

Tsotsil Families work toward food independence and economic autonomy



“We walked a lot to carry water!

All of us in our family would leave around 4:00 in the morning and we would return around 8:00 with our buckets of water. Now that we have cisterns that collect rainwater, our children can drink water whenever they want and they don’t get sick because this water is clean. We can wash our clothes and water our vegetable garden and trees.”

*María López Jiménez,
Bachén community*

Thanks to you:

Families gain access to clean water at home

20 Tsotsil families (approximately 120 people) from the communities of Bachén and Suytic **built 10 rainwater catchment systems** near their homes. Each system has the capacity to store 18,000 liters of water for families to drink, bathe, cook, wash dishes, grow vegetables and raise chickens.



Before the Project began, all the families had to spend between 3 and 4 hours a day collecting water!

They woke early at 4:00 AM to walk to mountain streams, buckets in hand. Practicing good hygiene—especially handwashing—was impossible. Families spent money on sweet soft drinks. They couldn’t grow vegetables or raise barnyard animals without a reliable and nearby water source

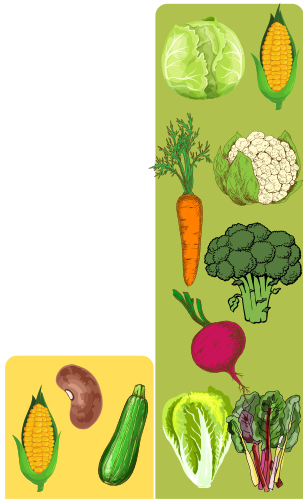
“Here in the community of Suytic we are poor people, but hardworking. Almost no one comes to see us and we don’t have any support. I want to say to the people of One Equal Heart: Thank you for the rainwater cisterns!”

*Antonio Méndez Santis,
Suytic community*

Women improve their families' nutrition

Women increased and diversified their food crops. 20 women and their families built large (100 m²) fenced chicken coops and vegetable gardens.

Annual Vegetable Harvests



Before

After

They increased their annual harvests by over 70%!

That is to say, families harvested 1,058 pounds of crops in three harvests, versus only 306 pounds before this Project began.

They grow lettuce, carrots, cabbage, broccoli, mustard greens, chard, radishes, amaranth, cauliflower, chicory, and corn, ecologically.

Before the Project began, families ate mainly what they could grow seasonally in their cornfields: corn, beans, squash, and amaranth.

Because of this Project, women now prepare nutritious food that they could not prepare before. This is an important first step to reducing malnutrition since 84% of children under 5 years old are malnourished.

"Before we wanted to eat vegetables and eggs, but we had to buy those things, and we almost never had money. Now I have built my henhouse and installed a little vegetable garden, and I am happy to be learning to cook more nutritious meals for my family."

*María López Jiménez,
Bachén community*



Download your copy of the Recipe Book with photos, prepared by Tsotsil women (in Spanish) <https://www.oneequalheart.org/newsandstories>