SHI’s Mission

Sustainable Harvest International (SHI) is building a global network of local partners working toward environmental, economic and social sustainability. SHI facilitates long-term collaboration among trained local staff, farmers and communities to implement sustainable land-use practices that alleviate poverty by restoring ecological stability.

Sustainable Harvest International Annual Report Fiscal Year 2003 is a publication of Sustainable Harvest International (SHI), a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The report is printed on recycled paper using soy based inks. All donations to Sustainable Harvest International are tax-deductible.

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Dear friends,

The past year has seen a lot of ups and downs for Sustainable Harvest International. To paraphrase Dickens, it was the best of years and it was the worst of years.

The saddest part was the passing of several of SHI’s strongest supporters; wonderful people whose presence will be missed both by SHI and me personally. At the same time, however, I made many new friends who are working with SHI’s extensionists in the field or supporting the work from other countries like the U.S., Canada and Switzerland.

The most joyous part of the year was seeing more progress than ever in all four countries where SHI works and sharing news of that progress with supporters from all over. One of the highlights for me was learning that 90% of SHI participants now have organic vegetable gardens and seeing the difference that is making for the families’ health and income; especially for the children. It was also a thrill to see the variety of new projects popping up, such as biogas digesters, fishponds and chicken coops. Last but not least, was the astounding amount of hope embodied in one of SHI’s longest standing and hardest working participants who told me of how his income had gone from $900 per year to $4,000 in the past year and what that means for his family.

Although most of the results of SHI’s work were the best ever, the one area where we fell short was income. The thought of having to cut families from the program was a very real and devastating one that thankfully we were able to avoid thanks to timely donations from a few of our angels. Nonetheless, it was hard to see the number of projects that we could carry out shrink instead of grow. I have high hopes that all of SHI’s friends will work to reverse that trend in the coming year.

I see our move to Maine at the start of the new fiscal year in July as the start of SHI’s revitalization with new staff, new ideas and new support to carry us into a brighter future.

I am grateful to everyone who continues to accompany us on this path to a sustainable and joyful future.

All the best,

Florence Reed
Founder and President, Sustainable Harvest International
Celebrating 6 Years of Progress in Central America

Each year SHI extensionists and participants are faced with new challenges and each year we are surprised by their ingenuity and ability to use their skills to overcome them. Fiscal Year 2003 was no exception; with your support we reached over 650 families in 74 communities in Honduras, Belize, Nicaragua and Panama. Below you will find some of the highlights and new projects from our last fiscal year.

**Don Cheyo and His Amazing Tabasco Peppers**

Honduran participant Eliseo Castellon, also known as Don Cheyo, worked with SHI extensionist Juan Carlos over the past year to diversify his crops. With Juan Carlos’ help, Don Cheyo examined the local markets and decided to grow Tabasco peppers, passion fruit and cassava in addition to his traditional crops such as beans and coffee. Don Cheyo’s crops flourished this year and he increased his annual income from $900 to nearly $4,000! Now he is not only able to provide plenty of good nutritious food for his family, but he is also able to send his children to school, fix his roof and buy the medicine his wife needs.

**Diversification of Fishponds**

Many of the communities we work with have asked for our assistance to construct fishponds on their land. Families are able to harvest the fish, which provide protein, as well as bring in extra income. Panamanian farmers are keeping fish in their rice paddies; these fish not only provide food for the family, but also keep the rice healthy by producing nutrients and by eating insects and weeds. In one Honduran community participants are not only able to harvest fish, but also large freshwater snails used to make traditional Honduran coconut snail soup.

**Beekeeping in Panama**

Families in Panama have discovered that bees are a wonderful addition to their farms. They have constructed apiaries from bamboo stalks and hollow logs. From these ingenious beehouses, the families harvest fresh honey, and the bees naturally pollinate their crops, helping to ensure a rich harvest.

**Community Loan Funds Take Off**

In the past 2 years, SHI has established 15 community loan funds that have increased their capital by an average of over thirty percent. With a loan from their local fund, a women’s collective in Honduras has discovered that they can bring income into their community. They have worked with SHI extensionist Manuel Bueso to create a micro-business centered on sustainably grown annatto (a plant used as a spice and as a coloring agent in food and in natural cosmetics). Bueso has provided training and technical support to harvest and dry the annatto. The women process and package the annatto paste to sell in local markets. After receiving seed money from SHI, the women have been able to increase the fund and start a small bread business.

