



INSIDE: From the annual banquet to monitoring in Belize – see director’s profile on page 3

www.shareagfoundation.org



PHOTOS BY MURRAY BROWNRIDGE

Top: An afternoon literacy class sponsored by SHARE. Bottom: A young girl watching the class from the sidelines.

WORKING TO HELP EL SALVADOR READ

BY LAURIE WEBER

It’s unfortunate, but “X” marks the spot where many illiterate men and women in El Salvador sign their name. Literacy training is badly needed in the small rural villages where a high percentage cannot spell anything, including their own names. And SHARE has answered the need.

SHARE has started literacy training in 20 villages in El Salvador. Classes run in the afternoon and evening, from January

until November. During the daytime classes, young children and grandparents fill the classes, while the evening classes are attended by working adults.

Extreme poverty means some children can’t afford even the minimal school tuition fees for primary school. However, they’re interested in learning, and eagerly attend the literacy training classes funded by SHARE.

(continued on page 2)

CONCERNS ARISING OVER CIDA SUPPORT

Many of SHARE's projects have been made possible by matching donations from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). However, SHARE recently learned that CIDA is revising its funding policies, and its support may be reduced or eliminated as a result of the federal organization's new plan for international assistance.

You can view the plan's contents on the CIDA website, at www.acdi-cida.gc.ca.

SHARE is concerned about the impact of CIDA's actions, and is asking its supporters to contact the federal government. For a sample letter you can send to your Member of Parliament or for general updates on the CIDA plan, please visit SHARE's website at www.shareagfoundation.org.

Communicating our successes

BY LAURIE WEBER,
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

SHARE has made some amazing progress this past year towards becoming more effective in our communication efforts. We plan to continue this trend in 2005 and beyond, through a number of new goals.

In 2004, SHARE refreshed its newsletter, website and fundraising brochure. The newsletter, as you may have noticed, has been upgraded significantly over the past year. Owen Roberts, University of Guelph Office of Research (who took part in a monitoring trip to Belize in 2003) has given us access to editorial coordination and student writers. We are trying to make the articles more focused on communicating the benefits of the work we do, rather than travelogues about the monitoring trips. The web site has been updated, and on-line donations are now accepted.

In 2004, we also held more than 10 information sessions at churches and clubs, as well as at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Ricardo Reigosa,

the project leader from Brazil, came to Ontario in September and was interviewed on Mark Cullen's weekly radio show.

In 2005 and beyond, SHARE's communications efforts will be focused on new goals, including encouraging people to start up their own projects to raise money for SHARE. Perhaps you can think of a way SHARE could be the charitable cause for your group's fundraising efforts. SHARE also plans to find organizations, other NGOs or other groups that are interested in SHARE's work in El Salvador, Brazil and Belize.

SHARE also plans to work internally, to gain a better understanding of our donor base, to then make marketing/communication decisions. SHARE's donor base was initially rural agricultural donors. However, through events such as the dinner dance, the donor base has expanded. To be more effective, we will look at trends in our donor base and then find ways to reach existing donors and potential donors more effectively. If you think you could help us spread the word about the good work that SHARE does, please contact us.

EL SALVADOR READS (continued from page 1)

Students are learning the basics of reading. Being able to read opens up the chances for local employment. It gives people the added boost of confidence to be able to interact with those outside the village. It gives hope where there was little before. It fosters equality, and equips people to help themselves.

Teachers are from the local villages. They are paid for their work, so this literacy training gives an added benefit of salary dollars flowing into the community. ANTA, SHARE's El Salvadorian not-for-profit partner on many projects, manages logistics such as hiring teachers and approving curriculum.

On a recent SHARE monitoring trip, a grandmother who attends classes spoke with us. "This is the first opportunity that I've had to learn, and I'm very grateful to SHARE for your help and the help you give to my granddaughter," she said.

Literacy training is just one component of the training SHARE

ILLITERACY IN EL SALVADOR	
Adult illiteracy rate (15 yrs and older)	21.3 %*
Children reaching grade five	67.0 %
* Note: Rural areas of El Salvador where SHARE works have significantly higher rates of illiteracy	
ILLITERACY IN CANADA	
Adult illiteracy rate (15 yrs and older)	Less than 1 %
Children reaching grade five	More than 99%
Source: United Nations Human Development Reports, El Salvador www.undp.org	

makes possible in El Salvador. SHARE also provides technical training for agricultural production, particularly organic fruit and vegetable production. More than 65 micro-credit businesses have started as a result of donations, and the training will continue. Being literate enables people to manage their micro-enterprises successfully.

