

## May 2008 e-newsletter

### Women around the world: United in motherhood

*Mothers around the world, no matter where they live or what their life circumstances may be, share a common connection – the desire for a safe and healthy family. Click below on each picture to learn about the lives of these women and how World Neighbors is helping to change their lives and their families' future.*



**Ophelia Palamino** lives in the central highlands of **Ecuador**, on a farm that belongs to her entire family, however, she is responsible for the field crops and the vegetable garden that supplies nutritious food for her family.

*"This food is for my family and what we have extra we exchange for what we need at market," Ophelia said.*

Through World Neighbors agriculture training courses, she has learned the importance of keeping her soil healthy, and she no longer plants the same crops season after season. She has learned to rotate the type of crops she plants from year to year, which can help improve the fertility of her soil over time. "This year I will plant carrots and the next year cabbage," she explained.

Her garden provides a lot more for her family than just healthy fruits and vegetables. It also contains medicinal plants that can do many things, from helping to relieve toothaches to slowing bleeding of small wounds. Ophelia is an herbalist in her community and many people visit her to gather the herbs they need to treat their ailments because doctors are expensive and used only for severe illness or injury.

Ophelia began her garden nearly 10 years ago, and as an agriculture promoter in her community, she now leads by example using her successes to promote learning by other farmers – both men and women. Many local farmers often visit to see her crops and discuss the methods she has learned from World Neighbors.

Ophelia's current project is producing her own organic compost with the extra plant matter, manure, egg shells, peanuts and other everyday waste from her household. She spends five weeks producing the compost, turning it over up to three times a day to break down the organic materials and to speed up the composting process. She is experimenting with the compost she produces, testing it on various crops to learn which ones benefit most from the mixture. She also sells her nutrient-rich compost at the market for additional income.

Before World Neighbors began working in Ophelia's community, a barter system was not possible, because no one in the community had extra food or other goods to trade or share. Now, families can get the nutritious foods they need to keep their families healthy.



**Odira Dervilus**, from Bayonnais, **Haiti** has improved the lives of her six children through the integrated training she has received from World Neighbors.

*"Before I was in the women's group I didn't know how to manage something, but now I know techniques for planting trees, storing corn; every week I go to the health community center. That's where I learned how to pick leaves for tea, I got advice on preventing malnutrition, birth control, it spoke to the whole family. I get along well with my husband and we make decisions together. Inside the organization there is credit for women, and that credit activity allowed me to do commerce to help with the kids. I buy chickens which produce others that I sell. Awhile ago I borrowed money to pay the kids school without problem."*

The change wasn't only in Odira's family, but for their entire community. The roads and paths were in bad shape with the mud making it difficult for people to walk.

*"Today the locale's face has changed. I can walk around easily, I see plantains and cassava planted, springs are capped, and people have cisterns to water gardens and serve households."*

Odira remembers a time when she was pregnant and only had three measures of corn to eat during her pregnancy and while nursing. *"In that time the misery was hard, but now I have plantains, papaya, beans, corn and rice; I have beans to store."*

Odira does not want her own children or the other children in her community to experience the difficult life she had. Through her participation in the group, she is making positive changes in the well-being of her community and she continues to want more improvements, *"I would like to see the community have a hospital and a good market where people aren't sitting in the sun and on garbage."*



**Amina Abdou**, lives in Koira Tégui village, Tolkoboye, **Niger**, with her two boys and three girls. She is divorced, making her the head of the household. She is solely responsible for taking care of the family's expenses, so she makes her livelihoods through farming when there are rains and gardening during the dry season.

To increase her income, Amina has begun to fatten cattle – an activity she has been interested in since her childhood. With World Neighbors support, she was granted a loan of about \$200 through a local partner organization (CGTV). With the loan, she bought a bull for about \$155 and fattened it for one and a half months, then sold it for \$255.

With the profit she made from the sale, she bought another bull and sold it one month later for a profit of \$85. She did the same process a third time and made a profit of \$110.

*"With the cattle fattening loan, I was able to increase my investment capital and therefore my profit. Now I am able to better provide for my family needs, specifically food. In addition, I'm saving part of the profit to improve my housing by next year."*



**Inaq Jamilah**, mother of five children from the village of Lantan, **Indonesia**, works every day digging for pumice stones.

Inaq had never participated in any community activities before World Neighbors and its partnering organization YKSSI started a program in her village. In the past her husband had been the one who was involved in such activities.

Before her involvement in the program, Inaq's work was just the same as the other women in the village – taking care of the home, including cooking, washing, housework and childcare. But, Inaq also worked to dig for pumice stones - selling the stones was the main source of livelihood for

her husband. Her work provided additional income for the family. One of her daughters also helped dig for the pumice stones.

*“Through involvement in the program activities, I learned a lot, even though I can’t read or write,”* said Inaq.

She participated in a post-harvest processing & management training and now she has started to make banana chips and cassava chips, something that she'd never been able to do before. In the past they would just boil or sun-dry the bananas and cassava, and there had been such a surplus that nobody cared who took them – anyone could come and get as many as they pleased. Now, since attending the training, she has a new sense of enthusiasm to try and develop this as a business. She no longer gives anything away.

*“Now my products are already being sold in Tratak, Aik Darek, BreBali (market outside of Lantan village) and around Lantan village.”*

**Yellavva Bajantri**, a mother to five daughters from the village of Lingapur, **India**, worked as a laborer with her husband in other farmers' fields during the cropping season, which lasts for about six months of the year. During the remaining six months, they had very work. They would sell fruit, but would earn very little money. Even after working 14-16 hours a day, it was difficult for them to get one meal a

Yellavva joined a women's group more than three years ago. The group of 18 women received intensive training on goat rearing from World Neighbors and its local partner organizations. Fifteen days after Yellavva received a pregnant goat, the animal gave birth to twins - one and one female. Yellavva's joy was beyond control.

Using the knowledge and skills she gained from the training Yellavva received, she reared the mother goat, as well as the two kids, with the utmost care. When the kids were five month, she sold the male kid for \$29. She used part of the money to clear the debt and part of the money to start a small business of vegetable and fruit vending, which earns a profit of about \$1.25 a day. From those earnings, she is able to help meet the family's needs, as well as save a little to expand her business.

When she first became a member of the women's group, it was very difficult for her to contribute the 90 cents per month to the savings and credit activity of the group. Now she not only contributes that amount, but wants the group to increase the monthly contribution to \$1.20.



little

day.

male

about

## On the Shelf



**The Green Parent: Your Kid-Friendly Guide to Earth-Friendly Living** by Jenn Savedge offers parents hints for things they can do for and with their kids to lead more environmentally friendly lives. From how to save energy to how to reuse and recycle everything, this resource offers advice for getting children involved in ecology as well as products and services that can help parents raise more environmentally conscious children.

Visit [www.thegreenparent.com](http://www.thegreenparent.com) to learn more about green living.