

The Driving Force of Knowledge

by Nadia Castro, World Vision Honduras

Early morning, with a soft breeze blowing up the hillside, we catch Secundina Aquino working the soil with a hoe on the plot of land that she is currently cultivating with her savings group. Secundina and her savings group are learning new agricultural techniques to farm tomatoes and green bell peppers.

Secundina is a strong, active woman who is driven to learn new agricultural techniques. But she didn't always have this knowledge. Her husband Juan Ramón Ramirez worked as a day laborer on other farms and only earned five dollars per day during harvest season. She recalls, "It was a struggle to try to feed all of our children with only five dollars per day; it was never enough." Secundina and Juan have ten children together and remember how difficult it was when they weren't able to put food on the table. Juan only knew about traditional farming for beans, coffee and corn. His harvest was never enough to provide for their family and he could not make an income. There was not enough left over to sell, and his crop didn't meet the market's quality standards. Secundina and Juan spent many long hours under the sun with very little results. Secundina worried often. With their limited resources, it was difficult to send their children to school or have access to healthcare. But things were about to change.



Secundina's hillside plot



Secundina harvests tomatoes

Secundina learned that a new World Vision THRIVE project was opening a farming school in her community. She decided to join and saw it as a new opportunity to learn techniques for farming. Nine other people joined from her community.

"I learned a lot of things that are priceless because the knowledge will remain with me forever, and I can teach my children to be better," she said. Secundina learned how to make soil beds and how to irrigate correctly and not overflow her plants. She quickly understood how to diversify her vegetables from season to season so that plagues did not destroy her plot. The thing she loved the most was the empowered world view. This allowed her to learn how God is the creator of everything

and why it's important to share with others. She also developed good practices through the savings group, like working as a team, learning how to communicate, learning the importance of saving, and how to trust God above all.

World Vision helps farmers to work together for greater power in buying and selling, improving agricultural practices, and understanding when and how to access markets. It's been quite a change since Secundina started the farming school. She is now replicating what she learned in her own home plot. She has the support of her older children and husband who help care for the tomatoes she has planted. Secundina and her family are grateful for the help the THRIVE project has brought. She says, "Now I have new motivation to work my fields because I have learned how to produce better quality crops, and I thank Jesus for always providing."