

Total Project Cost: \$120,000
Total Funds Needed: \$28,000

Public Health Promotion
Funds Needed: \$14,000

Water, Sanitation, Public Health Improvement in the Community of Valle Bonito, Honduras



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Background

Honduras is home to 7 million people and is considered among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere—nearly 65% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. **Water-related diseases are a leading cause of illness and a major contributor to infant mortality.** In 2001, the Pan American Health Organization estimated that while approximately 70% of the population had access to a drinking water source, 90% of this supply was intermittent and only 44% of this water was adequately disinfected.

The **Virginia Hospital Center Medical Brigade (VHCMB)**, through its Remote Village Project, has partnered with **Engineers Without Borders (EWB)** to provide potable water and sanitation to the **community of Valle Bonito**.

Village of Valle Bonito

- Home to 2,000 people, this rural agricultural community is located in the mountains approximately 2 hours outside of Comayagua in central Honduras.
- Coffee farming is the main source of income; the average household income is \$10-12 USD per week.
- Consumption of untreated water is a leading cause of disease in this community.
- Many households lack functioning latrines.
- VHCMB has trained community leaders as Community Health Workers. Their new clinic handled over 1,000 patient visits in

Community Needs

The village of Valle Bonito consists of various neighborhoods, only some of which are served by the water distribution system. Recently renovated by the VHCMB / EWB partnership, this system now provides chlorinated drinking water to those homes connected. Unfortunately, more than half of the Community remains to be served by this system. These residents siphon their water from nearby streams using garden hoses. These streams are contaminated by agricultural runoff (primarily pesticides and pulp from coffee farms), sewage (resulting from the lack of proper sanitation facilities) and natural surface water pathogens (e.g., parasites). Water-borne illness is highly prevalent in the community, resulting in diarrhea, high infant mortality rates, parasitic infections, and skin problems.

The Plan

The community seeks the optimal technical solution to their public health problems, which includes construction of a new



One of the local Community Health Workers at the orphanage

water system, to serve the balance of the community, and new sanitation facilities. These activities are complemented by the design of a community driven public health education program, promoting water use that prevents spread of water-borne disease by human activity. The VHCMB / EWB partnership is assisting Valle Bonito in achieving sustainable health improvements from these infrastructure and education goals.

Valle Bonito Community Partners

- **VHCMB**, founded in 1999, improves the health of underserved communities in Honduras through high-impact short-term mission trips and long-term capacity building programs in remote villages. The **Remote Village Project** empowers villages through Community Health Worker training, health education, and the provision of sustainable, public works improvement projects. (www.virginahospitalcenter.com)
- **EWB-DC Professional Chapter** is a group of engineering and public health professional volunteers with a mission to empower and assist communities to develop appropriate solutions to their water and sanitation needs. (www.ewb-dc.org)

Next Steps

- EWB-DC technical team, with support from Fondo Hondureño de Inversión Social, will begin construction of the new water and sanitation system in Summer 2008.
- EWB-DC public health team will begin working with newly trained Health Promoters, as well as the existing Community Health Workers, to implement the water use and hygiene education plan.
- EWB-DC public health will support a year-long volunteer in the community to facilitate the educational efforts.

Renovated hypo-chlorinator for the existing water system



To make a tax deductible contribution to this project:

*please send check or money order to EWB-DC Professional, Valle Bonito, 1800 Industrial Circle, Suite B-3, Longmont, CO 80026.
Or donate online at: <http://www.ewb-usa.org/donate.php> (Search "Water Supply Project", DC Professionals, La Libertad, Honduras).*