

Dear Elene, Lars Erik and other Ledarhogskolan friends,
It is time for another general update:

Selecting a student for a scholarship one should think would be an easy task, especially if the family has participated in our program for many years or a sibling or other family member has graduated.



First the students or parents have to write a simple note applying for the scholarship or a continuation of the same and will then be invited to an interview in our base in Zapote. Once invited the applicants have to arrive on the agreed hour (to see if they later on also will arrive punctually in school and other related events) and then have to pass a written little test, which basically is about simple math, reading and writing and some super simple grammar questions, always much easier than their grade level. Once that is completed the student has to answer some questions like why he/she would like to go to school, whether they consider themselves responsible enough to receive a scholarship, if their family complies with the project's hygiene requests such as drinking only filtered, chlorinated or boiled water, maintain the house and inhabitants clean, cover the food from parasites, be lice free and understanding the importance of it, brushing their teeth three times a day and so forth. They also need to understand that they have to take good care of the donated materials and comply with the rules of the school, have to do their homework and need to be in communication with our supervisors once a month during a meeting in our base (7th grade and above)where they can express problems and /or other needs.



This year we were really surprised by how many students had not prepared for the test much less had cleaned their hair of lice, especially the older students! As a result several lost the scholarship especially once they flunked the test 3-4 times. We always give them several opportunities as we obviously want them to continue to study and of course, our interest is that the student passes so that they eventually will get a good job thanks to a better education but some students just lack that drive. We tried and tried by giving them another chance but then comes the moment when enough is enough and it is time to sponsor somebody else who really wants to enter this academic road. We told the

students that once they REALLY wanted to return to the path of education they were welcome to submit another application for the following year.

This school year started with the not at all surprising absence of the teachers and instead of beginning classes the first week of January, classes finally began around the 10th of February, depending on the villages and teachers. Yet it remains unknown if the teachers will add the missing classes at the end of the school year, most likely not. Overall the teachers now appear on a regular basis although in many schools there are not enough teachers available for the amount of children attending.





Vamos Adelante luckily gives special re-enforcing classes in several areas and that has helped in those areas, especially in Ceylan, one of the highest villages up on

the volcano Fuego. During vacation we offer the children to come to learn different games, participate in simple plays, sing and practice the basics of math and reading/writing through games plus that they receive meals. You should see the children-nobody wants to go home and by the time the vacation classes are over they have rosy and healthy cheeks.



As every January and May we packed and gave out school bags to all scholarship students, which takes lots of time and preparation. The bags contain all the basic educational material the teachers always require. In addition during the whole year we buy the needed books and other materials the teachers constantly ask for. Each teacher normally asks for a different type of work book –by no means is this regulated by the director of the school, no no no-one has to follow the mood of the teachers.

According to the Ministry of Education a statement was issued in the fall of 2013 saying that the fees for the public school would cost Q 2 for Public Primary school and Q 3 for Public Basico(Junior High School). We have this

document hanging on the wall, which makes a pretty decoration but it is light years away from the truth. Of course, we called the assigned supervisors for the areas asking why the children were being charged up to Q 30 but they mumbled something about that their funds had been cut and that the schools had to basically finance themselves. So instead of moving forward the educational system took a step backwards again, nevertheless a small bag of school materials was handed to the students in April and May by the Ministry of Education.



Overall though things have become much better compared to ten years ago and



hopefully after another ten, things will flow so much better.... In the meantime we also purchased and handed out shoes to our students, a good tennis shoe and a sturdy classic school shoe which hopefully will last for several months. Shoes here are normally of low quality but we, after a long search found a good company.



Otilia, a previous VA university student and one of our long time health promoter is seeing patients with much success not only in our clinic in Zapote but is also now doing this in remote villages together with the other promoters. Dr. Rennee is still helping us but her husband suffered a severe heart attack over New Year and is still recovering slowly from the big operation and during this time she has not come out to the village, nevertheless she guides us in medical situations via the phone. We are also focusing more on dental health and thanks to the training of a hygienist two promoters can now clean teeth and prevent much damage.



Of course, we continue to accompany patients to different hospitals in case they need operations or other urgent treatment.





