

WATER BRIGADES PROJECT FOLLOW UP: EL ENCINAL, JOYAS DEL CARBALLO

DATE OF FOLLOW UP VISIT: 6 September 2012

System Background

The full-scale, gravity-flow water system in El Encinal was finalized in June 2010, providing potable water to 46 houses, an elementary school, and a kindergarten school. A Water Council was established and trained, as well as a Basic Sanitation Committee. Due to rising security concerns in late 2011 and early 2012, Global Brigades suspended visits to the communities of Joyas del Carballo. The situation has since improved and Global Brigades reopened visits to Joyas del Carballo in September of 2012.



Community leaders show the changes made at the dam to Water Brigades staff.

Summary of Follow-Up

Water Brigades staff carried out the following activities during the follow-up visit:

- Completed a walk-through of the entire system, accompanied by the community plumber and the President of the Water Council, revising the current condition, functionality, and maintenance of the dam, conduction line, and central storage tank.
- Talked with families about water quality and quantity within their households.
- Held a meeting with the Water Council and community members whose houses are connected to the system to offer observations and technical advice, discuss community water payments, and answer any questions or concerns.

Observations

While Global Brigades visits were suspended due to security concerns, a strong tropical storm hit the mountain of Joyas del Carballo in October 2011 causing flooding and massive landslides. The El Encinal water system remained mostly intact, but the storm damaged several sections of pipe in the conduction line and the storage tank. In May 2012, FORCUENCAS, an institution funded by the European Union, donated the money to El Encinal to replace the damaged piping. An additional structure at the source was built to improve the water intake structure at the existing dam. The rest of the piping in the conduction line and all of the piping in the distribution network was unharmed. The storage tank functions well, although a small leak was found in the foundation,



Central storage and treatment tank in El Encinal still functions well but needs a protective fence and some foundational repairs.

most likely caused by the land movements from the storm. Families reported that when the system was initially repaired it was less dependable and the water often came out of the faucets dirty; the quality of the water has since improved and arrives consistently.

One of the biggest challenges facing El Encinal is the current state of the Water Council and the community organization surrounding the water project. The Water Council currently consists of only four members, with the Vice President, Fiscal and Vocal 1 no longer serving on the committee. The plumber maintains the system to the best of his ability but is currently not chlorinating due to a lack of funds. The large majority of households stopped paying the monthly water fee since the storm damaged their system and they were without their water service until the pipes were replaced. During the meeting with the Water Council and members of the general assembly, community members voiced their concerns for the current state of their system and expressed their interest and desire to work with the technical guidance of Water Brigades staff to improve their situation.

Recommendations and Response



A cement anchor stabilizes the new piping in the conduction line donated by FORCUENCAS. The former piping installed by Water Brigades was bent by the force of the storm and can be seen in the lower front of the picture partially covered by debris.

Water Brigades staff met with the Water Council and some additional members of the community and discussed all aspects of the system, including the importance of improving maintenance on the system and centrally chlorinating the water at the tank. Water Brigades staff strongly advised the community to meet and reform the Water Council to create a complete, 7-member council. It was additionally discussed that with the reformation of the Water Council, the community needs to support the new council and begin paying their monthly water fee so that they can purchase chlorine, properly maintain and administer the system, and pay the plumber for his work. It was also recommended for the Water Council to repair the tank and fence it in for added security.

Water Brigades staff will continue visiting El Encinal more regularly for follow-ups and to continue providing technical assistance to help improve the community's organization surrounding the water system and address current issues with the system. A general assembly meeting has been planned to take place in October to re-establish the Water Council with the support of Water Brigades staff.