



No One Left Behind

Just three weeks after its opening, the National Housing Registration reports 860,577 families registered

VOCATION OF SERVICE AND DISCIPLINE

With her boots on

A Teacher and a militia member, Esperanza del Carmen Yaguare is in charge of La Pedrera Camp



First Lieutenant Carmen Yaguare turns around and shows us the two-story building that houses the school. Getting there means going up 300 steps, and it's hard to believe a woman her size can actually make it every day. When she started working there 18 years ago she never thought her life would go by as it did. It's been a hard path, but she is grateful it all happened the way it did.

She graduated as a Spanish and Literature Teacher at the Pedagogic Institute of Caracas when she was 24. Her vocation got inspiration from the example given by teachers in her own learning experience. Her second home now is the school where she has been working in Antimano for 15 years as teacher and 3 years as Principal.

Carmen joined the Reserve as soon as she graduated in 1996: "I always wanted to join the army but I could not because of my height." She joined the Bolivarian Militia in 2005 as first sergeant. Esperanza del Carmen Yaguare became First Lieutenant in 2007 after finishing the officers' training course and she was stationed in Antimano parish in 2009.

Guarding Life and the Nation

Her story is not that different from that of other women who realized that what happens in the neighbourhood is not the sole responsibility of the state and government. Esperanza has lived for 40 years in Antimano, and she confesses she was surprised of how little she knew about her community when she joined the Bolivarian Militia Camp.



"My life was a routine: I went to school and then back home. I worked for the community but I did not know much about what was happening around," she says.

Carmen feels especially proud of the tasks she performs as part of the Bolivarian Militia. Since last year, the group has focused on evacuating high-risk houses and taking families to temporary shelters. According to Esperanza, they carry out these activities with the participation of communal councils, militia members, and the whole community.

"The militia is in charge of protecting the nation and keeping people's lives safe. We understand the people are on our side, and that they need us," says Carmen.

Setting an Example

Esperanza has gone through all kinds of experiences in the militia camp she belongs to. Even some experiences have been close to tragedy. "We rescued two little girls that had fallen to a ravine. At first, we did not see anything, but I went ahead. We were on a high hill and I was about to jump but my subordinates convinced me not to. The grandmother of the child was screaming: Save my girls! Fortunately everything went just fine," she says relieved.

At school she hangs her uniform because she considers school to be a completely different experience. Maybe the kids give her the energy she uses on such a shaky life. Lieutenant Yaguare tells us what a regular day for her is: It starts at 5:30 am and ends nearly at 12 am. "The most important thing is to give back to the country what it has given to you."

"I wake up at 5:30 am and after making some coffee I help mom with the arepas!" Carmen lives with her parents, two sisters and one niece.

At 7:14 she is already at school performing her tasks as principal until 1:00 PM. "Then I go wherever the militia needs me. We then have lunch, and do our rounds in our community until 7:00 PM. When I get home I spend some time with my family and comply with my duties as teacher. I end up in bed at around 12:00 AM." ♦

Carmen Ugueto

¹ An arepa is a dish made of ground corn dough or cooked corn flour. It is a flat, round, unleavened patty made of cornmeal which can be grilled, baked, or fried. It can be either topped or filled with meat, eggs, tomatoes, salad, cheese, shrimp, or fish.

WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE NOW RESPECTED, RECOGNIZED. NOW THEY PARTICIPATE

Great Benefits

After twenty years working for the company, Fernando's weight on his shoulders is less heavy with the new Fama de America factory

In the last 20 years, Fernando Jose del Valle has carried over three tons of coffee a day in Fama de America company. Just as his father did during 30 years.

As a result of carrying over 500 27-lbs coffee sacks a day, breathing dust and sand Fernando's father got sick and ignored by the company after three decades of work. He died six years ago.

Fernando sadly says that his father could never enjoy the benefits he has in the company now: a safe working place in a social property company that recognizes his work and pays back fairly.

Family tradition

Fernando told us his story while we were waiting for the technical inspection of the coffee seeds coming from Sanare, state of Lara. Fernando was born in the parish of San Juan in Caracas, but now he lives in Carapita slum.