**Demonstration Farm**

Thanks to a very generous donation of 20 acres of land in Honduras from supporter, Anita Sigg, SHI has taken the first steps towards constructing a demonstration farm. This educational facility will be a place where families can come to learn about sustainable agricultural practices before implementing them on their own land and where supporters and students can visit and see our work in the field firsthand. During Fiscal Year 2003 SHI extensionists worked weekends and other days off to start planting trees, plantains and natural erosion barriers of pineapple on the land. We are looking forward to working with volunteers and the local community to build classrooms on the site in the coming year.
The community of Texoxingales is situated in a remote and mountainous area of the municipality of Azacualpa in the district of Santa Barbara. SHI Honduras started working in the community last year, and in February of 2003 we started our work with the Rutilia del Carmen Pena grade school, named in honor of a teacher that helped construct the school. The school has 31 students: 12 girls and 19 boys. SHI Honduras, with the support of a North American volunteer, Erin Geiger, began a small work plan that the students and the school’s only teacher, Maynor Arita, undertook with great enthusiasm. “This is the first time that an organization has come to our school to help us because we are so far from Azacualpa [the nearest large village] and because of the terrible path no one has ever tried to come where we are,” stated the director.

With this level of motivation they started to work. SHI Honduras provided some agricultural tools (hoes, rakes, watering cans, mattocks) and a hose that they used immediately to establish a school garden on the grounds of the school. They spent 3 months caring for their garden, and things went so well that in June, they harvested sweet peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, cabbages, corn and beans. According to Maynor Arita, “the children ate until they could burst and they brought [the vegetables] to their homes and ate with their parents and little brothers and sisters. Apart from this, the student government sold garden vegetables and made 400 lempiras [approximately $25] that we use to buy a few products to improve the school.” The school has plans to grow an even larger garden next year from which they hope to sell part of the produce to benefit the school.

But this is not all the students have done. SHI has provided nursery bags and tree seeds, and they have created a nursery with 1000 plants that were almost ready to be transplanted by the end of Fiscal Year 2003. The plants growing were mahogany, cedar and yellow cassia. With these trees, the students are reforesting the watershed of the community and the school grounds. “The girls have shown the most enthusiasm with the nurseries and plants. They have devoted their recesses to weeding and watering,” said the director.

After seeing such motivation on the part of the students and an application written by the members of the school government, SHI established a fund of 1,300 lempiras [$80 US] for the creation of a school business maintained by the boys and girls with the support of their teachers. With this fund they have bought school supplies and items that they sell during snack time at prices lower than the local stores. The teacher has sent us a note of thanks:

*I am deeply grateful for the help of Sustainable Harvest; we never imagined that after knowing us for only five months you would have the confidence to give us this funding, possibly it was because of the accomplishments and dedication that the students have offered the program. We have good and ambitious plans that we hope to accomplish with you. Thank you, thank you for all your support, continue to support us for more time.*
Jaime Arauz is a farmer born and raised on the shores of Lake Alajuela, an artificial lake created 70 years ago to provide water for the Panama Canal. Don Jaime has been working with SHI for several months and told us, “I have never worked with an organization before, but when I was helping with the reforestation project of the Canal Authority of Panama, I had the opportunity to get to know SHI extension worker, Eric Hernandez. Eric motivated me to join with a group of families that he was working with in Peña Blanca. In March of this year, we started to work together. My first project was establishing a small plot of corn and a vegetable garden on the lakeshore, which is flooded when the waters rise, but produces rich harvests in the summer. What the flood leaves in the soil is very good for my crops.”

From this initial project, Don Jaime and his family have harvested corn, hot peppers, cabbage and other vegetables that provide nutrition for the family as well as generate a little profit. They were able to sell part of their pepper harvest in the community.

Don Jaime’s interest has helped him to quickly get ahead, and he has accomplished other activities in this short span of time. Together with his wife, Liraselis Hernandez, and their 5 children they have readied a hectare of land to plant various crops. The work has not been easy, since the land had been invaded by a species of invasive grass called paja mala [bad straw], which grows rapidly and is very difficult to eliminate. Don Jaime had to work for 30 days to clear the invasive species from the area, but he succeeded. In the 3 months that followed, he has planted more than 2 acres with crops like corn, cassava and green vegetables. He has also started a nursery with 800 forest tree seedlings and fruit trees (papaya and coffee). In addition to this, he has a plot planted with 500 trees including soursop, coffee, annatto and other fruit trees that covers half an acre. This was made possible with the help of the Canal Authority and with material support in the form of bags and organic fertilizer from SHI.

