

Sharing three years of joint work between civil society, government and private sector in DRR



Last July, over 200 people gathered in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, at a forum on the private sector's commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The participants were made up of personnel from private companies, public institutions and NGOs. The forum explored the collaboration to improve emergency preparedness and response capacity

in Northern Honduras between Trócaire, the Honduran Association of Light Manufacturing (AHM), the Honduran Association of NGOs (ASONOG), the Mennonite Social Action Committee (CASM) and the Honduran Commission for Emergencies (COPECO).

Continues on page 4

Our projects in Central America



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Response to the food crisis in the most vulnerable communities in Guatemala

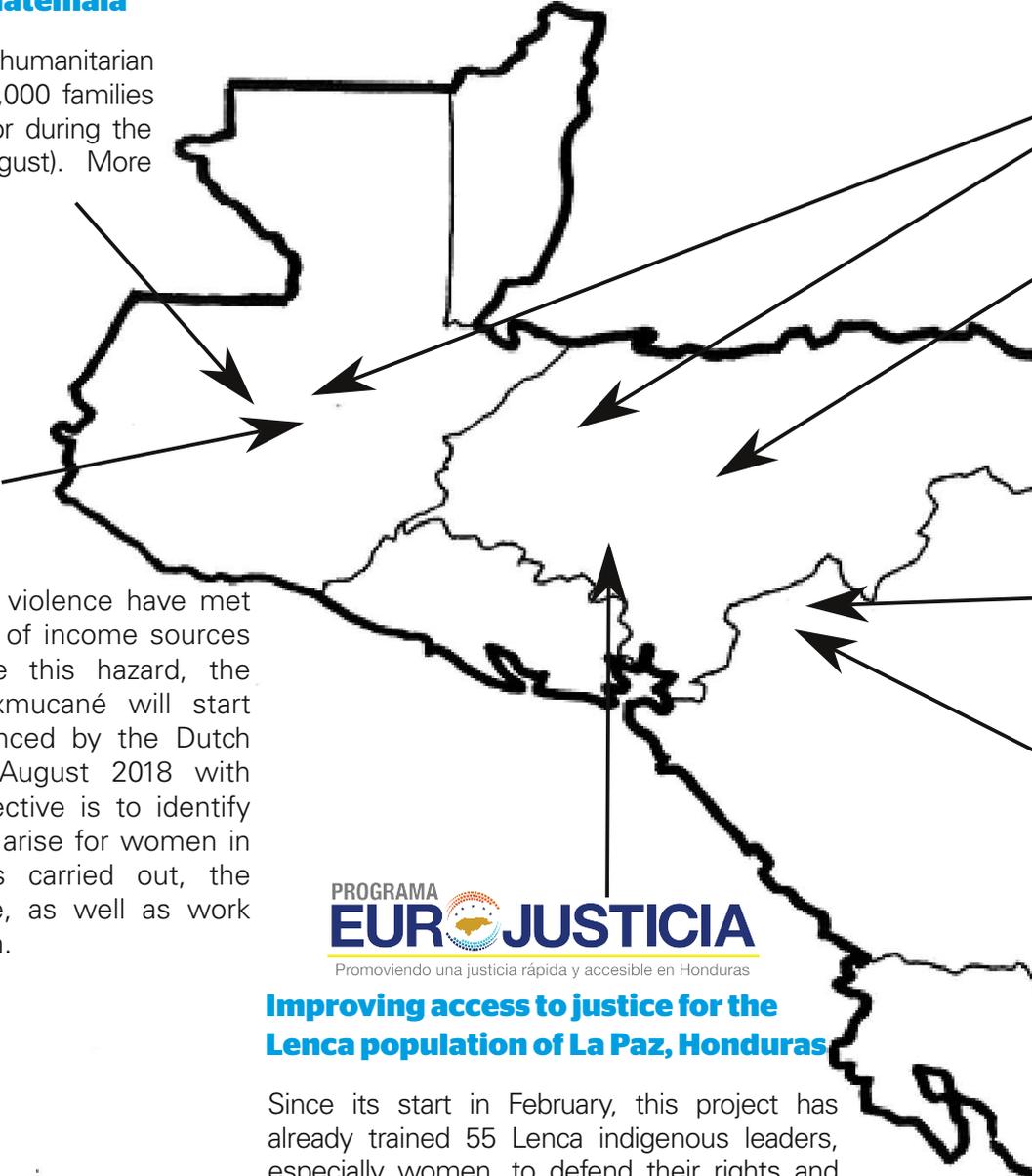
Trócaire, along with other humanitarian organisations, provided support to 2,000 families living in the Guatemalan Dry Corridor during the seasonal hunger gap (June - August). More information on page 6.