He was born in Caracas populous parish of San Juan and now lives in Carapita slum. He began working at the factory for almost two decades. "My dad was a founder of Fama de America, I was unemployed and he brought me here," he says with obvious pride.

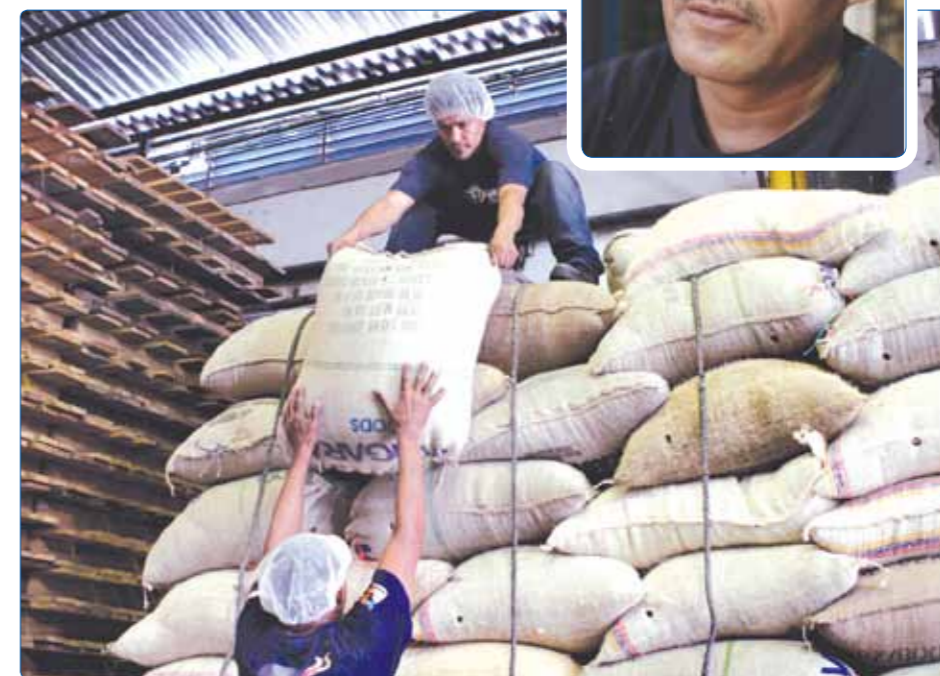
Family tradition has survived to a no-benefits system. "The company has not offered us anything. We just unloaded the trucks and we were paid 3 (over one dollar) per sack" he says.

He continues explaining so anyone can have an idea of how workers were treated in that coffee company. If there was nothing to unload, we had nothing. If we got sick, we had to pay for the medical care. We had no insurance. Even if we got small injuries, they did not provide us with a Band-Aid. We had to pay everything! We did not have food bonus either, says Fernando.



He explains that although they tried to negotiate with the owners of the company on several occasions, there were no improvements. "We just had a tiny bathroom," he says, pointing to the parking lot, "And we should go out to eat" because they were not allowed to use the areas of the factory to eat.

Fernando tried to look for words to describe how they felt: "We were not taken into account, we were relegated," he says. "Many colleagues who were up there - referring to workers - were not allowed to talk to us. The old union did not help us either."



"In old times we resisted so much. Here one felt humiliated. When we spoke with the owners they made us wait long. When we called for salary increase they said: "We have many problems with the government." Before, everything was for them, there benefits for us."

Working tirelessly Fernando managed to raise a family with three daughters. He was strong. He paid the rent, school of his kids and everything else with his daily payment.

With justice aroma

He quickly finishes with the past to comment on the changes that benefit each and every one of the workers of Fama de America: "When the state seized the company a new labor union participated. They called us and offered us regular employment. They said they would recognize the time that we had worked here, that time was worth!"

From May 2010, when Fama de America became a state-owned company, Fernando, the oldest carrier and his four companions received the fair payments they had to receive.

"We started to have benefits. We have a regular salary, food bonus and insurance for us and our families."

Now the five carriers are not only part of the payroll, they also share with all their companions and are free to use all the facilities including the dining room and the infirmary, where they receive medical care in case of any incident.

