

***Evolution of a Potable
Water Partnership, Sierra
de Omoa, Honduras***

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Talk Organization

- Purpose, Location, Climate, etc.
- **Why Work Here?**
- Honduras Project - Students
- **Honduras Project - Reflections**
- Honduras Project – Recent and Current Events
- **The Future**

Purpose – Potable Water

- **Partner with Honduran villagers & agencies in the Sierra de Omoa region to construct and maintain simple drinking water systems**
- Villages range in size from about 100 – 350 residents and up to 50-60 or so houses
- **Basic system consists of small dam, piping, tank with chlorinator, and distribution lines to individual houses**
- Work with friends Alex del Cid Vásquez and Rolando López, and local political leaders
- **Provide training, experience for US students**



Alex del Cid Vásquez, “el jefe de agua”



Villages located in the Sierra de Omoa, a rugged mountain range ~30-40 km NW of San Pedro Sula

Climate: Warm and humid with distinct wet and dry seasons. Average annual rainfall of 250 cm (~100 inches)



Lat: 15.583 - Long: -88.200 - Alt: 700 km
TAGEO.com - NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Why Work in the Sierra de Omoa?

According to my Honduran friends:

- **Relatively few people – little political power**
- **Rugged topography, poor roads – politicians, civil servants don't often want to make the effort to visit or work there (except during election season)**
- **NGOs don't want to work there – risk of failure is too high**

So why work there?

It's a challenge!

Rugged Topography, Remote Locations



Honduras Project – Students

- From 2001-2005, I conducted field course for U of NM Master of Water Resources students in Honduras - three weeks each June. See *JCWRE* and *IMPACT* articles (URLs at end)
- Partnered with *Hondureños* Alex del Cid Vásquez, Rolando López, SANAA, and local villagers to help build gravity-flow water systems (dam, tank, piping) in 5 villages in the Sierra de Omoa.
- Introduced students to hydrophilanthropy and the struggles of many just to obtain clean drinking water.





Honduras Project – Reflections

- **From 2006 – 2011: Little activity in-country. Considered issues of sustainability, capacity building, project development, partnerships.**
- **Raised funds for ACJ Foundation**
- **Funded other organizations' projects in Honduras (Predisan, TX Water Mission)**
- **Pondered issues of increased awareness of violence in Honduras and its cities**

Honduras Project – Recent Developments

- **Alex del Cid Vásquez now city councilor, Municipio de Omoa**
- Alex has convinced mayor Prof. Ricardo Alvarado to implement a rural water supply policy (= votes)
- **He indicated to the mayor that water is an important issue for women and girls: *they collect the water (= more votes)***
- Related issues of education and sanitation: important to women and girls.



Prof. Ricardo Alvarado, Mayor of Municipio de Omoa, with Michael Campana & Rolando López

Honduras Project – Current

- **Partnering with Municipio de Omoa**
- Completed systems in Brisas del Rio Cuyamel and Los Mejias
- **Initiated system in Las Palmas**
- Have identified more villages needing potable water systems
- **Municipio has provided support: road maintenance, vehicles, running interference with officials, escorts, etc.**



Tank at Brisas del Rio Cuyamel

Tank at Los Mejias - July 2013



Community Sign

Ann
Campana
Judge
Foundation



Bienvenidos sean a la aldea de:

LOS MEJÍAS



A 800 metros SNM
Productores del mejor café del parque Nacional Cuyamel - OMOA
3 DE JULIO DEL DOS MIL TRECE

Next Up: Las Palmas



Honduras Project – Future

- **Recently started project in El Tamarindo in the Municipio de Choloma, which is providing tank**
- **Choloma is larger than Omoa (220,000 to 30,000) and wealthier**
- **Overall: political climate is uncertain – elections at end of November 2013**
- **New political party: PAC**
- **Violence – student participation?**

Readings

1) September 2010

Water Resources IMPACT

(<http://bit.ly/9ColgZ>)

2) August 2010 ***J. of Contemporary***

Water Research and Education

(<http://is.gd/hK4ge8>)

3) ‘Hydrophilanthropy’ category at:

<http://www.waterwired.org>

Thank You!

WaterWired blog:

<http://www.waterwired.org>

WaterWired Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/waterwired>

ACJF: <http://www.acjfoundation.org>

"The road to help is paved with good intentions." –

Tracy Baker