Don Jaime has had technical and logistical assistance from SHI in all of his endeavors. However, what has had the greatest impact on his success is his enthusiasm to accomplish many things. Don Jaime told us: “I have many projects in my head, the majority of which are to diversify my farm and to produce products that I can sell. Eric has helped me to plan for the next two years. I hope to have two hectares well taken care of and cultivated with banana, coffee, rice paddies, a good garden and a pigpen. Some of these crops will need a small irrigation system to do well. The Canal Authority and the Ministry of Agricultural Development will give us some of the tubing, and with the help of SHI we can construct a reservoir to hold the water. This will be a large step towards enabling us to produce on our plots in the dry season.” Doña Liraselis commented: “I would like to have a better hen house, as the SHI coordinator has told me they have in Honduras. Of course, I will also help Jaime in all of the work he does. Together we will leap ahead.”

Together, the Arauz-Hernandez Family and Sustainable Harvest International are moving ahead making life better, not only for one family, but for the 110 families we are working with in Panama and more than 900 families that are assisted directly and indirectly in four countries in the region of Central America.
Mr. Florencio Canti, a Mayan inhabitant of southern Belize, is encouraged by the success he has achieved by working with Sustainable Harvest International since March of 2002. Mr. Canti has been instrumental in securing SHI’s assistance, not only for his family, but for his people in Santa Cruz village in the Toledo District as well.

He sought out SHI because he learned that slash-and-burn practices were not the best for growing his traditional crops. After being involved with SHI’s program, “the field extensionist was like a spear point for me,” he said; “[without his technical ideas] I would not have my farm the way it is now. In addition to technical support he assisted me with seeds, nursery bags, cuttings and other farm materials.”

Mr. Canti mentioned the previous natural disaster [Hurricane Iris]. He states that much of their watershed, national parks, ecosystems and farming practices need to be repaired. “Just after such disaster, it posed to us a real challenge for SHI and for us too.”

Now that I am working with Mr. Canti, he has begun to work mainly with root crops such as coco yams, soup yams, yampi, sweet potatoes and so on. He also has plantains, pineapples, okra, different varieties of garden beans (pole beans and brush beans) and also a plot of hybrid ginger. He has had two successful vegetable harvests since he began working with SHI.

Mr. Canti is now able to grow more food. He has 1.5 acres in sustainable production, thereby saving at least 3 acres of land from slash-and-burn destruction and is growing soil-enhancing mucuna beans. Mr. Canti wants to plant mid-term crops that will diversify his harvest so that he will have good land, diversified, healthy and productive crops and he will be better able to generate income for his family. He is very thankful for the assistance SHI is providing him, especially the help he has gotten to renovate his formerly abandoned coconut grove as well as the new trees that he is growing including cacao, cedar and samwood. He sends his thanks:

Many families tried to discourage me by telling me that I am wasting my time with SHI, saying that organizations like this one only come and go, but gradually these families are seeing the good work and activities accomplished. Changing to sustainable and organic methods means a lot. It is hard and very challenging for a farmer to do. It is time consuming unlike just going to your farm and applying artificial or chemical fertilizers. I want to thank and acknowledge SHI for its continuous and unselfish assistance and technical support. I look forward to even greater successes in the future.
We asked SHI for assistance because farms in this area don’t produce well and we have serious problems selling the products we grow. I saw that SHI was willing to support the families in the community; so I decided to take advantage of the training and education that you offer and above all utilize the resources well.

SHI has given me plantain seedlings, vegetable seeds, they have shown me how to make gardens, they have given me mahogany, oak and cedar seeds, and I will plant trees where there are none, they have taught me how to plant fertilizer beans on my farm and how to take better care of the animals, care, feed and vaccinate them so that they are strong. Twice, I have received corn and bean seeds that I didn’t have before. They have given me a silo to protect the harvests. They have given me 2500 nut palm seeds that I will plant.

I know that we won’t see everything producing just one time, but already I have harvested about 1500 plantains, and I have sold about 80% of the beans. We sell and have the seeds from this year in our home; so we won’t need to buy more. Before, I kept corn stacked in the corner of my house and lost almost half to bugs. Now with the silo, I can keep 800 pounds. Now 100 lbs of corn sells for just over $3, but in three months I can take it out and people will come to my farm to buy 100 lbs for almost $6. I earn approximately $2 just for keeping the corn in the silo, and I don’t have to work my animals because the buyers come to me. Now I have planted almost half an acre with plantains with the seeds produced from my first crop. I hope to see the results of the fertilizer beans soon.