STICHTING BVA

Breaking the cycle of gender based violence through economic empowerment of indigenous women and girls

Supporting women to live free of violence have met with a constant obstacle: the lack of income sources to build new lives. To overcome this hazard, the Guatemalan women collective Ixmucané will start implementing a new project financed by the Dutch organisation Stichting BVA until August 2018 with Trócaire support. The primary objective is to identify what economic opportunities may arise for women in their communities. While this is carried out, the empowerment work will continue, as well as work around new masculinities with men.

More info on page 6.



PROGRAMA
EUR JUSTICIA
Promoviendo una justicia rápida y accesible en Honduras

Improving access to justice for the Lenca population of La Paz, Honduras

Since its start in February, this project has already trained 55 Lenca indigenous leaders, especially women, to defend their rights and also 22 justice workers to have a better understanding of human rights violations and gender-based violence. Legal assistance has been provided in 66 cases related to both of these problems. Besides, there are now six human rights promotion networks in the area, as well as safety plans for human rights defenders and their organisations. To improve advocacy strategies, several surveys have been carried out to identify the main obstacles that Lenca people find to have better access to justice. The information gathered will enable the partners and activist to propose solutions to improve the current situation.

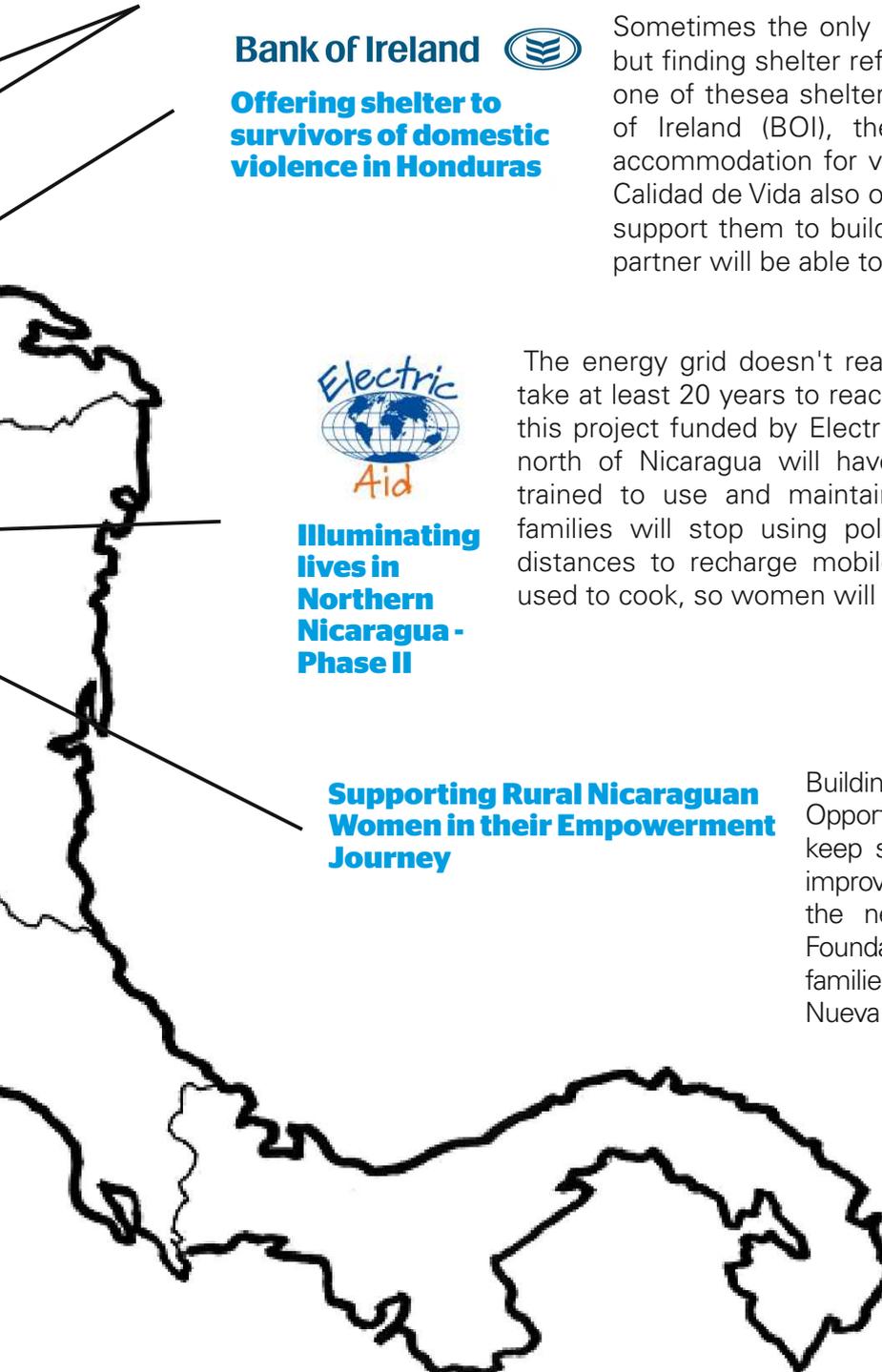
More information on page 5.



