



## “YACHUYAJ WO” GARDEN REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2015



Pastor Carlos Campos (our Wichi extension worker), with daughter and son in law, peeling maize in the faraway community of Capitán Pagé

Every summer these last years the wichi are in the newspapers for a sad reason: infant mortality and malnutrition. This year is no exception. Some examples from each end of the ideology war:

Martes, 27 de enero de 2015 | [Hoy](#)

[SOCIEDAD](#)

## Niño wichi desnutrido (Wichi child malnourished)

Un niño de un año que integraba una comunidad wichi de Morillo, en Salta, falleció en un hospital de la ciudad de Orán...A one year old child from the wichi community of Morillo died in the Oran hospital...

[lanacion.com](#) |

## Lunes 26 de enero de 2015 | 17:39 **Murió por desnutrición un nene wichi en Salta** **A wichi child died from malnutrition in Salta**

El niño de casi dos años llegó al hospital de Orán con un cuadro severo de desnutrición; pesaba apenas ocho kilos y falleció el martes The boy, nearly 2 years old got to the Oran hospital with a severe case of malnutrition; he weighed 8 kg and died last Tuesday.

[15 FEB 2015](#) LA NACION Publicado en Edición Impresa

## **Según la BBC, este año murieron 10 chicos por desnutrición en Salta** **According to the BBC, 10 children died this year in Salta**

El problema afecta principalmente a la comunidad Wichi, de unas 30.000 personas

The problema affects the Wichi community of around 30.000 people.

- [Clarín.com](#)
- 09/02/15 **“Mi bebecito me lloraba de hambre y ni lo pude enterrar” “My little baby was crying from hunger and I couldn’t even bury him”**

**Salta: el drama de la desnutrición en uno de los pueblos más pobres.** Lo dice la mamá de uno de los bebés que murió desnutrido en Pichanal, en septiembre. El caso fue ocultado por el gobierno local hasta la semana pasada. **Salta: the drama of malnutrition in one of**

the poorest villages. This is said by the mother of one of the babies that died from malnutrition in Pichanal, last September. This was hidden by the local government till last week.



16 DE FEBRERO DE 2015

## Repercusión mundial por las notas de El Tribuno sobre las muertes por desnutrición en Salta **World repercussions from the articles written by El Tribuno about deaths from malnutrition in Salta.**



For a long time we are saying (with little or no results from the local government) that wichi family agriculture based on culturally appropriate ways has to be part of public policy.

Our experience shows that working with wichi extension workers, using drip irrigation systems, good seed with incorporated pest control is the way to produce the needed food.

Plan B is sending truckloads of food to the communities... (SEE AT THE BOTTOM POSITIVE NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITH

GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP)

All our efforts are geared to show what can be done and how to do it so that then the authorities can copy and on another scale replicate the experience.



We are doing this sort of agriculture since 2008 but in September last year, with support of a local NGO, we launched ourselves to try and develop **15 gardens** in each of three wichi

communities (Dragones, Morillo and Capitán Page). The plan was to do this in a small scale so that we gain experience for future work on a larger scale. The plan is working.



We now have **19 gardens in Dragones, 46 in Morillo and 17 in Capitán Page**. We have done more than the objective and in Morillo we will more than triple the amount projected, this is because it's a bigger community and also they have better access to water.

Laureano here left is our extension worker in Dragones. He is smiling but really there is nothing to smile about when one sees the deep "structural" poverty. Bad education, bad access to water, no jobs, etc. It'll take a long time to get out of this problem that short term thinkers have put us in. Laureano is also involved in the church, travelling with his group of musicians to other communities for evangelization campaigns. Church life and music is very important to the wichi.

Right: Our extensión worker in Morillo (called Nono) in his own garden that he has just put together. He is holding a nearly empty wheel of drip irrigation hose showing that demand for his service has been high.



Harvest in Page. Carlos Campos is our extensión worker here. He is also a pastor, taking care of the Misión Chaqueña congregation.

In all my trips, as I'm in contact with the wichi, the spiritual world is very present. We take sick people and before travelling there is always a prayer done and many

times they ask me to come into their house so I can pray for the sick. I have to be very clear that it's not me that heals!!

If by any chance the local government wants to scale up our operation, we're writing out the "recipe" of the garden extension. It would be something like this:

## **RECIPE FOR EXTENDING GARDENS**



### **1)SOCIAL INGREDIENTS**

- a) Send extensión workers that have some **family connection** in the community we want to do agricultural extensión.
- b) Send them for **short periods** (2 to 3 months).
- c) Whoever goes has to make his **own garden first**. When at 6 weeks the maize explodes in growth neighbors look over the fence and with little convincing want their

own.