Today, after more than fifteen years of uninterrupted work, Fernando prepares to take his first vacation.

"I'm going to enjoy them in July. Sometimes I think about what I'm going to do with too many days. Maybe I'm going to my mom's house back in the East." ♦

HOUSING: A GREAT MISSION (PART I)

Inclusion for everybody

After three weeks of having started, the National Housing Registration process has compiled data from 860,577 families

"We were living in the Alí Primera slum in Carabobo. Last December 4, I was at home with my daughter and a friend setting the Christmas tree when the big rain started. Suddenly, our adobe house was shaking and cracking. My little daughter got nervous and told me she wanted to leave. I told her that it was raining too hard, but eventually we had to leave as water was pouring into the house like a river. We heard when the adobe house crumbled to the ground.

Jennifer Veliz's story is similar to those of thousands of Venezuelans who had to get out of their homes because of the heavy rains. It happened in December 1999 in Caracas, Vargas, Miranda, and Falcon. It all happened again in December 2010, but now including other states: Zulia, Lara, Aragua, and Carabobo. And rains do not stop; the southwest states are now in the 2011 list.

Many do not understand the grief and despair of losing a house due to the rains or any other reason. Probably, that is the reason why some people do not understand the magnitude of the efforts made by the Bolivarian Government to bring their lives back to those who have lost everything.

Big problems, big solutions

The 32,742 families affected by the rains are receiving Government attention in 924 shelters (135,126 people) scattered in 16 states throughout the nation.

A large number of refugees have left the shelters to go to their new houses. Another large amount of people have lands and houses already assigned. The rest of them are registered in the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela aimed at dealing with the housing deficit issue created by capitalist greed and unattended by previous irresponsible governments.



There is still plenty of time

860,577 families registered in the National Housing Registration after three weeks of its Start

First month of registration to take place in: Capital District, Vargas, Miranda, Zulia and Falcón.



The five components of the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela:

1) **Land:** Over 17,000 acres are ready and set for the construction of 153,000 houses in 2011. Over 86,000 are needed to achieve the goal of 2,000,000 houses for the next seven years (2011-2017).

2) **The Executors:** Comprising the organized people (communal councils, communes, building squads), the Venezuelan Government as a planner and the private companies.

3) **Building Materials:** A massive industrialization process is under way in order to provide all the necessary material for the constructions, so there would not be any delay in the works.

4) **Financing:** Over US\$ 7 billion have been assigned for the construction of 153,000 houses.

5) **Registration:** Last May 7, the process started in the Bolivar Squares of the rain-affected States: Vargas, Miranda, Capital District, Zulia, and Falcon. The second registration process is scheduled for July, comprising the states of: Aragua, Carabobo, Yaracuy, Lara, Mérida, Táchira and Trujillo.

A third stage will take place in September for the states of: Apure, Guárico, Cojedes, Barinas, Portuguesa, Nueva Esparta, Monagas, Sucre, Amazonas, Delta Amacuro and Bolívar.

Replacing the current refugees is the top priority, but just as the President sentenced last April 30 in the inauguration day of the Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela: "Nobody is going to be left out". The ultimate goal of the mission is to solve the lack of a house for every Venezuelan family.

◆ Yeneiza Delgado Mijares



Catherine Sánchez. Beneficiary of "Las Tres Raíces" residential compound, Caracas

I lived in a shanty house, a place called Roca Tarpeya. Due to the rains, this place soil started to collapse. We were then taken to Miraflores Palace and we were very well assisted. When we received the apartment I felt many things: happiness, gratefulness. I must tell you not to lose your hope, wherever you are, any shelter you are in, you are going to get your house. You have to trust our President.

Las Tres Raíces residential compound

Location: Lecuna Avenue, Caracas

Benefited Families: 42

Description: Eight store building. 30 apartments, 753 ft2 each. Three bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen. 12 apartments 530 ft2 with two bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining, and a kitchen.

Community Spaces: Seven Social-production units and seven commerce centers: Arepera Socialista (sale of the Venezuelan typical dish known as Arepa), a Café Venezuela coffee shop, a grocery named Biceabasto, an art fair, an office to pay for services, a shoe store -with shoes made in the shelter-, a kindergarten, a communal house, a bakery, a textile workshop, and a beauty saloon.



