



## STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY

How communities are coming together during unprecedented times

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking an undeniable toll on people around the world. Latin America continues to see a rise in cases, and in many places, an aging, under resourced, and overwhelmed health care infrastructure cannot keep up. As local economies collapsed, hunger played a larger and larger role in the everyday lives of the communities we partner with in El Salvador and Honduras. Historic damage from tropical storms and hurricanes compounded the hardships experienced this year. Despite these many challenges, resilient communities are working together to survive these disasters.

Our partners have been learning from, working with, and serving their communities for decades. When the Mangrove Association helped 98 families in surrounding villages establish their own home gardens, they weren't strangers handing out needless items to nameless faces - they were helping their neighbors and friends through hard

times. The Women's Association of Barra de Santiago (AMBAS) set up sanitation stations because they knew how many of their neighbors barely had enough water to drink or cook with, let alone practice regular hand washing. Red COMAL improved food security in seven indigenous villages in the mountains of La Paz, Honduras, by working with local producers to provide basic grains to over 200 families. They have the expertise and capacity needed to help each other through these disasters.

This year, you've shown extraordinary compassion and solidarity for our partners and their work. With your support, they have stepped up to help their friends, family, and neighbors survive by listening to their needs and mobilizing their resources to respond quickly and effectively.

***Thank you for the generosity and kindness you've shown by stepping up to care for one another during these challenging times.***



# SPECIAL REPORT: HONDURAS

## BACK-TO-BACK HURRICANES CAUSE DEVASTATING FLOODS



In Honduras, Hurricane Eta left a trail of death and destruction in its wake. Thousands of hectares of crops were washed away, causing even more shortages in communities experiencing severe food insecurity as a result of the pandemic. And then, a mere two weeks later, Hurricane Iota followed Eta's path making matters devastatingly worse.

Red COMAL's team immediately launched relief efforts to ensure access to food and basic necessities for those most impacted by the storms. Thanks to your outpouring of support, they delivered emergency food and supplies to over 250 rural families. They also purchased over 10,000 pounds of beans, and in the coming weeks and months will work with small farmers to help rebuild fields destroyed by floods and landslides. Thank you so much for your solidarity during this difficult time.



**Top left:** Red COMAL staff and volunteers worked tirelessly day and night to purchase, pack, and distribute emergency supplies **Left:** Kits were distributed to rural villages cut-off by the storms **Bottom:** Floods decimated communities in the Valle de Sula (Reuters)





# FARMING FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

As part of the Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund, our partners have:

- Built 15 community-led poultry farms in 9 different communities throughout the Bajo Lempa.
- Established 48 corn plots and 20 fruit orchards to improve community food security.
- Distributed 5,000 tomato and pepper seedlings to households throughout the Bajo Lempa, San Marcos Lempa, and Tierra Blanca.
- Provided over 200 families with biosafety kits, food baskets, and supplies for the production of basic grains in 7 communities in southern Honduras.

*Justiniano Vasquez, a small farmer in rural El Salvador, worked with the Mangrove Association's agroecology program to increase crop production.*



"In times of crisis, we must turn to traditional knowledge to survive. The support from the Mangrove Association and EcoViva has made it easier for us to continue agricultural production. We are grateful that they never abandoned us; they are always finding ways to help the poorest families. It is important for all of us to stay active, organized, connected, and to always contribute our collective knowledge to help the Mangrove Association further develop local capacity and continue to improve the economic stability of families in the Bajo Lempa."

*Donaldo Zuniga, Executive Director of Red COMAL, coordinated rapid responses to the crisis.*



Red COMAL supported seven communities during the COVID-19 crisis. "The most significant way Red COMAL has helped vulnerable families through this disaster is through agricultural production and food distribution. Food insecurity is a major problem for thousands of families across Honduras, and this support saved many lives. I am inspired by the opportunity to provide support to some of Honduras' most vulnerable families. The ability to improve health and security in our communities gives me hope."

