

# Improving the Food-for-the-Poor Casitas

*Pimienta, Cortes, Honduras*



Engineers Without Borders™-USA (EWB-USA) is a non-profit organization established in 2000 to partner with developing communities worldwide in order to improve their quality of life.

Website: [www.ewb-usa.org](http://www.ewb-usa.org)  
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## Project Cost

### Phase I Cost

\$6,000

### Phase II Cost

\$13,000

## Chapter

Gateway Professional Partners Chapter (St. Louis)

## Background

The St. Louis Gateway Chapter has teamed up with Washington Overseas Mission (WOM), a local NGO based in Washington, Missouri with over 15 years of experience and community contacts in Honduras to help on a variety of projects requiring engineering expertise. EWB and WOM have traveled to Honduras together for the past two years performing project assessments and working with the local government officials and communities to improve living conditions for the poor.

## The Need

The town of Pimienta has recently added a neighborhood called “the Casitas” to house some of its neediest residents. Unfortunately the construction is lacking basic infrastructure and it is making living conditions difficult. The houses are settling and erosion is reducing the stability of the area. Basic sanitation and water supply is needed.

## The EWB-USA Response

### Assessment

The Gateway Chapter found that although the intentions of the aid organization that constructed the housing development were good, not developing basic infrastructure prior to construction is causing problems that the city has no funds to correct. Lack of site drainage, sewage systems, electricity, water supply, and essential housing features such as bathrooms and pilas makes the housing development almost unlivable.

### Site Survey and Evaluation:

The Gateway Chapter performed a site survey and project evaluation in June 2008 and developed an assessment and recommendation report that outlines several steps to be taken. Those steps include providing site drainage throughout the area to move runoff away from the houses, provide basic sewage infrastructure, provide water supply to the houses, and support electrical distribution throughout the neighborhood. The chapter representatives also worked with the community to fund and build numerous pilas for the residents as a

show of good faith and to get local involvement.

### Next Steps:

Additional design, funding, and labor is needed to complete the infrastructure work in Pimienta to make the houses livable for the families. Our Chapter is committed to working with WOM and the town of Pimienta due to the excellent relationships formed with the residents and the local administrators.

## Moving Forward

The Phase I project to provide site drainage will create lined ditches to direct runoff away from housing foundations and prevent further soil erosion and stream pollution. The expected cost of the labor and materials is \$6,000.

Phase II will provide for the creation of a water and sewer distribution system that will make the housing more usable and provide basic sanitation services. The expected cost of this effort is \$13,000.

In addition, work will be done to educate the local administrators on what should be done prior to allowing development of an area in order to avoid the issues being encountered now.

To Learn more about this project:

[www.ewb-stl.org](http://www.ewb-stl.org)

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