According to the extensionists, the soil of our land is poor to cultivate food and what produces the best is pineapple, nut palm and cassava. With these we can raise pigs and sell them, but it would be good if the project could give us a pig pen so that we can raise them better and sell more. As the breed of pigs that we have now is very bad, I would like to raise sheep and try other types of work.

We have already started to change the way we are working, and we know more things. SHI is the only organization that comes, and if they had to leave, we would just go back like we were 2 years ago: without help and without knowledge.

-Daniel Segundo García Ruíz

Participant, Juan Moody with extensionist Dinis Morales caring for seedlings.
Florence Reed, left, with extensionist Venancio Coc, right, and SHI Belize participant holding cacao seedlings.

SHI Belize participant, Patricia Ack stands proudly in her vegetable garden.
Restoring Forests

Above: Young participants in Nicaragua help tend tree seedlings in their family’s nursery.

Above: Participant farmer in Panama with fresh ginger root.

Above: Venancio Coc and participant with a cacao sapling.
Top left: Community in Belize joins together to bring a successful Habañero harvest to market. Top right: Participant in La Pita Honduras picks pineapple with extensionist Juan Carlos Sandres. Center: Honduran family installs new bio-gas digester. Bottom left: Apiaries in Panama constructed from hollowed logs. Bottom right: Even the smallest community members join in to help harvest the peppers in Belize.
SUSTAINABLE HARVEST LEGACY SOCIETY

Sustainable Harvest International (SHI) has established the Sustainable Harvest Legacy Society to recognize and honor those individuals who have expressed their deep commitment to the alleviation of poverty and environmental protection by making a gift to SHI through their estate plan.

There are several ways for you to provide an enduring gift to Sustainable Harvest International. A commitment expressed in any of the three following ways will entitle you to membership in the Sustainable Harvest Legacy Society.

- Including a bequest to Sustainable Harvest International in your will or living trust.
- Naming SHI a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or assets remaining in a retirement plan (e.g., an IRA).
- Making a gift now to SHI from which you will receive a lifetime income (often at a better rate than before) and tax benefits (e.g., a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust).

Many of the plans listed above can provide significant tax and financial advantages to you and your loved ones.

When you become a member of the Sustainable Harvest Legacy Society, you will receive the following benefits as an expression of our deep appreciation:

- A beautiful Central American print by renowned photographer Scott Vlaun.
- Invitations to attend SHI’s annual Harvest Celebration and to join SHI field staff on visits to project sites around the world.
- Special publications and briefings.
- Listing of your name in Sustainable Harvest International’s Annual Report.

To learn more about joining the Sustainable Harvest Legacy Society, please contact our office.

A SINCERE THANK YOU

LETTER FROM SHI BELIZE PARTICIPANT, CASIMIRO ICO
San Jose, Toledo
SHI participant since 1999

Greetings! It is a pleasure and an opportunity for me, Casimiro Ico, SHI Belize participant from the village of San Jose, to greatly express and say sincere thank you to SHI, its staff, Board of Directors, and Donors because now I am seeing and experiencing the good things that SHI is doing and giving to us and the benefit and the impact it has to my immediate family and myself. If we continue to accept and put into practice the methods, the technologies of sustainable agriculture, the goals and the objectives, etc. of SHI will definitely be met and thus our lifestyles, our community and our environment will be better off than when we started. Never before have I received any assistance from any organization like SHI, but now I publicly applaud SHI’s effort and can quite easily say what I am getting now. I have a thousand plants of cedar, a couple cherry and a couple of guanacaste. And yet this is not the end but merely the beginning. I am looking forward to plant more different types of trees- be it permanent or temporary for I know this will undoubtedly help my family in the near and distant future. Our forest now is in a very bad condition especially in the aftermath of Iris (the hurricane). We therefore need to seek for solutions to reforest Mother Nature. As we are all aware that without much trees there will be increased soil erosions and rich land being depleted, water shortage (Rivers, creeks, wells, streams, etc will tend to dry), there will be more carbon dioxide in the air and among other problems. The use of trees and the demand to reforest this land is a priority! Our children will need these trees next twenty to thirty years from now to build houses for their family. Permanent trees help in improving soil conditions, improve family livelihood as they can sell products from these trees and earn themselves some money. I am also involved in family gardening which provides my family with income, and yet we are still able to eat these fresh organically grown vegetables with my family. My wife and children both help out with the vegetable garden. They help me to till the soil, mulch around the plants and in the everyday watering of the plants until harvest time. At harvest time, some of the veggies would be on sale and some of the money would go for education for my children. While we eat some, my children are healthy, and this makes them study harder in school.

