

A MEDICINAL PLANT GARDEN IN NUEVO PROGRESO, ALTO AMAZONAS

By Alejandra Bussalleu

Nuevo Progreso is a Shawi community of about 200 people located about 2 hours in motocar from Yurimaguas, in the Alto Amazonas province. We report here on the recent field trip where IHACC met with community members to discuss the local health system, concerns around the sharing of traditional knowledge and the creation of a community medicinal plant garden as a teaching tool.

How is the local Health system in Nuevo Progreso?

The closest health post is located one hour away by foot from Nuevo Progreso, or can be accessed by motocarro for about 10 soles. Most families prefer to consult with Nuevo Progreso's traditional healers, Don Isidro and Don Eugenio, who have been around for many years and who are the main resource for the majority community members for any health concern.

What are some of the main concerns about health and the changing climate?

Community members are worried about children's health and increasing cases of diarrhea, fever and flu. Furthermore, the increasingly changing climate makes it more difficult to transport patients to health centers in cases of emergency, but also more difficult to travel to the forest to collect traditional plants used to heal certain conditions. Finally, other concerns include the loss of traditional knowledge within the community, particularly due to the migration of youth to larger cities for education or employment, the decrease in traditional plants in the forests and the poor transfer of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next.

A medicinal Plant garden: A community-based approach to improve access to traditional knowledge

With the support of the IHACC Project in Peru, community members have decided to organize a medicinal plant garden in Nuevo Progreso which will be easy to access to all. The main purpose will be to act as a living teaching area for all community members, from young children enrolled in the elementary school to elders about the importance and properties of the most important medicinal plants. Community members of all ages agreed on the importance of valuing traditional knowledge and creating a space where the sharing of it can be accessible to all. To this end, the Nuevo Progreso community has as a long term goal to be a teaching community where academic institutions and other municipalities could come and learn from their experience along with Shawi traditional knowledge.



Don Isidro, healer of the community of Nuevo Progreso, at work clearing the patch of land which will become the medicinal plant garden



Piñón colorado, mostly used to treat diarrhea and fevers.

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