Leonardo Rodriguez lives in Mogotes, Honduras with his wife and two sons. With the support and encouragement of SHI and field trainer Victor Castillo, Leonardo has decided not to attempt to return to the U.S. but to continue seeking opportunities through his land in Mogotes.

“I was in the US for almost four years. Then I said, you know what? I have some money now and I am going to work in my own country. But, by the time I got home to Honduras, I didn’t even have enough money to buy a soda—everything was gone. I wanted to leave right away and return to the US because without money no one can work here. Then SHI field trainers came to the farm and encouraged me [to make my own farm profitable]. It was great. We started with a garden and we have been working together ever since.”

Now in Phase 4 of our program, Leonardo and his family cultivate yuca, peppers, cabbage, cucumbers, onion cilantro, papaya, and much more on their land. In the past year, they generated $700 from the sale of their produce. In rural areas like Mogotes, 54% of households live in extreme poverty with incomes of less than $1.25 a day or roughly $500 a year. Increasing income from their farm and the ability to grow most of their own food allows farmers like Leonardo to stay with their families instead of seeking work elsewhere.

“...little by little, we are improving,” Leonardo says.
Dear Friends,

On a flight to Honduras from the U.S. many years ago, I asked the woman sitting next to me where she was going. “Home to see my family,” she replied simply. I asked her how long she’d been away. “Seven years,” she said. “My son was three when I left to get work and send money home to support him.”

How weak I felt trying to keep up with the casual nature of our conversation while reeling at the thought of how hard it was for me to leave my young son for a week, let alone seven years. What would I do if faced with the choice of long-term separation or starvation for my family?

The conversation brought home for me the plight of the thousands of farmers who are forced to leave their families every year when unsustainable farming practices no longer offer a way to survive in their communities. It added another reason why I am proud to be one of the many people making SHI’s work possible.

When I think of my friend on the plane and all of the families separated by economic necessity, I also think of Leonardo Rodriguez, featured in this annual report. I think of all of the other SHI families learning how to work together for a dignified life in their own rural communities. I hope you will too.

With gratitude from SHI’s Executive Director, Renee Johnson, staff, Board and myself,

Florence Reed
President and Founder

For complete info on FY14 financials, donor lists, and more exclusive content, please see our online report.

Since 1997, over 1,100 families have graduated from SHI’s programs; empowered and equipped with sustainable, long-term solutions.