



# Turimiquire Foundation

## Recipe for a Thriving Community

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING HUMAN SERVICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS IN THE TURIMIQUIRE WATERSHED OF NORTHEASTERN VENEZUELA, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON FAMILY PLANNING AND EDUCATION.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL FIRST

Based on more than 30 years of experience living and working in the impoverished regions of north-eastern Venezuela, the Turimiquire Foundation has developed our [Recipe for a Thriving Community](#) as a fast track blueprint for realizing the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in the year 2000.

Our Recipe offers a tested methodology to tackle the stated needs and desires of the low income populations that we serve.

#### 1) Stabilize the Family

- ◆ Family Planning Services
- ◆ Reproductive Health Education

#### 2) Focus on Education

- ◆ Teacher Development
- ◆ Student Scholarships
- ◆ Public Schools and Infrastructure

#### 3) Develop the Community

- ◆ Public Services and Infrastructure
- ◆ Sustainable Livelihood
- ◆ Community Centers (Urban and Rural)
- ◆ Computers and Internet

We believe that our **Recipe for a Thriving Community** offers a cohesive service delivery model for how an NGO can deliver maximum value in human services to its clients. It is in the crucible of *small, community-based experiments like our own* that some of the most effective solutions for the broad Millennium Vision are being forged today!

We are ready to grow and expand our efforts, and we need *your help*.

Thank you,

*Steven Bloomstein*



## Reproductive Health: A Tale of Three Women

**PETRA** (far right) and her two daughters live several hours walking up a remote river valley far from most public services. We have known Petra since she was younger than her daughter **HEIDI** (left). Petra has always been a hard working ray of sunshine in our valley, an exemplary member of the community. She and her family showcase the way in which our Foundation serves individuals and families, guided by our **Recipe for a Thriving Community**.

**Reproductive Health:** Petra grew up in a world not so long ago where 14-year-old girls often became pregnant, and were sequentially pregnant thereafter, commonly not having their monthly menses for years on end. Six or eight children later, when enough offspring had survived infancy, mothers might seek a tubal ligation, the most popular birth control method here in Venezuela. Commonly waiting years for this elective public health service at the overwhelmed public hospital, they often had even more children in the interim for lack of alternatives. Petra herself got married unusually late for this area -- all of 24 years old -- and 15 years later, when she and her husband Arcadio decided that six children were enough, they came to our Foundation and promptly received a laparoscopic tubal sterilization.

Some years later, Petra's eldest daughter **DAICY** (center) came to the Foundation for birth control pills when she was an aspiring student in her teens with her first boyfriend. Because of our reproductive health education program, Daicy understood early on that, unlike her mother, she had the option to be in a relationship without necessarily having a baby. This allowed her to work through what proved to be an unstable relationship without complicated consequences, and to complete elementary school and begin high school in our scholarship program. She is now married and pregnant with her second child, utilizing the Foundation's family planning program to space her children and direct her own reproductive health. Her husband shares in her choices, and heads one of the local baseball teams that the Foundation supports for students and young men.

**Education:** Younger Heidi is now 18 years old. Through our scholarship program, she completed high school, and now helps the Foundation to distribute school supplies in this remote rural area. We are especially proud that she is one of our first high school graduates to be attending college with our continuing support. Heidi has participated in our workshops on reproductive health, which emphasize responsible informed sexuality in order to avoid unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (a growing reality for her generation here). She is well aware of her options, and has sensibly chosen for now not to be sexually active while she pursues her studies and gives shape to her young life. Raising a family is not a priority for her yet, and she is clear about controlling her own destiny.

The Foundation seeks to serve women effectively in each of these **three stages** in their lives – youth, the reproductively active years, and maturity. We are proud of the constructive role that we have played in the lives of Petra, Daicy, Heidi, and thousands of other women, helping empower them to take control of their reproductive health and education and to create the futures that they themselves want to have. In a matter of years, *in less than one complete generation*, the choices for these women have opened tremendously. Both Petra and her husband are illiterate, but Daicy is literate on a high school level, and Heidi is now the first in her family to go to college, an enormous step forward. Heidi's younger sister Jeicy, the youngest in the family, is also enrolled in our scholarship program, attending high school and planning to go to college. This incremental progress, carried forward over time by many individuals and families, lifts the whole community.



## Real Results in Less than One Generation

- ◆ **Very few unplanned children anymore** - large families are no longer the norm.
- ◆ **Young women bear their children later** - and two or three children are now considered the norm.
- ◆ **Infant and maternal mortality now rarely occur** - we have not had a local case in 10 years.
- ◆ For the first time, children of the valley are **graduating from high school** - some are even **attending university** with our support.

This completely voluntary and entirely documented transition has occurred in *less than one generation*, and shows how quickly and thoroughly people will respond to services that truly meet their needs.

### The environment benefits right along with the human community.

As the population has stabilized, the impact on this once pristine river valley is noticeable. The upper valley is returning to lush tropical woods, wildlife is prospering, and the streams are running cleaner. With less mouths to feed, the devastating effect of repeated slash-and-burn agriculture is reduced. After perhaps 400 years of non-stop intense exploitation and diminishing returns, there is now less erosion and more forestation in the valley.



#### Slash and burn "swidden" agriculture

declines with less population pressure, and allows the forests and streams to slowly return to a more pristine state. This deprives no one and benefits everyone with renewed natural resources.



### The kinds of changes that we describe here are entirely replicable.

Much of what we have learned and done is relevant and applicable at low cost in other parts of Venezuela.

- ◆ Typically, 40% of all children have not been planned for, nor desired (worldwide average)
- ◆ When low-income women are empowered to have only the children they want to have, they will generally have fewer children.
- ◆ What clearly benefits families and communities on a local level can be critical in addressing larger social, environmental and economic challenges in Venezuela

Our Foundation has been able to demonstrate on a modest scale that many of the solutions that we as a planet need are available and affordable.

We are prepared to expand the Recipe – **with your help.**

*When we are dreaming alone it is only a dream.  
When we are dreaming with others, it is the beginning of reality.*

- Dom Helder Camara

The Foundation counts on the material donations and in-kind support offered by various organizations and individuals with whom we work, both in the United States and in Venezuela. We thank our fine network of partners!

**Clínica Santa Rosa, Cumaná**  
**Clinica Grupo Medico Sucre,**  
**Cumaná**



### *Our Story in Numbers (1997 - 2009)*

- ◆ **25,000+** women have been provided with ongoing family planning services
- ◆ **37,000+** adolescents, parents, health care providers and educators have participated in **1,700+** sexual and reproductive health workshops
- ◆ **2** community centers, rural and urban
- ◆ **2** computer and Internet centers, rural and urban
- ◆ Rural kindergarten, school library, school cafeteria, child care center
- ◆ Gravity-piped clean water for several hundred families in a remote valley
- ◆ Solar electricity for off-the-grid families, a rural schoolhouse, and a chapel

### ***Please come dream with us !!!***

Our modest budget of approximately \$80,000 USD per year is ready to grow .

**94%** of all contributions go directly into the field (average for past 12 years).

All Foundation officers and board members serve voluntarily and without compensation.

The Turimiquire Foundation is a **501(c)(3)** non-profit organization. **Contributions are fully tax deductible.**

Contribute now by mailing us a check or online at [www.turimiquire.org/contribute/](http://www.turimiquire.org/contribute/)



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