

# El Zapote Water Project

Final Report ~ July 14, 2009

**CoCoDA**  
609 E. 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46205

## Water for Life, Health, and Well-Being

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I write to you today with this final report on the El Zapote Water Project. After many years of struggle, hard work, and sheer determination, the community of El Zapote now enjoys one of the things most of people take for granted: running potable water at home.

In July 2005, CoCoDA also implemented a potable water distribution system in Aguacayo, in the department of Cuscatlán. Through these two projects, CoCoDA has gained an expertise in tackling complex, large-scale infrastructure challenges—and developed a model of collaboration between people and institutions in both El Salvador and the United States that will allow us to succeed with similar projects in the future.

A water project occurs at the intersection of hard work and technical, financial, social, and policy challenges. We want to thank the community of El Zapote for their dedication and cooperation, and we celebrate the invaluable contributions of this team:

- **ADES** (Association for Social Economic Development, Santa Marta)
- **REDES** (Salvadoran Foundation for Reconstruction and Development)
- **Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People**
- **Victoria Municipal Government**
- **Rotary Club International** and the following **Indiana Rotary Clubs**: Vincennes, Evansville Morning and Noon Clubs
- **Patchwork Central**, Evansville, Indiana
- **Kent Coalition for Sanctuary**, Kent, Ohio
- **San Salvador – Cuscatlán Rotary Club** from El Salvador
- **CoCoDA** (Companion Community Development Alternatives)

The El Zapote Water Project was completed on July 25, 2008. We are proud to bring potable water to the families of this community, and we look forward to working with all our partners to extend the benefits to other communities in El Salvador in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

Iván J. M. Villasbôa  
CoCoDA Acting Director

**The Need for a New System**



*Community Assemblies to Plan the Project*



*The CoCoDA–Rotary delegation posing with the San Salvador–Cuscatlan Rotary Club during its visit to El Salvador to inaugurate the El Zapote Water Project*

This project brought potable water to approximately 45 families in the community of El Zapote, in the Municipality of Victoria in the department of Cabañas.

El Salvador's long civil war forced a significant portion of its population to seek refuge in Honduras. El Zapote, like Aquacayo, is a community re-populated by refugees who returned in the late 1980s to find that their homes and working fields had been destroyed by government forces specifically targeting the civilian population. For more than 20 years—since the first group of civilians returned to what is now known as Santa Marta, Valle Nuevo, and El Zapote, on October 10, 1986—most of the residents have suffered from inadequate access to clean potable water.

Major water distribution systems were eventually constructed to benefit Santa Marta and Valle Nuevo, but these systems passed over El Zapote. These residents were forced to obtain minimal quantities of water from an antiquated, dilapidated system on a nearby hillside. This source was frequently contaminated, contributing to health problems in the region.



*Two photos of decay, disrepair, and the potential for disease: in the top photo, leaks in the captation tank and hoses attempting to recapture leaking water; in the bottom photo, a dead rat is stuck in the pipe that supplies water to the people of El Zapote.*

## CoCoDA's partners in El Zapote

CoCoDA bases its methods and objectives on principles of cooperation. We worked directly with the community of El Zapote and **ADES**, the local development organization that provided invaluable support to this effort. ADES was our eyes, ears, and hands on the ground.

**REDES**, the Salvadoran Foundation for Reconstruction and Development, was also a critical partner, providing technical expertise, performing all the surveying measurements, and producing the technical report and budget that defined the project.

The **Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People** once again, as they did with the project in Aguacayo, believed in the value of this project and in the ability of this small community to see the project through from beginning to end. The committee's faith and financial contribution was once again instrumental to complete this project.

**Patchwork Central** in Evansville Indiana and the **Kent Coalition for Sanctuary** in Kent Ohio made important contributions to the project. These organizations provided funds that underwrote expenses not covered by any of the project grants—and these funds were essential to the success of the campaign.

