

Centro Madre Report

Summer 2012



Since the year 2000, the non-profit community center **Centro Madre** has been working in the rural area of Barlovento with projects related to education, health, agriculture and cooperatives. At the moment the emphasis is on the development of the Integral Farm which will give sustainability to the project. During the past four months, we have received numerous visitors - students, professors and farmers. With the help of agronomists we are quickly becoming an agricultural model, the only reference project in the State of Miranda.



We have received students and professors from the Universidad Argelia Laya from Higuerote, Evergreen State University, Universidad Experimental Simon Rodriguez, and Mission Sucre (which provides free college level education to adult Venezuelans). Agriculture professors bring their classes to Centro Madre to observe how we grow a large variety of food on a small farm, using as much as possible organic methods. Some professors give importance to

having the students work when they come, so they experience growing and selling, collecting manure, preparing the soil and filling seedling bags. We distribute seeds freely to farmers and students.

Also high school and elementary school classes and a school of children with disabilities visited us.

Three students have been coming three times a week to do their thesis on neem and noni as biological products against diseases of plants. Now they have started to do their internships in Centro Madre, every day for two months.



We have now sold a total of 7,500 guava seedlings to local farmers. When they come to buy and see the large variety of fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants that we grow, many ask for technical advice. Farmers are requesting us to visit their farms and give them advice. Gradually we are making more and more connections and a network. Our hope is to create a cooperative association of farmers.

FUTURE PLANS

We have completed planning and made estimates to open a small store to sell our products and those of the neighboring communities. We are looking for funds for the construction, for setting up an official kitchen and getting the sanitation permit. We have requested the municipality to make a safe entrance from the main road entering the farm. Three civil engineers came, made the measurements and are now preparing the proposal to present to the mayor.

Another goal is to create a space that can sit several people, adults or children, for workshop activities, short movies, presentations etc.

We are looking for a microscope for the students for the investigation of plant and plant disease.

We have the feeling that we really are achieving something with respect to our agricultural projects. We never could have accomplished this without the generous donations we received through Stichting Centro Madre.

Thank you very much,

Hendrika Renkers

For more information about Hendrika's work in Barlovento please refer to her website www.centromadre.org . You can also contact our Dutch organisation: www.centromadre.nl

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