

How We Serve:

Completing a water project in Honduras is a many-faceted, long-term project that requires the following steps: site identification, team preparation, trip logistics, fund-raising, travel and follow-up.

A. Site Identification

Agua Viva seeks to identify villages in need of a water system and that are open to hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Agua Viva has relationships with Hondurans who are familiar with the needs and personalities of villages in Southern Honduras. These contacts are able to identify and qualify villages according to our criteria.

Additionally, Agua Viva has partnered with Hondurans who are trained in engineering and constructing gravity-fed water systems. Identification of a village requires interviews and site surveys by our Honduran agents to determine the feasibility of the project as well as a visit by an Agua Viva representative to meet the village elders and establish an initial relationship.

B. Team Preparation

Team preparation is a vital element of a successful water project. Team members meet on a weekly basis for 12 weeks to prepare their hearts and minds for a life-changing trip. These 12 weekly meetings are filled with teaching, prayer, planning and sharing of testimonies. The topics discussed include a study focusing on God's heart for the poor, "incarnational living", cross-cultural sensitivity issues, team-building, conflict resolution, living in community as well as logistics and trip planning. Throughout the preparatory meetings, time is set aside for each member to share their "life/faith-story".

C. Trip Logistics

There are numerous logistical matters which need to be taken care of for a trip of this magnitude including obtaining passports for all members, flight arrangements, medical exams and vaccinations, obtaining equipment and supplies, and packing instructions. While Agua Viva provides direction and guidance on many of these issues, we expect team members to take responsibility for the trip planning. Agua Viva adheres to a minimalist packing philosophy. We feel that material possessions can act as a barrier between team members and Hondurans and therefore adhere to a very strict packing list.

D. Fundraising

Fundraising is an important part of each trip. These activities finance the water system, and are also integral in building community and comradery among team-members. Typically the majority of the funds have come from a letter writing campaign. Team members share their heart with family and friends by asking for their financial and prayer support. Other fundraising

events/ideas include hosting a dinner, garage sales, car washes, selling bottles of water, in-kind donations for tools and supplies, gaining sponsors for lengths of pipe, etc. These events facilitate team building experiences to build upon during the trip.

Additionally, each team member agrees to pay for their own transportation to Honduras to defray costs but more importantly demonstrate their commitment to the project. Each team takes on the responsibility of paying for project in its entirety.

E. The Trip

Generally a trip will last 7-10 days, including travel time. This allows team members to take one week of vacation to complete the trip. The teams typically travel to Tegucigalpa, Honduras and then travel to the village they will serve. The receiving community provides a place to stay, food and water for the team. This can be a great hardship for the community, but is a necessary element for partnering to occur. This becomes a great source of pride for the community as they are able to tangibly contribute to the success of the project.

Every North American team member is assigned a Honduran partner with whom they will work for the week. Each team member is encouraged to focus on developing a relationship with their partner and his family. Agua Viva recommends seizing the opportunity to visit a partner's home and staying overnight with them if the offer is extended. Tremendous insight is gained by entering into their lives in this way.

The work of the trip generally consists of digging trenches with pick axes and shovels, laying PVC water pipe, and then back-filling the trench. Construction of holding tanks or capping of water sources may also be involved. The labor is mentally and physically exhausting. Generally, a project is planned to provide water to each home in the village.

Other relationship building opportunities include interacting with the children through planned activities which can include singing, skits, crafts and a bible story or message. In addition, "town meetings" are organized to provide an opportunity to share our lives and our motivation to work within the community - our love for Jesus Christ, His love for them, and their need to know Him. We also will hear from the Hondurans and learn about life there. In return, the community is encouraged to share their experiences.

After leaving the village, the team members participate in a de-briefing session to discuss the impact of the week, and help them prepare to re-enter the North American culture.

F. Follow-up

Upon returning to North America, it is imperative that team members have opportunity to process their experience. Usually, this is provided by two to three team meetings after the trip, and a general gathering of the church where team members can share their experience with friends and supporters. Additionally, team members are encouraged to write thank you letters to their supporters as a way to share the experience with them.

Follow-up with the receiving community is absolutely essential. It is important that the completed system undergo evaluation and water quality testing. More importantly, it is imperative that the spiritual seeds that were planted and watered during the project are nurtured and continue to germinate and grow healthy.

Agua Viva's desire is that one or more team members are impacted in such a meaningful way that they participate in the community follow-up.