



**Global
Health
Ministries**

*Helping the hands
that heal*

VILLAGE HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT



El Salvador

While the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod is one of GHM's smallest church partners, it has created one of our most successful community-based primary health care initiatives to date.

2008-2016

EL SALVADOR

Pastor Concepción Vanegas of El Salvador is both a pastor and the coordinator of her church's national health program. In 2008 she began gathering local communities to seek ways to care for their countless victims of hurricanes, which ravaged the country virtually every year. With almost no church health facilities the people sought community based health education.

Similar discussions were held in eleven other villages ministered to by Vanegas. Resettled communities of refugees from the country's civil war that ended in 1992, the people of Nahualapa and the surrounding villages are practiced in innovating ways to survive through violence and insecurity. They developed a plan with a number of components, including measures to prevent erosion and crop loss, storage granaries to protect emergency food sources, programs to raise and share the first-born of chickens, goats and cows until all community members had their own animals, and a first aid training program for village members.

She proposed that GHM support a new village health worker training program. Within a year, the first class of thirty village health workers had graduated, and four other regional gatherings were planned.

Today almost 200 village health workers (VHWs) have been trained in first aid and CPR, as well as tropical diseases. Reports are too numerous to list of lives saved, the injured and critically ill stabilized for transport to health facilities, and first-aid for cuts, sprains, breaks and bruises. These VHWs are respected leaders, adept at identifying and addressing individual or community practices that advance or diminish community health. The program itself is based in Lutheran congregations. What began as an outreach of one congregation now stretches across the nation into five micro-regions, wherever the Lutheran church is found in El Salvador.

Visit our website www.ghm.org to donate or to learn more about how we can partner to "help the hands that heal."