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Enhancing resilience in Central America through multi-stakeholder disaster risk management partnerships

After years of experience in the Sula Valley, working to involve the private sector in efforts to reduce the risk of disasters, Trócaire is scaling-up the work in Honduras and expanding it to Guatemala. More information on pages 4 and 5.



Bank of Ireland

Offering shelter to survivors of domestic violence in Honduras

Sometimes the only option to leave violence behind is escaping, but finding shelter refuge is hard. Our partner Calidad de Vida runs one of thesea shelter which, and thanks to a donation from Bank of Ireland (BOI), they will repair it to provide proper better accommodation for victims of gender violence and their children. Calidad de Vida also offers education and training for the victims to support them to build new lives. WlthWith the BOI donation, our partner will be able to improve the quality of the training provided.



Illuminating lives in Northern Nicaragua - Phase II

The energy grid doesn't reach every household in Nicaragua, and it will take at least 20 years to reach many rural areas. Thanks to a new phase of this project funded by Electric Aid-funded project, 36 rural families in the north of Nicaragua will have access to renewable energy and will be trained to use and maintain solar panels. With the solar panels, the families will stop using polluting fuels (gas, kerosene), travelling long distances to recharge mobile phones and reduce the amount of wood used to cook, so women will be the main beneficiaries.

Supporting Rural Nicaraguan Women in their Empowerment Journey

Building over upon the project "Land for Women Opportunities for Life", Trócaire and its partners will keep supporting Nicaraguan women to access land, improve harvests and bolsters food security now with the new financial backing of from The Kenneally Foundation. This new project aims to reach 500 families (2500 people) living in the departments of Nueva Segovia, Madriz and Estelí, areas that will be heavily affected by the El Niño phenomenon for the next three years. The work goes beyond just accessing land. It, also aiming at the creation of to create women-led businesses to diversify the sources of income and to balance the gender relationships inside the families as well as improving women self-esteem and decision making power.

Disaster Risk Reductions Forum in San



Speakers of the event during the Q&A session.

Photo: Santiago Agra/Trócaire

Comes from page 1

This work, which started in 2014, has benefited more than 30,000 people in the cities of San Pedro Sula, Choloma and Puerto Cortés. The project has been made possible due to the support of the Disaster Preparedness ECHO (DIPECHO) programme of the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO). The work was much needed as the Sula Valley in Honduras is the most populated area in the country, extremely vulnerable to floods and hurricanes, has huge social inequality and high crime rates. The participation of the private sector was critical as the Sula Valley is the country's economic engine, with a large light manufacturing sector. Nelson García, from CASM, talked about the project as "an example at a national and international level of coordination between civil society organisations, public institutions and the private sector" and remembered that there are still 18,000 people living in shanty towns in the city.

During the event, the speakers from government, civil society and the private sector talked about the legal framework in Honduras for DRR, the national and regional advocacy platforms, the importance of

private sector participation and the experience of the AHM. "The relationship with civil society organisations was difficult at the beginning, but I reckon that many industries don't take seriously this kind of initiative because of their lack of knowledge about the risks we are exposed to" AHM coordinator of the occupational health and safety unit, Geovani Lara, pointed out. The purpose of project was for textile factories and other businesses to have developed "Business Disaster Preparedness and Contingency Plans with a Social Perspective", according to Lara. "We want to ensure that emergency plans take into account how workers' communities are affected when an emergency is declared and in the medium term, being able to work alongside these communities to reduce existing risks and avoid creating new ones. We want the people we train to use their abilities in their communities, to be agents of change and to create resilience".

