.

Before construction of the water system, the people of El Limón learned a great deal about how safe water and latrines are linked to improved public health. They also established a water committee with the authority to collect water fees necessary to maintain the water system (about \$0.25/month). One of the most important aspects is that of training local technicians who now operate and maintain the water system.

El Limón is located in a region of Honduras that has been heavily deforested. The environmental education component of El Limón's water project taught them the critical importance of the forest to the environment. This is doubly important to the people in El Limón, because maintenance of vegetation near the spring will insure that rain can soak into the soil and continue to recharge their source of drinking water for years into the future.

#### Project Completed in 1992



Before the water project - girls in El Limón collected water from this contaminated source



Men transporting cement for water project on mules. El Limón.



Community members walk along path of conduction line which is buried in concrete and rock beneath path. El Limón.

The people of El Limón provided all the labor for the project, including miles of excavation done entirely by hand—no back-hoes or other modern construction equipment were used. This work was in addition to their normal responsibilities that include farming and carrying drinking water. On most days, the workers had to walk two hours to the work site, work eight hours, and then walk another two hours to get home.

### **Impact of New Water and Sanitation System**

When WaterPartners staff visited El Limón in 1992 to celebrate the completion of their water system, the community was ecstatic about their new water system. Many of the people of El Limón, especially the women, told us how much better their lives were now that they did not have to spend hours each day fetching water from rivers and water holes. They told us their children are healthier and that they can spend more time with them.

They also said that they are now planting and caring for vegetable gardens. One woman told us that she feels she "has more hands" now that the water project is completed because of all the time she doesn't have to spend carrying water.

Raul Chicas, a leader in the community, stood and gave a moving speech, saying, "This project means more to us than just water. Before the project the community members were all going their separate ways and could not unite to solve their problems. The water project has created cohesion in El Limón that not only brought safe water but also allows us to start solving other problems as a community rather than as individuals. It has been very meaningful to me to be part of this project, and I feel united with people in other communities who are also constructing water projects."

However, some of the children did express their disappointment at having to be bathed every day instead of once every four days!

### **1999 Update**

WaterPartners staff visited El Limón again in 1999 to see how the community and the project were doing 7 years after the project was complete.

WaterPartners staff was pleased to see sufficient water flow was coming out of the taps and that the people of El Limón were still pleased with their project. In addition, we were happy to hear that all households we visited said they continue to pay their monthly user fee.

*1. United Nations Statistics Division - Honduras - Water, percentage of population with access to improved drinking water sources, rural (UNICEF) - 1990*

*2. United Nations Statistics Division - Honduras - Sanitation, percentage of population with access to improved sanitation, rural (UNICEF) - 1990*



Woman washing her son with bucket of water taken from new water system. El Limón.



Woman grinding corn on stone to make tortillas. El Limón.



Man smiling for camera and playing home-made banjo-like instrument. El Limón.



Woman washing clothes at her new pila. El Limón.