With the assistance of our extensionist, supervisors and donors we are now able to do more and will continue to do more.

Thanks to our donors, and from the bottom of our hearts we wish them the best of luck.

Sincerely yours,
Casimiro Ico
SPECIAL THANKS
YOU MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE

Sustainable Harvest International would like to extend its sincere thanks to all of our friends, volunteers and donors. Without your continual support, the success stories on these pages would not have become a reality and families like the Icos and the Canites would still be struggling to fight poverty, malnutrition and destruction of their land. Instead, they are discovering ways they can support themselves and ensure a healthy future for their children. Thank you for enabling us to reach over 670 families in 74 communities in Honduras, Belize, Panama and Nicaragua, start 15 successful community loan funds, plant over 900,000 trees, convert thousands of acres of degraded land to sustainable uses and save tens of thousands of acres of tropical forest from slash-and-burn destruction. Our success is truly a credit to the generosity of our supporters. SHI would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge some of our key supporters for fiscal year 2003.

LEGACY SOCIETY
Dargie Anderson, E. Ann Gill, Joanne Holman, Kira Kilmer, Mae Manney, Joy & Steve Urban

$50,000 and Greater
Nora Tuthill

$15,000 to $49,000
Alternative Gifts International, Harlow and Barbara Carpenter, Charles Merrill, Seed Corps

$10,000 to $14,000
NY Help, Henrietta Currier, Julia Farwell-Clay, Geoffrey Clark

$4,000 to $9,999
Helaine Lerner, Bruce Berlin, Atkinson Foundation, Annie’s Naturals, Chris Hoar and Janet Leigh, Louis Frenkel, The Penates Foundation, Willima & Janet Jackson, Doug & Helen Reed

$1,000 to $3,999

MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY SUSTAINERS
Dick & Debbie Bancroft, Terence Barr, Jim Barrett, Meg Berlin & Didier Murat, Steve Birnbaum, Doug Bloch, Natalie Huiteric, Kristen Maanum-Hegg, Michelle Carlson, Douglass Crouse, Dorothy Currier, Richard Ertle, Elizabeth Finn, Ellen Forbes, Robert Franke, Dianne E. Woods, Veronica Kaczmarowski, Michelle Knight, Elizabeth Landerholm, Cliff Lazenby, Joann Lipshires, Pamela Mayer, Namcy Lovejoy, Sally Pachulska, Jane White, Betty Williams, Dianne Woods
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES & CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FISCAL YEAR 2003
For the Period July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003

REVENUES, GAINS & OTHER SUPPORT

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Net Assets Released from Restrictions

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EXPENSES

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**TOTAL EXPENSES**

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CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

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NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR

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A complete copy of Sustainable Harvest International’s financial statements may be obtained by contacting our office.
Sustainable Harvest International has made hope for a sustainable future a reality for hundreds of families in Central America—and for you, too.

Thanks to generous donor support, SHI’s extensionists have been able to reach communities with feasible alternatives to end destructive slash-and-burn agriculture. SHI participants, including the Rutilla del Carmen Pena school in Honduras, Aruaz family in Panama, Florencio Canti in Belize and the Ruiz family in Nicaragua are now growing more food than ever before to feed their families and increase their incomes.

SHI extensionists are helping participants to plant trees that will restore the rainforest and help to reduce global warming. In the coming year we will celebrate the planting of our millionth tree! The forests being conserved and replanted by SHI participants are helping to stop the mass extinctions of plants and animals.

The vital work of Sustainable Harvest International must continue. Although SHI has accomplished a great deal, more remains to be done.

SHI constantly receives requests from new families, communities and organizations in other countries asking us to help them make their hope for a sustainable future a reality. We would love to help them, but we need increased financial support to make their dreams a reality.

In order to keep our commitments to our existing participants and to reach new ones, Sustainable Harvest International urgently needs new financial support. All efforts to support our work are deeply appreciated.