One of the achievements of the project is having 2,000 trained responders accredited by COPECO to act during emergencies in the factories. Many factories now have a workplace emergency committee registered with COPECO, with skills

Pedro Sula

ranging from first aid, evacuation, to search and rescue. "The focus of corporate social responsibility should shift towards disaster risk reduction," says Lara. "We are happy with the work we have done so far," added Martha Benavides, Head of Technical Services and Administration at AHM, "but we still have a long way to go. Between 40 and 60% of the companies that close down during an emergency never reopen," pointed out Marianela Guzmán, from the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC). "If the company can recover quickly from an emergency this benefits the communities where the workers live," Lara pointed out.



Country Director Hervé Bund speaking with the media during the event.

The event closed with a call for the three sectors to keep working together and to bring more companies on board to replicate the good work done up to now in other sectors of the Honduran economy, in order to keep protecting people's lives and livelihoods once the project is over. Currently, this work is being replicated in the south of Honduras and a parallel project, also funded by ECHO, is being implemented in the department of Escuintla in Guatemala.

Supporting the Lenca people to keep their land

Trócaire, through its partners in the Eurojusticia project, is supporting Lenca indigenous people to defend their land, with the financial support of the European Union. One example is the Base 9 de Julio (9th July Basecamp), where nine men are fighting to keep harvesting their crops on a plot of land that was uncultivated before they entered on July 23rd, 2010. 29 families "recovered" the land, but the majority have left due to persecution and repression. They live under constant siege by the police and the army, who have reinforced their presence in the area.



The Honduran Committee of Relatives of Missing Detainees (COFADEH) has provided legal support during all the processes open against them. Many of the causes are rigged as there is the influence of political interest. "We have already endured 28 evictions, but up to now only three or four have been legal, we checked the files," explains Fabricio Vásquez, secretary of the group. Many of them have been violent, and the police used live ammunition and tear gasses. "On the last eviction, in January, it seems that the plot was on fire and you could hear the bullets bumping into the trees," Fabricio says. "During evictions, they destroy everything: the harvest, the houses, they steal our tools and our clothes"; Wilman Chavez, another member explains. "Besides, when they arrive to violate rights, they abuse the women and don't respect the elders or the children."

Despite all the problems they are facing, none of them have lost their smile and they keep focused on feeding their families. Between individual and communal plots they grow corn, beans, cassava, bananas, coffee, chayote and medicinal plants. "Our roots are deep in the earth," Inocencio Vásquez, the eldest camp member says confidently, "they will only take us from here dead." In Honduras 300,000 rural families are landless and La Paz is a department with high levels of child malnourishment. Access to a plot of land to grow food is a right not a crime.

Guatemala

Breaking the economic dependence of women

Escaping violence requires more than just stopping the strikesblows. Building a life free of violence demands breaking the chains that trap women in that situation. Economic dependence is one of these main reasonschains. In a patriarchal society that relegates women to the private domestic sphere, earning a living is a challenge for those looking for their autonomy. Trócaire and its partners' work to support violence survivors who have stumbled come up against this obstacle in the women empowerment journey.



Women of Ixmukané that are carrying out the project

To overcome it, Trócaire partner Ixmukané is starting a project focus on looking for economic opportunities for women, keep empowering them while working with men at the same time to promote a different behaviours towards women. The initiative, funded by the Dutch organisation Stichting BVA, will last until August 2018. Ixmukané works in the Quiché department, an area heavily affected by poverty and one of the main scenarios centres of the internal armed conflict that shook the country from 1960 to 1996.

Several women who have been supported by Ixmukané to escape violence are now legal facilitators and have many ideas to start economic projects that women could carry out from their houses or small plots of land. Some examples are raising poultry or pigs, restaurants or knitting workshops. During the They have a year ahead they will work to develop a plan to figure out what they need to transform these ideas into real projects that can support women to build lives free of violence and also support the development of their communities.

Fighting food insecurity in the Dry Corridor

Last August, the beneficiaries of the project "Response to the food crisis in the most vulnerable communities in Guatemala" received their last cash transfer to buy food. The project was is funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and carried out by a consortium of international organisations and local partners headed lead by Acción Contra el Hambre. Trócaire took part along with its partner the Highlands Peasant Committee (CCDA).



