



Experience by ADES Santa Marta - Asociación de Desarrollo Económico Social

In Santa Marta, Departamento de Cabañas, El Salvador

Background:

Since 1994 the community Los Hernández was fighting for their right and access to potable water, but they never saw any progress. The population needed to walk for hours to fill their water jugs whose amounts could never satisfied their needs.

The **solution** was to create a quality drinking water supply system and community sanitation through the construction of a hydraulic infrastructure and its independent management by the community.

Experience description

Starting from the human rights perspective to the access of water, a process of active community participation was carried out to design a project supported by the entire population. Different donors were found including public entities with which a water supply and sanitation system was built. It was key to the sustainability of the project that this system was self-managed by the community. Therefore, training modules were developed, focused on the operation, maintenance, management and proper administration of community water and sanitation systems. To strengthen community organization and participation, 40 young community leaders were trained. Furthermore, the environmental aspect was not to be missed: to reforest the water recharge area, a tree nursery was established and the community made sure to protect their natural resources.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Increase in the quality of life of the population, especially of women and children
- Improvement in health, hygiene, housing and food security
- Community empowerment and self-determined management of water supply by the community



CHALLENGES

- cover the continuing costs of the electric water pump on the long term
- At the beginning the quality of the water from the sources did not meet the drinking water standards
- the community operating the water-administration autonomously



LESSONS LEARNED

- the active participation of each beneficiary throughout the process is key to success
- water projects must include an agro-ecological aspect
- To integrate valves in the pipeline construction in order to achieve the same water pressure for all consumer