After receiving the first grant from the Presbyterian Church, the community, ADES and CoCoDA approached Juan Antonio Ramos Barrera, the mayor of the **Municipality of Victoria** where El Zapote is located. After several meetings, the mayor agreed to be part of this process and contributed with \$15,000 to purchase pipes and other materials not covered by the Presbyterian and Rotary Grants.

The **Rotary Clubs of Indiana**, under the leadership of Evansville Morning and Noon Clubs, with a matching grant from the **Rotary Foundation**, provided the main financial support that allowed us to proceed with this project, just as they did for Aguacayo. Having successfully completed two highly complicated potable water distribution systems in partnership with the Indiana clubs, we hope to maintain this relationship while adding the strength of additional clubs from the mid-west to future projects.

The **Rotary Club of El Salvador** was vital to bringing this project to fruition. We will continue working closely with this club to identify and bring more projects to the rural areas of the country.

These projects could not be completed without the unwavering support of each of these clubs. Across the board, their members displayed a generosity of spirit, a willingness to go the extra mile and a devotion to Rotary's core principles that make them perfect partners for CoCoDA. We are currently in the planning phase of another project that will take advantage of the solid working relationship we have developed together.

CoCoDA's **Revolving Development Fund** provided much needed financial flexibility by bridging the gap whenever expenditures outpaced the receipt of commitments and pledges from contributors.

## An expression of core values

The El Zapote Water Project exemplifies the two key components of CoCoDA's mission:

The first is "community to comunidad." CoCoDA promotes democratic economic and social development in Central America by uniting diverse peoples and organizations across nations to work together for a common goal. Central to this principle is entrusting the El Zapote itself to define the project's goals, and pairing them with organizations in their own country and in the United States to help them meet their objectives.

The second component of CoCoDA's mission is to promote awareness in the United States and to advocate for more just relations with Latin America. Through these projects, we have been proud to introduce Rotarian leaders from Indiana to the realities of life in rural El Salvador. Together, we are building friendships across barriers of wealth and poverty, culture and language, privilege and oppression.

## The project budget

The total cost was \$83,782.87, allocated as follows:

<b>Detail</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Materials	\$43,800.00	\$42,609.10
Administration: ADES	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Administration: CoCoDA	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Property	\$5,700.00	\$5,700.00
Non-Skilled Labor	\$6,600.00	\$6,600.00
Skilled Labor	\$7,000.00	\$9,000.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$6,900.00	\$4,873.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$85,000.00</b>	<b>\$83,782.87</b>

The contributions to the project were as follows:

<b>Detail</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Patchwork Central & Kent Coalition	\$4,800.00	\$3,582.87
Zapote Community	\$12,300.00	\$12,300.00
Presbyterian Church	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Victoria Municipal Government	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
ROTARY CLUBS – Indiana	\$27,900.00	\$27,900.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$85,000.00</b>	<b>\$83,782.87</b>

## In Conclusion

The success of the Aguacayo and El Zapote Water Projects have reinforced our conviction that CoCoDA is on the right path. We also recognize and accept our responsibility to bring potable water to other communities in rural areas of El Salvador. The task is daunting, but with the continued partnership of CoCoDA, Rotary and our Salvadoran friends, we will continue to offer hope, one water project and one community at a time.

To all of you who have participated and supported this effort, and on behalf of all the people of El Zapote and ADES, our partner NGO, please accept my eternal gratitude. I look forward to working with you once again, on the next project.

Sincerely,

Iván J. M. Villasbôa  
CoCoDA Acting Director



*Irma Figueroa (Rotary San Salvador), Juan Antonio Ramos Barrera (Mayor of Victoria), Iván J. M. Villasbôa (CoCoDA), Wayne Titus (Rotary Northville, Michigan), María Rosa Lainez (ADES) sitting at the inauguration table for the project*



*The Evansville Rotary Members pose in front of water tank with the Rotary and Municipality logos*



*Wayne Titus of the Northville, Michigan Rotary Club receives his certificate of appreciation from the President of the El Zapote Water Board*