*María Anastasia Vigil took part in the Mangrove Association's poultry farm program.*



"I am grateful for the solidarity of the Mangrove Association and the good-hearted people who they collaborate with. They provided support and materials to build poultry farms, which helped our family survive this crisis. Through this work, I am able to produce more eggs for my family and become more financially stable. To maintain a chicken farm, it is important for family members to communicate and collaborate, and these projects help families work better together."



# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

## *Radio Mangle keeps families safe and informed*



*Ever Guevara is the director of Radio Mangle, a community radio station.*

During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in El Salvador, false rumors spread across the country through social media, unscrupulous news outlets, and

word of mouth. New quarantine rules and restrictions were not communicated clearly and the government's emergency relief programs required complicated steps to access. Strict curfews, lack of public transport, and social isolation left many people confused and afraid.

Ever Guevara is the Director of Radio Mangle, a station serving over 200 rural towns in the Bajo Lempa. They stayed on air every day throughout the pandemic, bringing accurate information to their listeners about Covid-19:

how it spreads, what symptoms to watch for, how to prevent infection, and how to apply for emergency relief. Ever knows the radio's constant coverage continues to be a vital resource for his community, as trusted news sources are hard to come by. Ever is proud of the role Radio Mangle plays to battle disinformation and help the people of the Bajo Lempa navigate these difficult times.



***"Radio Mangle's COVID-19 prevention campaigns have been an incredibly important resource for our communities."***

*Teresa Yamileth Orellana Melgar, Radio Mangle*

### **PUERTO PARADA HIT HARD BY STORM SURGE**

Tropical Storm Amanda destroyed agricultural fields and family farms at the end of May, further threatened the safety and food security of vulnerable families. Cincahuite, a local grassroots organization, led recovery efforts by evacuating community members, repairing levies, and distributing emergency supplies.



### **AMBAS SETS UP SANITATION STATIONS**

AMBAS mobilized in the community of Barra de Santiago to distribute emergency supplies to meet basic needs. They supplemented these efforts providing fresh fish and helping families start home gardens. Their disinfecting stations encouraged safe practices while protecting water security.

### **RED COMAL HELPS FARMERS AND FOOD SECURITY**

Red COMAL gave guidance to local agricultural producers to safeguard the availability of grains and seeds for local communities. They provided additional assistance to small farmers to help combat growing food insecurity caused by strict quarantine measures and collapsed markets. They also conducted food security studies and provided emergency food staples to families in need.





# ORGANIZING IN ACTION

*How relief reaches the communities that need it most*



*Oscar Armando Rivas, a community leader from El Jicaro and participant in COVID-19 relief efforts to improve food security*

**"The most important part of being organized is that help actually reaches families that need it."**

Oscar is a local leader in the small town of El Jicaro who has dedicated years of service to community organizing. With the Mangrove Association's help, El Jicaro's local group is working to face problems caused by the global pandemic. Oscar shares with us how the situation has had a severe impact on the local economy and the livelihoods of himself and those around him.

"I am very grateful that we are organized. It helps that groups like ours have been working with the communities for a long time, so we know them and can provide better support. The Mangrove Association helped us work together to support small farmers and provide emergency food kits to families in need. This has helped keep our community from going hungry. The most important part of being organized is that the help actually reaches families that need it." Strict curfews and the danger of contracting the virus makes it difficult for families to leave their homes to earn money or access basic necessities. The ability to provide for themselves through vegetable gardens, local livestock, and poultry farms has improved community resilience and maintained food security.



*Oscar, caring for an egg-laying hen at his small poultry farm in El Jicaro*

The Mangrove Association's organized emergency response helped Oscar set up his own poultry farm to make it through this extremely difficult time. "Because of the pandemic, I no longer have the necessary resources to survive. This type of support helps us produce our own food and generate a modest income. I am very grateful for this community effort to help each other thrive. It motivates us to keep going forward during the pandemic."

**Want to help continue this important work?**

With your support, our partners can expand food security programs to serve more rural communities. They can provide additional trainings for small farmers on agroecological methods that improve sustainability - both for the people and for the environment. Thank you for your solidarity and unwavering support!

Please stay tuned for new ways to directly support our partners on GlobalGiving.

  
**ecoviva**