

The Savings Box in Mexico: A simple community loan program providing leadership opportunities and economic stability

The Savings Box Program is the platform for developing all other programs. It is a very simple community loan program where community members (the majority of whom are women) save together and borrow from their joint savings over a period of 3 years. The program follows the following phases:

- First 6 weeks: Members save money and attend weekly trainings about savings and their most pressing needs. They also elect three individuals to positions that are rotated every 3 months.
- Phase 1: Basic needs are met (water cisterns, stoves, latrines, sinks, etc.).
- Phase 2: Food production (family gardens, animal husbandry, food conservation, etc.).
- Phase 3: Economic development (micro-enterprises such as goat cheese production, selling eggs, etc.)

Costs

Material and start-up costs for the program are generally low, in general about \$89 for materials and \$800 for administration and training.

Impact

- Strengthened community leadership and unity. Greater opportunities for women.
- Communities able to determine their own path and income-generating opportunities of their own choosing.

In 2013, new savings box programs were started in seven communities, directly impacting 656 individuals (see Table 1). The indirect impacts are difficult to measure because they are exponential. For example, in Doxteje the women opted to start a *tortellería* business. They started with \$30 pesos and by the end of the year had saved \$36,800 pesos with their business. It is estimated that this *tortellería* business impacted 1,348 individuals.

Table 1: Funds and membership in individual Savings Box Programs, 2013

Community	Start of 2013		End of 2013	
	Funds	Members	Funds	Members
Tixmadeje	\$28 pesos (\$2.18 USD)	9	\$1,673 pesos (\$121.71 USD)	12
Detiña	\$375 pesos (\$29.18 USD)	16	\$13,690 (\$1,045.08 USD)	39
Doxteje	\$30 pesos (\$2.33 USD)	10	\$36,800 (\$2,809.27 USD)	Not specified

No data were specified for Agua Blanca, Valle de los Fantomas, and Las Ruisas

Source: 2013 Business Plan