

## Amistad Canada & Caminos de Agua Join Forces

Creating Clean Water Access Together

By Romeo Robles

We're proud to announce that **Caminos de Agua** has been approved as a Project Partner of Amistad Canada. **Amistad Canada** collaborates with selected non-profit organizations to organize, implement, and monitor focused projects in Mexico while providing tax-receipts for Canadian donors who support those projects.

### Who is Amistad Canada?



**Image:** A child from the community of Los Ricos testing out a Rainwater Harvesting System.

**Amistad Canada** is a Canadian federally registered charity that collaborates with Mexican non-profit organizations to deliver needed health and education projects in the San Miguel de Allende area and several other Mexican locations. "Amistad" was

incorporated and registered under the Income Tax Act in 2009 in Canada and is an all-volunteer organization, developed and managed by Canadians who have a special interest in Mexico. On a yearly basis, Amistad invites a limited number of candidate non-profits for consideration as partner organizations. Once they are selected, partner organizations create defined projects that meet Amistad guidelines. Because these projects are funded by Canadians making tax-deductible donations, Amistad Canada is responsible for seeing that they comply with Canada's Income Tax Act's regulations.



**Image:** Amistad Canada & Caminos partnership logo.

### Caminos de Agua: Why Us?

***Our mission** is to improve human health and community well-being through adequate and affordable access to clean water.*



**Photo:** Saúl Juárez, Caminos' Community Projects Coordinator, giving a workshop to local community members.

**Caminos de Agua** (Caminos) has been working for over a decade in pursuit of our mission by combating the severe water scarcity and contamination issues, as well as the health impacts they create, in the northern part of Guanajuato State, including San Miguel de Allende. Because of this, our work fits squarely into one of Amistad Canada's core purposes to *Promote Health*.

After developing an extensive project proposal, focusing on educational programming and the construction of Rainwater Harvesting Systems to create a sustainable source of safe drinking water in severely impacted communities, we were very proud to be selected as one of the newest partner organizations. Amistad currently collaborates with a total of 14 organizations to deliver health and education programs throughout various parts of Mexico.

As explained by Mark O'Neill, Amistad Canada's President,

*"Our board of directors was particularly impressed by the work that Caminos de Agua does in addressing the growing water crisis in the State of Guanajuato. Through*

*this partnership, Canadians will be able to make tax-deductible donations to help a selected community develop rainwater harvesting systems and the related education and training that will provide a lifetime of clean drinking water, and, therefore, avoid suffering the many health repercussions that would otherwise result."*

## What's the Problem?

The Water Crisis in Our Region and its Impacts on Human Health



**Photo:** A community member in the process of building a Rainwater Harvesting System. In the background, a section of a modern agricultural field is visible, with a private well and irrigation systems, in a region of extreme water scarcity.

In Mexico, 52% of the population (~67 million) live with some form of water scarcity; more than 47 million do not have daily or continuous water access; and an estimated 9-11 million have no water service at all, causing a massive public health crisis throughout the country. At the same time, 75% of water extracted is used for agriculture.

In the state of Guanajuato, the situation is amplified – overexploitation by industrial agriculture is reducing our groundwater levels by 2-3 meters per year – 30 times above the eight-centimeter loss per year that qualifies as "extreme water stress."

The amount of water lost is akin to draining over 440,000 olympic-sized swimming pools every single year. The unsustainable decrease in groundwater levels is forcing wells to be drilled ever deeper into geological substrates, which has resulted in the emergence of naturally-occurring chemicals in local groundwater supplies. Arsenic levels are up to 23 times higher than the World Health Organization recommendations and more than 12 times higher for fluoride in some communities.

Arsenic and fluoride are closely linked to dental and crippling skeletal fluorosis, chronic kidney disease, skin disease, and various cancers. Children are at greatest risk, as their growing bodies absorb these minerals at a much higher rate, and exposure to high fluoride during childhood has shown to have severe impacts on children's cognitive development and learning ability later in life.



**Photo:** A community member takes a water sample from a local community's well.

According to our Executive Director, Dylan Terrell,

*"Unfortunately our mission is becoming increasingly critical. The region we work in is confronting a complex water crisis that demands decisive action. Our water supply is becoming more contaminated with*

*dangerous levels of extremely difficult-to-remove arsenic and fluoride. But even more worrisome, is the increasing depletion of our water table. It is so severe that our region has been classified as having one of the highest levels of water stress in all of Mexico, second only to Baja California."*

## What is the Amistad-Caminos Project?



**Photo:** A group of community members from La Norita del Refugio building a Rainwater Harvesting System.

Much of our work in Caminos de Agua is focused on partnering with local communities to monitor levels of water contamination, provide educational programs to better understand the health and environmental risks, and develop and implement customized solutions to help families avoid the health and economic consequences of regularly consuming contaminated water. Included in these solutions is our Rainwater Harvesting Program. Rainwater is immune to the problem of water table loss and is also naturally free of arsenic and fluoride and, when combined with our own filtration technology, rainwater becomes a sustainable, safe drinking water source.

All Canadian donations will go directly toward **The Amistad Canada–Caminos de Agua 'Clean Water Access Project.'** All funds raised for this joint project will be utilized to conduct an intensive community education program, as well as cover the cost of materials, construction oversight, and follow-up monitoring and evaluation of rainwater harvesting systems built in collaboration with a local community in need. Caminos has a proven track record in this work, having installed hundreds of large-scale rainwater harvesting systems in over 80 other communities in our region. Our rainwater harvesting projects improve community health, reduce environmental stress on over-extracted aquifers, and give people control and consistency over their water supply.

If you're a Canadian citizen, this is great news. Now you can help us expand access to clean water and get a Canadian Income Tax deduction at the same time. This is an important step for us as it allows our Canadian friends to deepen their support for our work.

## Donate Today

The work of Caminos de Agua is dependent on the support of individuals like you who make up a large portion of our annual operating budget and are an integral part of creating access to safe and healthy water for so many. So, please consider a donation today.

To donate to Caminos de Agua directly, visit [caminosdeagua.org/en/donate](https://caminosdeagua.org/en/donate), or you can also scan the QR code (above right).



**Canadian Donors** can donate through Amistad Canada by visiting:  
<https://www.amistadcanada.org/donate/>

*(Note: don't forget to select Caminos de Agua's project when you designate your donation at Amistad's website)*

## About La Gota

**La Gota**, which means "The Drop" in Spanish, is a periodic bulletin that dives deeper into important subjects relating to the current water crisis in the Northern Guanajuato State (where we do the majority of our work) and greater Mexico, as well as behind-the-scenes look at Caminos de Agua's projects and activities. Its goal is to further inform those who are affected by, and concerned about, our water crisis.

Our last issue of **La Gota** focused on the "**Acuaférico**" project. A municipal water project that is looking to provide water to the city of San Miguel for the next 20 years. Learn more about our upcoming issues and read past issues of **La Gota** at:

[caminosdeagua.org/en/la-gota](https://caminosdeagua.org/en/la-gota)