



## Heartland International Mission

### *UCA and Community Project*

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When: April 22, 2009

In attendance:

Ricardo Flores, Mario (teacher reps) and Sarah (student rep)  
Milagro, Blanca, Cecilia, Miguel and Kathy

After introductions, Carlos spoke of the process and the projects they have in a few other communities. (You can read about those on an old email from Ricardo when we were first introduced as well as remember from our meeting in Cerna). I believe this was discussed so the Team could learn a little of their work and have confidence that they can work in the communities with success. And to demonstrate the commitment they will bring.

They also said that this was the first “official visit” signifying the beginning of our formal relationship.

Then they began to talk again about process:

They will begin with a diagnostic. The students will create this. They will study the demographics of the municipality. This will be a participatory diagnostic (between the students and the community). This diagnostic will help everyone to know what the priority for a project will be. With community involvement, the idea is to come up with a common vision between all the groups: women’s group, youth, older adults, leaders, etc.

From this diagnostic, they hope to learn:

1. What are the interests of the groups in El Tablón Centro and Cerna
2. What are the restrictions
3. What is the motivation

These are the groups they would like to talk with:

1. Leaders of the communities
2. Reps from other institutions (InterVida, ProVida, City Hall, etc.)
3. Youth groups
4. Older adult group
5. Reps from each of the committees within the community (water, women’s, health, etc)

This diagnostic process could take 3 months – to begin in May.

After the diagnostic... we commit to a theme – document it and make the commitment.

They will help define the roles of all the participants. Heartland will learn of their role as we move forward.

The UCA makes the commitment to see the process through from the “first planting of the seed” (metaphorically and potentially literally speaking) to the final fruition and sale of the goods.

The idea is that the process is lengthy (3 to 4 years on average) – but by the time they are done, the community has a level of confidence that they can carry on the work without the assistance of the UCA.

The UCA works not only on a “product” for the community – but also the social necessities. The UCA commits to ‘accompany’ the community till they are absolutely sure that the community can



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sustain the project independently. That is part of the diagnostic... to learn what the community can handle on its own. They accompany, teach and then accompany some more.

When it comes to choosing a product – they look at not just what will grow in the area, but what will also have viable selling appeal.

A concern of the Team – not really a concern – but a valid question: Using students in this process could possibly lend itself to a lack of continuity? As they graduate... they won't come back and we have to train a whole bunch of new students basically starting at square one each January? (I paraphrased that)

Ricardo assured them there is lots of continuity... it carries from one group of students to the next. The core of 'docents' (teachers) remains the same ... there are upper and lower level students who carry it over from year to year to the incoming students.

The benefit to the students – other than hands on involvement in a community - is that they get to listen to the wisdom of the people in the communities. They are learning not only the logistics of making a diagnostic and creating an economic development plan and carrying it through from "first seed to sale" ... they are hearing the voices and learning first hand the realities of the people living in their country.

Our first official visit to the community – to begin the diagnostic will be Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. There will be 5 students and 13 other teachers (if I heard that correctly... but keep in mind we were told there might be 7 in attendance today, but we just had the three).

They plan to arrive in Berlín about 8 a.m. so we can get to El Tablón Centro by about 9 a.m. Our first meetings will be with a youth group as well as a group of the community's leaders. Milagro has already made the call to set up those meetings.

We are on our way!

Faithfully yours,  
Kathy  
April 27, 2009