Beneficiaries waiting for the last cash transfer

Since 2014, the drought caused by El Niño has wiped out food sources for many families in the Quiché department, a part of Guatemala with high poverty at the heart of the Central American Dry Corridor. CCDA carried out a survey alongside community and grassroots organisations to choose the beneficiaries, prioritising women, malnourished children and the elderly. Many beneficiaries are indigenous, making them more vulnerable. For women, the situation can be worse.

Beyond the transfers, the our partner also monitors improvements the evolution of in children's health after each cash transfer and also what the beneficiaries bought with the money received. For many families, this is the only chance they have to eat meat. The families with malnourished children also got extra nutritional packages and families with small plots of land also received seeds and training to produce within agroecological techniques.

Nicaragua

Strengthening the response to gender-based violence

The Early Warning System (EWS) against Gender Based Violence of Chinandega entered a new stage with several upgrades. The number of women reporting cases (called "enlaces") has been modified to be more efficient, they have received state-of-the-art mobile phones with new apps to collect data about the cases they denounce. The system is SMS-based to avoid problems with internet connection. Initially, the EWS came up as a collaboration between the French NGO Télécom Sans Frontières (TSF) and the Chinandega Women Movement (MMCh). Trócaire and our partner, the Association for the Integral Development of Women (APADEIM), joined in 2016.



Two enlaces learning to use the new devices

In this new phase, the EWS is staffed with a coordinator, two administrators, a lawyer and a psychologist, who provide free and specialised support to the victims during the complaint and recovery process. Every time that any of the "enlaces" send a complaint, they are registered automatically on a server and on an online map with geolocalised data. This allows monitoring cases by place, type and frequency. Based on this data, MMCh and APADEIM produce periodic reports as "observatories" of the violence in the department to track and visualise the cases of GBV and to establish a dialogue with government and civil society stakeholders through analysis working groups. The idea is to contribute to citizen advocacy in a country where the relationship between civil society organisation and government institutions is getting more and more difficult.

"Recovering Utopia" for civil society organisations

Since January 2017, a group of 51 organisations and 58 people led by our partner Red Nicaraguense por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local (RNDDL) have carried out a process of reflection that helped them "to recover Utopia", according to the facilitator and expert Marcelo Manucci.

The people taking part in this process work in thematic areas from cattle rising to civil rights and strategic planning. The aim of the process was that not only the organisations look for new ways of doing their jobs, but also to change the way the staff think and solve the problems they face. "Behind the numbers, there are life stories that want to change other lives", according to Manucci.



Facilitator Marcelo Manucci (standing) with the participants in the Forum. Photo: Red Local

Not all the organisations that began the journey in January have finished their plan yet, so the numbers of interventions planned will keep growing during the next week and months. The III Forum is not the end of the process, but a chance to open new cycles of innovation with the participants and other organisations.

25 of these participating organisations presented the projects resulting from this process at the III National Forum on Innovation and Sustainability in Managua on September 21st. The projects include 335 proposed interventions on the different parts of the country where the participants work. "Each one has a utopia behind it,"; Manucci said.

Red Local will open their virtual classroom to more people interested in replicating the experience in universities, private companies and local, regional and national institutions of Nicaragua.

UCD Volunteers Overseas comes back to Nicaragua



Irish volunteers with MCN staff with their painting in Funarte offices in Estelí

As every year, a group of students from UCD Volunteers Overseas came to Somoto in Northern Nicaragua this summer. In the last three years, Trócaire has been organising for UCDVO workshops and field visits to partners' projects in collaboration with our Development Education department in Ireland, to introduce students to our work. We shared two days with a group of 23 students learning about climate justice, prevention of gender-based violence and women's empowerment, interacting with our partners Centro Humboldt, Funarte and Movimiento Comunal Nicaragüense and their beneficiaries. In the city of Estelí, volunteers made paintings with the guidance of Funarte in the same way this partner

does with people who suffered violence. With Movimiento Comunal volunteers not only listened to the testimonies of project participants but they also shared traditional dances from Ireland and Nicaragua. Irish students and people from the community of Apatule had a lot of fun. After seeing the work of partners, volunteers expressed they wanted to learn more about opportunities for engagement with Trócaire back in Ireland, and now the Education department is inviting them to participate in the Student Ambassador programme. We are already planning for next year's visit!

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