Hileny Keits. Beneficiary of the "Batalla de Carabobo" Community

I was born in Caracas, but I was living in La Guaira. After losing it all, the Bolivarian Government provided us with a house here in the Batalla de Carabobo housing plan. For a Caracas native is always hard to change home but I eventually adapted here. After the creation of the Communal Council Batalla de Carabobo, we got these houses by President Chavez. We are going to build 40,000 houses a year, and we already have 30,000. The opposition still does not believe it, but the communal councils have great organization skills. We made it. My life changed for good, every human being has the right for a decent house.

"Batalla de Carabobo" Community

Location: Los Guayos Municipality. State of Carabobo

Benefited Families: 30

Description: 30 houses. 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, a living room, a dining, and a kitchen



María Salomé Miquiralemo. Beneficiary of the "Ciudad Belén" Socialist City

I had never realized that my 30-year-old house would fall someday. But it did with the rains. By December 3, I said: Oh God if it keeps on raining like this, this is going to crumble!" But now I go to sleep quietly because I know the house is not going to fall down after a heavy rain. Previous government did not get a sack of cement. My message to everybody in shelters is to be patient; President Chavez is working on the housing issue.

"Ciudad Belén" Socialist City

Location: Guarenas, State of Miranda.

Benefited Families: so far 200 (80 in apartments already, 120 with documents on hands). The goal is reaching 420 families.

Description: 3 bedroom, 2 bathrooms, a living/dinning room and a kitchen.

Common Spaces: Playing Ground, Childcare (Simoncito) and sport courts.



WORKERS MANAGE THE HOYA GRANDE FARM

Freed servants are now in charge

The recovery of lands in the South of the Maracaibo Lake, Zulia state (south-western Venezuela) has improved the standard of living and restored the dignity of the communities.

Just a year ago, there was a farm anchored in the past, when owners ruled over everything, including the miserable wages and the time of their workers. It was something similar to the servant-feudal lord relationship in times of feudalism.

Such farm is today the Agricultural Social Production Unit Hoya Grande. With 185 workers, it is one of the 25 extensions of lands recovered in the South of the Maracaibo Lake by the Bolivarian Government.

Today, this Agricultural Social Production Unit has 533 acres, where 5 tons of plantains are produced by acre. Workers expect to double this production to 10 tons.

Worker Exploitation

Emma del Carmen Perez worked for 48 years peeling plantains at the Hoya Grande farm. She assures that she and her workmates were exploited.

They started working at 7:00 AM and they had to fill baskets with 100 plantains. So it was a tough work for the 150 women, who still do this job under totally different conditions in the Agricultural Social Production Unit.

When there was a lot of raw material, they had to work overtime until late at night, and they were given just one meal and a ride home. Emma's face darkens with anger when she remembers the working conditions they had to face: unhealthiness, overcrowding and terrible basic services.



The Bolivarian Government has provided support in order to start educational and training programs that would teach and train workers in the fields such as socio-politics, technical production, and culture.

This is the reason why Emma and some of her workmates are now getting ready to receive academic preparation; they can do so because they now have one thing that was stolen from them before: Time.

"Before, the lack of time was the biggest obstacle we had to study, but now we have the missions (social programs) and we have the opportunity to attend classes," she says. ♦

Luis Eloy Pacheco

Numbers

- 533 acres of sowed land. This represents 56% of the total 1,006-acre recovered land.
- It produces 22% of the plantains grown in the 25 lands recovered by the Bolivarian Government. Around 617 acres have been fertilized.
- After mowing and fertilizing, an area used for nurseries was recovered and it will allow them to sow 62 new acres of plantains.
- New equipment and machinery has been acquired to better manage the crops.
- They are doing the paperwork to acquire tractors and agricultural supplies.
- A technically sustainable meat and milk production project is being developed.

Furthermore, they were paid just US \$ 1.2 per basket, and 0.23 cents of dollar were discounted and they went to a savings bank. This saved money was actually their Christmas bonus.

