



Agrovivienda – Housing and Other Projects with Small Farmers in Masaya, Nicaragua

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SCHOOL PROJECT ACHIEVES FIRST RESULTS

The school project started at the beginning of this year, with funds raised by the Leicester Masaya Link Group, is now well-advanced.

The project is working with a rural school ('Nueva Zelanda') to develop a school garden, better cooking facilities and a play area. The physical work, which the children are doing themselves, is linked to their curriculum, covering topics such as the environment and agriculture. The children come from farming families, some of them already part of Adic's sustainable agriculture work.



By the time the rainy season started in May, much of the preparatory work for the garden had been done. Photos on this page show the plant nursery – when first started (below right), children holding the growing plants (above) and the school director Janet Cordoba (below left) with seedlings ready to be planted out in August. As well as fruit trees, there are forest trees and flowering plants. Children have also been encouraged to create their own nurseries at home, and several have now done so.



The school now has a larger area of land available, as the local council (having been told about the project) decided to give it some extra space. The new land has been partly cleared to form a football pitch, complete with rustic goalposts, and part now has young plantains growing that should produce fruit next year (see photos, right).



Parents helped with the site preparation, creating a dyke to retain soil and rainwater. The boundaries are being planted with trees from the nursery to create a 'living fence' (see photo bottom left).



Apart from planting, the main physical works are to build a water tank (so there is a reliable water supply), rebuild the school kitchen (hopefully to use the products of the garden) and create a play area. The water tank and the play equipment are now in use (see photo bottom right).

But the main results have been the wider effects on the school. The student's curriculum on environmental issues has been revitalised, they and the teachers are clearly finding a new motivation with the changes that are taking place in the school, and parents and the local community have become involved too. Adic has benefited by taking its sustainable agriculture work in a new direction, and strengthening its community base. Ideally, we would now like to do similar projects in more rural schools if we can get funding, and the local schools director is keen for more of her schools to benefit.



Agrovivienda is a project supported by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Leicester Masaya Link Group, to improve housing and living conditions amongst subsistence farmers in the region of Masaya, Nicaragua. For more information, visit www.cih.org/nicaragua or contact John Perry, project co-ordinator (johnperry@satelinet.net). For information on how to make a financial contribution, contact Claire Plumb at 0116 223 2272 or email (leicester@masaya.fsworld.co.uk).