



**Washington Women's Foundation  
International Grant Committee  
Final Report July, 2014 – June, 2015**

**Project Name: Empowering Local Women to be Community Health Leaders**

Warnes – District 8

**Project Summary:**

The project to train HPs arose from the requests made by the rural communities in Warnes District 8. We learned of their interest through the community and health authorities.

The community diagnostic and analysis of needs was completed identifying the four communities of La Reforma, Las Maras, Chané Rivero y El Paisaje for this project.

In July, community meetings were held in which four Promoters were elected for each community, however in the La Reforma community many interested women submitted their application and 11 were selected. It was explained that those missing workshops would be dropped, but all 11 persisted until the end of the project!



Meeting with the Paisaje community to select ACS

At the end of July the training workshops began. 12 all-day workshops were held by the end of the project year.

By November, the promoters were trained and ready to begin the use of the community medical kits. Meetings were held with the health authorities and staff to explain the mode of sale and sustainability of the kits.



Promoters with their kits during the workshop



In December, Christmas health fairs were held in each community that helped to promote the services of the HPs and the medical kits. The HPs (HPs) were also presented as contacts for the community regarding sexual and reproductive health issues. Across the four fairs, 145 adults and 250 children attended. Educational activities included information on basic first aid, the role of the HPs and their medical kits, basic hygiene and how to use an Eco-Latrine. Additionally, HPs conducted fun activities including games, plays, competitions that engaged issues related to community health.



The HPs took advantage of the vacation time at the end of the year to perform their hospital practicums and to support the clinic in different education campaigns and vaccinations. The women also began to use the medical kits to attend to patients and to perform clinical follow up in community.



In January 2015 the trainings resumed and the HPs learned different public speaking techniques and how to create education fairs about sexual and reproductive Health. As this is not a topic usually discussed in public, it was necessary to teach this separately. They also learned about women's rights and how to deal with violence. Clinical procedures that relate to emergency/first response situations were also covered. The next several months HPs were practicing, building their skills and the trust of the people.



Workshop  
on splinting a  
broken bone



HPs wearing carnival  
costumes made of recycled  
materials



Workshop on drawing  
blood

In May, HPs put on sexual health fairs with the high school students from the education district of La Reforma. They coordinated and made the activity happen and they were evaluated by Etta Projects and the health personnel for their capacity to organize and lecture on topics inside the classroom for secondary and primary school students.



This activity was an important factor in their grade and prepared them for the final theoretical and practical evaluation. This included the keeping of an activity record in preparation for the test.



Taking the theoretical exam



Demonstrating at the practical exam



Health personnel who administered the exams

The grades received by the HPs were exceptionally high and 100% received a certificate on the behalf of the Department of Health. The average score was 92%

**Workshop topics:**

WORKSHOP	SUBJECT
Workshop 1	Basic health concepts and ACS information
Workshop 2	Basic sanitation—Primary health care
Workshop 3	Injection techniques
Workshop 4	Personal hygiene and wound care
Workshop 5	First Aid and Vital Signs
Workshop 6	Caring for and prevention of illnesses in my community
Workshop 7	Use of medical equipment
Workshop 8	Communal medical kits
Workshop 9	Drowning rescue and CPR
Workshop 10	First Level Health Care Programs and the ACS
Workshop 11	Contraceptives and SSR programs
Workshop 12	Speaking techniques and methods to present SSR
Meetings 13 – 16	Practicing for the SSR fair and the final exam

In addition to the workshops, HPs also completed eight hours of hospital practicum.

**Follow-up and Monitoring:**

Etta Projects visits the communities periodically to monitor the use and maintenance of the medical kits, the community activities that the HPs are developing, patient care, and the activities of the HPs at the health center.

**Beneficiaries:**

The overall project benefited 2,500 people in the four communities.