In April a small medical team from the US stayed with us for a few days. They love to help and enjoy being in the villages.

Clara, who worked in Santa Rosa, El Rodeo and surrounding farms retired at the end of last year as her family thought she should take it easier and that they now would take care of her. In addition Clara thought that the women affiliated with us in her areas really

learned the most essential things about health, hygiene and education. So many previous students (seen all over in "our" area) now have their own families and have a much better job compared to their parents and that is especially thanks to our scholarship-and

godchild programs. VamosAdelante has not hired another promoter for this area as much development has taken place during the last year and our help is much more needed in more remote places.



The Primary School in Santa Rosa we were running was handed over successfully to the Ministry of Education at the end of last year, as mentioned previously. As a result we do not have to pay as many salaries any longer as the government now takes care of this. I am often asked how Vamos Adelante plans to

become more self-sufficient, well, here I mentioned several examples.

Our women groups remain very strong and we have over 1400 women affiliated. Several of them have now thanks to educational training learned a small business (selling food, negotiating bananas , etc.) and are more independent financially of their husbands.



For children , young adults and women education means a future with hope and a better chance finding work.

The goal of sending the students, especially girls, to school is of course that they will be able to support themselves and their families well in the future and not only through finding a job but also/or by starting their own little businesses. We have been fairly successful with a group of women and are we are trying our best to motivate the young adults using them as an example.

We hope that you are happy with our report and on behalf of your god child, the parents -in particular the mothers- and especially our team we would like to thank you again for all your most generous support.





Hello Elene, Lars Erik and other Ledarhogskolan friends!

My name is Dominik and I am the current volunteer of Vamos Adelante! I have been working here with Nina and her wonderful team since mid-February and I will stay until the end of May. Before I start telling you about your godchildren, let me tell you a few words about myself.

I am 23 years old and graduated in the summer of 2013 from university with my bachelor degree in business management. Since it had long been my desire to spend some months traveling through the world as well as gaining some of experience in the work of a humanitarian aid organization, I decided to take a year off after my graduation and do exactly those two things. When I then first came to Guatemala in the second half of 2013, I quickly fell madly in love with this beautiful country and its amazing people. Already before I left the country to continue my travels, I knew that I would want to come back and work here. Fortunately, my stepsister Marlene has known Nina for many years and also worked for Vamos Adelante about three years ago, which made my search for a friendly and successful organization a very short one. And well, now I am here ☺

But now let me tell you more about your godchildren! I will start with **Norma Lopez** who lives in Nispero. Norma and her family are doing pretty great! Thanks to your help, Norma continues to have enough to eat and looks more and more like a girl her age. In addition, her mother and her continue living with the rest of her family in peace which makes Norma also very happy.

In school, Norma is also doing quite alright. She loves to draw and paint, which they get to do a lot in 1st grade. Her teacher is called Carolin and she is really nice and Norma likes her very much. Her best friend in school is called Cesar, but Norma says that she has many friends and gets along with everyone in her class. One thing that Norma has to improve however is her attitude towards homework and cleanliness of her school books. During my visit, I her notebooks and noticed that they were really dirty and had torn pages in them. Also, I found an old homework that still wasn't done. As such, I pointed out to her that this behavior is not adequate for a student in 1st grade and she said she will do her best to be more careful from now on.

After school, when she has helped her mother in the household and hopefully before she has actually done her homework, Norma likes to play in her room with her dolls. It still takes a lot of effort for her to talk and articulate herself properly which is probably the reason why she is content when she can play quietly on her own. However, it would be helpful for her if she also tries to engage in more conversations with her mother and other family members so that she overcomes this inhibition towards talking.

All in all though, Norma is a really sweet and friendly young girl. I enjoyed getting to know her and her family very much. Norma wants to let all of you know how thankful she is for your help and how much she likes the food box that you send her!

At this point, let me emphasize one more time how thankful all of you godchild is for your help and that this help really makes a difference in her life! Therefore, speaking on behalf of everyone here at Vamos Adelante, I too would like to say thank you for all that you are giving. We are truly grateful for your support!

Dominik and the Vamos Adelante Team