- d) Pay a basic minimum but also **pay per results**: more gardens better salary. It's difficult to organize but essential.
- e) Print good agriculture **suggestions in wichi language**.
- f) **Relate with the local church**. It has to be known we come not from politics but from Christians helping Christians. With wichi this is **very** important.
- g) **Be creative** in finding solutions. Get out of the box!
- h) There will be **power struggles** in the community due to the "Project". Be wise not to get involved.

### **2) TECNICAL INGREDIENTS**

- a) First of all **see if water is available**.
- b) **Have stock** of seed and irrigation materials in the place. When demand comes you have to move fast.
- c) Choose plants that are **culturally appropriate** (maize, pumpkins, beans, etc)
- d) Maize seed has to be protected from caterpillars. You can see the difference of the maize in this man's



plot. <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669274639864959>

- e) Gardens that are done **have to be evaluated** so that whoever promotes it get's payed. Incentive is needed to make the system work.
- f) We have understood **that regular visits from myself** are essential to keep the interest up. Once they have a few harvests done they understand the works and go on alone.
- g) **Pinpoint with GPS** all the gardens. Having exact latitude and longitude will mean that you can follow the development in real time from a centre

point. [20150306160512-01226-map\(1\).kmz](#) With this link (downloading Google Earth) you can see recent gardens we visited last week. This is a new, and we hope useful, feature we are adding to our basket of resources.



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to  
away

### PILCOMAYO

haven't been able to travel to these far communities but I get news from the leader of the communities up there (Francisco Perez). He says they have had a good harvest.

Here some photos sent by FP of family with



produce..

We have given a cel phone to each of the 5 wichi extension workers. This is more expensive but it keeps us informed. In future we hope that with new technology we can see what's happening in real time.



## WATER



In the last 4 months we have finished 4 new pumps drilled by hand by the future owners. We provide teacher and tools. The beneficiaries donate the labour. They are not very beautiful but yes they are needed as water is in demand!

We have bored 12 water sources in the last 18 months: Carboncito 2, Misión Chaqueña 5, Salim 1 (solar power), Hickmann 1, Reserva 1 & San Ignacio 2 (this last one is in the making). There is still much to do in this area.

Here some videos of recent pumps:

Carboncito Nopis

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=630477463744677&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

Carboncito Ceferino

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=661841103941646&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

Misión Chaqueña Pelao

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=661755150616908&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

San Ignacio "Flores"[https://www.facebook.com/video.php?](https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669266863199070&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater)

[v=669266863199070&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669266863199070&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater)

## CRAFTS



We still are fighting so that authorities let us send crafts to Europe and USA through the courier system that is door to door and easy and efficient.

Unbelievable that the poorest are not helped to sell their products, and so generate needed income...



This is what we like: Agriculture mixed with crafts. The man carves wood and is taking care of the garden at the same time. It produces food and generates needed income.

Crafts use small amounts of wood and lots of labor is added. We are trying to

convince authorities that they ban all logging of palo santo in the province of Salta. It should be of exclusive use of the wichi craftsmen. Here 25 tons of wood off to China... We can generate over USD400000 for the wichi through crafts... <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=676015409190882&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

## CONCLUSIONS

- With 100% of wichi secondary students in the low comprehension group (Argentine average is 15% high 55% medium & 30% low) we have a serious problem for the future. If to this we add the lack of investment in water infrastructure we are in trouble now and in the future.
- We will be pushing for more hand dug well as the technology is appropriate and has good results at a low cost.



- Being identified by the wichi as a church worker is a great asset and privilege. It opens doors and makes the relationship complete. Something that other workers can't have.
- In all my past reports I mentioned that our objective was to start options for the wichi that work and that at one point they would have to be taken up by the government so as to scale it up to many more communities. Although we have been knocking on doors for the past 6-7 years nothing ever happened. It seems that now it has dawned on the politicians that their system hasn't work and they are looking for options. Yesterday, for the first time, I had a meeting with the minister of health and he said he needs to work with us so that we (that have results) can show the way. It means that our structure can be taken up by the government but monitored by us. We will have a word in water policy, income generation (crafts), family agriculture, etc. All work that I know and have been doing for a long time. THIS IS VERY GOOD NEWS. (Am I naive?)



-I could never have done this job of developing gardens 450km away from home if I hadn't the new vehicle that was generously donated by my brother John and his friends from Ohio. This has had a chain effect that now we can show results that convince authorities to support our work that in the end (I'm convinced) will benefit the wichi.

Here above stuck in slippery mud!!

- Alec Deane

+54 9 387 5096482

[alecdeane@yahoo.com](mailto:alecdeane@yahoo.com)

[fundacion.siwok@gmail.com](mailto:fundacion.siwok@gmail.com)

### BONUS

If you're not bored by now here some gardens and their explanation (Spanish):

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669329493192807&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669351703190586&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669360976522992&set=vb.100003472876345&type=3&theater>



The first of January we had 30 gardens now 10<sup>th</sup> March, 82 and growing!