**General Project Goal:**

**To improve the general, sexual and reproductive health in four rural communities, increasing access to health care, by educating HPs in illness prevention, treatment, emergency care, sexual and reproductive health and women's and children's rights.**

**Achievement-** This goal was 100% completed. All four communities in the district now have trained health leaders. This increased the accessibility to health services in their communities and thanks to the activities and fairs that the HPs developed, the communities have learned about the prevention of illness, women's rights, and sexual and reproductive health concepts.

**SPECIFIC GOALS**

- **Train 16 local villagers in four rural communities with the tools, skills, and understanding health leaders in their own communities.**

**Achievement-** This goal was completed. Twenty-two students passed the exam and were certified by the local health department. The four communities now have community health leaders serving, monitoring and recording the health status in their villages. Each village has a medical kit with the needed tools and supplies for basic health care.

- **Strengthen leadership skills so that the HPs can organize and motivate their communities to increase gender equality.**

**Achievement-** The HPs attended training workshops in leadership and speaking techniques to be able to present as leaders. The women demonstrated their capacity to organize and create workshops in the local high school in La Reforma and later led their own workshops in their communities. The health personnel who served as judges in the exam expressed how amazed they were by the development of the fairs and gave high grades to the HPs.



- **Promote sexual and reproductive rights in the communities, especially those of vulnerable groups like adolescents and women.**

**Achievement-** The goal was 100% completed. Communities learned about sexual and reproductive health and women's rights from the fairs and the activities done in the schools. The project was well received and the communities have asked Etta Projects to create another project to delve deeper into these issues.

### **Results:**

The results of the project were:

- The four communities now each have four (La Reforma has 11) trained HPs who have taken the final exam and received the certificate from the local health department.
- The four communities now have a functioning community medical kit and are equipped with medications and medical supplies.
- The local high school students (serving all communities) in La Reforma participated in workshops lead by the trained HPs in sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and contraceptives. Three other communities received the same workshops about sexual and reproductive health for men and women lead by the HPs for women and men at the health fairs.
- The HPs are working in coordination with the health clinic personnel and are able to refer patients and do the follow up in community on serious cases when directed by the health clinic.
- The small health rooms in Paisaje and Chané are up and running and are offering medical care through the HPs and the health personnel. The health room in Las Maras will be completed during the second year of training.

### **Impact and sustainability:**

Prior to this project, community members had to walk to La Reforma to be cared for and many times when they got there the clinic was closed. Now, each community has qualified women who can take care of patients, use the village medical kit to sell medications and work to prevent illness in coordination with the health clinic, as well as respond to emergencies. The high involvement of the health clinic increases the sustainability of this project.



When the community members attended the community fairs organized by the HPs and learned about sexual reproductive health services and women’s rights, they were surprised to learn that services and laws exist that support women’s health. The fairs also introduced resources to decrease violence against women and children. Bolivia has the highest rate of domestic violence in South America. The community interest was so great that they applied for a second project to understand these concepts on a deeper level and to organize their communities to be able to take action to decrease abuse to women and children. (Etta Projects has already started this project).

The clinic health personnel also learned how to work better with the communities and are motivated to use the assistance of the HPs to increase their coverage and utilize the skills of the HPs to do follow up and maintenance care thus improving the accessibility of the health care to the four communities.

### Personal Testimonials:

“I showed my husband that despite everything he told me: ‘that these classes weren’t worth anything etc...’ I was able to care for him when he cut his finger in half. I sutured the cut, cleaned it, and told him that ‘YES, THE CLASSES ARE WORTH IT’. Well, he had no response at the time but he has never said anything more about the worthlessness of the classes since.”



“I learned how to walk with my head held high and assert myself and to know that we have rights just like everyone else, to not fear anything or anyone. Thank you Dr. Catherine and Etta, for everything you have done to help women know their rights and motivate them to become someone with dignity.”



The \$15,000 invested in these villages has created not only a change in the health of each person but has opened doors for many women. For the first time women are realizing that they have opportunity to serve their community and realize their own dreams. Health is changing, cultural attitudes about the role of women is changing as well as the acknowledgement that violence against women is wrong and must be stopped. Change will continue to happen for generations beyond the life of this grant.