Based on the success of literacy training to date, classes will be expanded to many new villages in the New Year.

"This is the first opportunity that I've had to learn, and I'm very grateful to SHARE for your help and the help you give to my granddaughter."

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE PAUL MCLELLAN

Paul McLellan is a former dairy farmer from Brant County. He has been a director on the Brant County Federation of Agriculture for a number of years. Paul has also been actively involved in other agriculture related committees and projects within his county. Paul is presently working for AgriCorp.

Q: How did you get interested in SHARE?

A: My first exposure to SHARE was at the annual banquet. I really became interested in SHARE's work, and decided shortly after to go on a monitoring trip to Belize.

Q: What do you like about SHARE's work?

A: I really like the SHARE philosophy of providing a hand up, not a hand out. I've seen first-hand the amazing difference that a little boost can make to a community.

Q: You've been on a couple monitoring trips now. Why do you keep going back?

A: Monitoring trips are very rewarding. The communities are always so excited to see project monitor Les Frayne and the people from SHARE. It's amazing to visit groups that have had projects for a number of years, and see how appreciative they are of SHARE's initial assistance.

One memorable experience was with a dairy group that was also given a couple of hand crank sewing machines and material. The following year, on arrival at the village, the whole community met us and had their sewing up on display for us to see. The men could barely get our attention to talk about the dairy project, because the women were busy proudly showing us their fine work. Everyone was genuinely appreciative of SHARE, and of director Rosemary Sedgwick's efforts to collect the machines and material.

Another project that was one of the first SHARE projects in Belize is doing very well now and they have built their herd to a point that they are selling surplus milk. You can easily see the advancement in their living conditions. It's so amazing to see how they can survive with so little and what a difference a small hand up from SHARE can make in their lives. They show so much pride in the fact that they have completed their pass-on to another group and can show what their hard work has accomplished.



Top: Paul McLellan viewing a dairy project in Belize. Bottom: Inspecting a cattle water trough. Farmers show Les Frayne, project officer, (centre left) and Rosemary Sedgwick, director (centre right) the new setup which prevents water contamination.



Interested in learning more about SHARE?

Consider joining a monitoring trip.

CONTACT PROJECT OFFICERS

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S.H.A.R.E. AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION

2005 S.H.A.R.E. EVENTS

June 4

Sharing Hands Ladies Group
ANNUAL PLANT SALE
9.30 to 12.00 noon
14409 Credit View Road, Cheltenham.

July 18

6th ANNUAL SHARE BEST BALL GOLF TOURNAMENT
9.00 am
ARISS VALLEY GOLF and COUNTRY CLUB. Call 905-702-8543, 905-838-2101, 519-824-0799

September 11

CORN ROAST for BELIZE SCHOLARSHIP FUND
3:30-8:30 pm
Harmer Farm, 2395 No 1 Side Rd., Burlington. For information call 1-905-335-3730

September

SPECIAL EVENTS TBD
Check our website or call SHARE for additional special events during Eloy Waight's visit to Canada. Eloy is SHARE's Central America Liaison.

November 5

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE
6.30 p.m.
Call 1-905-799-1135 for info.
Speranza Banquet Hall, 510A Deerhurst Dr., Brampton

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

SHARE donors need new headline here

SHARE's track record for low administration costs has always been good — extremely good, in fact. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, it did.

As charities come under increased scrutiny about how money is spent, we've sought to minimize our costs, and maximize the return to our donors. One way that we've done that is with a strong volunteer network. In fact, salaries and occupancy costs — which can be a large percentage of the expenses of any service organization — do not exist at SHARE. Until recently, our other expenses, though small, have been met from general donations. That affected the amount available for projects.

We have also strived to maximize the efficient use of your donations by investing in endowments. The interest earned from that support is then used to pay our operating costs. I'm pleased to tell you that thanks to a recent large donation, the interest earned on endowments to SHARE is now sufficient to allow us to cover all of our administration costs internally. We can now say confidently that 100 per cent of your donation goes directly to projects in Central and South America, to those who need it most.

Our work there is important. So are your donations. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
John Webster
CHAIR
SHARE Agriculture Foundation