"The former bosses were despots, who could not care less about our living conditions. Their objective was to exploit us and get rich with our work and production."

A different Story

Emma says the change has been drastic since these lands were recovered. Their salary has increased, and they are better treated. They also get a food bonus, medical insurance, and other benefits established by law.



RESTORATION OF PUBLIC COMMON SPACES

A team committed to its work

101 families benefit from the cleansing of ravines in Antimano Parish in south west Caracas

Ken Eduardo's grandmother prepares breakfast (arepas and fried eggs) for the ten members of the cleansing squads of La Colmena community at the Antimano parish.

Breakfast is the beginning of the voluntary work by the Communal Council Guaicaipuro, which is responsible of the removal of rubble and trash from the ravines.

From 8:AM to 4:PM, the team works with energy and enthusiasm. Its goal is to leave the place clean for the 101 families that surround the ravines.

Wearing jumpsuits, and carrying pikes, brushes, boots, masks, and rubble bags the young members of the group spend the day picking wastes while singing and whistling salsa songs.

Working together

19-year-old Pedro Luis Gonzalez, wants to be a vet. He works with his mates just as anybody else. "Everybody takes part in improving the place and in taking care of everybody's place."

He takes away some stones and smiling tells us: "We want this clean, because we can have fun and play basketball later."



Recovering our spaces

Cesar Negrin has been living for six years with his wife and four children in Los Tubos neighbourhood. Member of the Social Inspection Office for the Guaicaipuro Communal Council, he also prepares yoghurts and jelly for several schools from the area. In the afternoon, he looks after his family and looks over the developing infrastructure.

"The stream the guys are cleansing now is being worked with tools provided by Pdvsa. It is 600 meters long and though a lot of rubble is down there it will not take long before we have our place back."

Cesar tells us there are currently five projects about to be executed in La Colmena: The recovery of the Barrio Adentro facility, and the Culture House, restoring the walkway, and the construction of two brick walls.

Ken Eduardo is eleven years old and studies sixth grade at the Fe y Alegria School. As he watches the cleansing works he says: "It is better this way without trash. My message to Venezuela is that we have to take care of our environment; there is only one planet and we have to keep what we have." ♦

Rita Lucas



Minimal Wage surpasses Food Basic Basket requirements

<p>Bolivarian Revolution </p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2011</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 1st. Legal Minimum Wage: BsF 2,383 (US\$ 529 aprox.) Basic Basket: BsF 1,503 (US\$ 349 aprox) <i>(including May increase)</i> • September 1st. Legal Minimum Wage: BsF 2,523 (US\$ 586 aprox) Basic Basket: BsF. 1,589 (US\$ 369 aprox) <i>(Including September increase)</i>
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1998</p> <p> Puntofijo Pact</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Minimal Wage: BsF. 100 (US\$ 23 aprox) Basic Basket: BsF.123 (US\$ 28.6) • Legal Minimal Wage: The sum of minimal wage plus the bonus for food tickets. • Basic Basket: The group of foods that comply with the amount of nutrients and energy the Venezuelan standard family needs

Source: National Statistics Institute and Ministry of People's Power for Work

Over 164, 286 university workers to benefit with the 40% salary raise

Source: Ministry of People's Power for Higher Education

Scholarships amount duplicated

US\$ 100

Total beneficiaries goes from 70,000 to 82,000

Bolivarian Government Investment:
US\$ 76,000,000



82,860 Teachers of all ranks

- Instructors' salary goes from US\$ 540 to US\$ 770 plus bonus
- Professors' salary goes from US\$ 1,201 to US\$ 1,700 plus bonus

53,444 employees of all ranks

- Lowest rank salary US\$ 530
- Higher rank employees will get US\$ 1,000

27,982 workers of all ranks

- Level 1 workers will get US\$ 390
- Level 7 will get US\$ 450

Bolivarian Government Investment:
1 Billion Dollars

Payment of deficits

- US\$ 130 million to cover students services deficits
- The investment covers: refractory, transport, medical attention, intensive courses, library, and instructional material

Debt Payment

- US\$ 465 million to cover budget deficits for the periods 2008-2009

Teachers, employees, and workers from the 55 universities will benefit from this

