

WEATHER PROOFING

Help farming families to feed themselves in the face of more frequent droughts and floods

April 2015 to March 2016

FUNDING TARGET: £294,250

Your support could ensure that more than 2,700 people have enough to eat by: helping communities to plan and prepare for extreme weather; enabling families to strengthen their livelihoods; empowering women to renegotiate their position in their households and communities, resulting in a fairer distribution of responsibilities; and influencing the government to support climate change adaptation efforts.

BACKGROUND

Levels of rural poverty in Honduras are shocking, with the majority of households living below the poverty line. Most families rely on small-scale farming, but they often are not able to grow enough to eat.

Rural women bear the brunt of this poverty, with fewer resources and more responsibilities. On top of childcare and housework duties, women are expected to sow, grow, and harvest crops. This means they have less time to participate in the decisions that affect them, further exacerbated by the cultural and social barriers which prevent women from taking leadership positions.

This combination of increased responsibility and marginalised status means that women are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which are already being felt in Honduras. Changing weather patterns are affecting crop yields, and the increasing scarcity of water supplies and firewood mean that women and girls have to walk further to gather them, adding to their already overburdened workload.



A workshop on adapting farming methods to changing weather patterns in the community of Santa Teresa. Photo: Leonel Hernandez/AESMO.

THE PROJECT

“Rural women in western Honduras are on the frontline of climate change. This project takes a holistic approach, working with both women and men on livelihoods, natural resource management, and gender training to make sure that farming families have enough to eat, now and in the future”
Hector Ortega, Oxfam Programme Manager.

Despite a serious drought in 2014, the project has already had some key successes in introducing new farming techniques, addressing gender imbalances and pushing the government for greater support.

Building on this success, the project will continue to work with farming communities living in two river basin areas (Rio Hondo and Zanjon) in western Honduras. Together with partners, we will support communities to be better prepared and coordinated on climate change, bringing community members together to adapt the way that they grow food and earn money, and protect water sources.

We will work to tackle the interlinked issues of food shortages and gender inequality by providing start-up funds and equipment for 40 women and young people to begin new income-generation activities, as well as supporting them to negotiate their responsibilities within their households and communities.

It is vital that the government increases its support to rural communities struggling to deal with climate change. The project will boost the influencing skills of two local organisations and two national organisations to advocate for increased support from authorities. A public campaign using media, social media, and high-level influencing will add to the calls for more resources to be made available for small-scale farmers, especially women.



Honduras profile

Population: 8.1 million

Development: 129 (of 187) on the HDI¹

Gross national income per capita: \$4,138 (UK: \$35,002)

Rural population living in extreme poverty: 50%²

Proportion of women small-scale farmers who do not hold land titles: 86%³

Source: 2014 UNDP Human Development report, unless otherwise stated.

¹The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: life expectancy and health, access to knowledge and standard of living.

² IFAD, 2010

³ La Encuesta de Demografía y Salud (ENDESA, 2011-2012)/ Investigación de Campaña Cosechemos Justicia para las Mujeres del Campo. Cespád 2013.

Jaime Eduardo Urias received training from the project on the unequal distribution of childcare and household responsibilities between women and men. Now, he is proud to help his mother around the house. Photo: Leonel Hernandez/AESMO.



ACTIVITIES

Support communities to plan for extreme weather and manage natural resources sustainably

- Support 200 people (80 women and 120 men) to adapt their livelihoods to extreme weather, ensuring women are included in discussions and decisions to boost people's ability to cope, and continue to support 400 people who received training last year.
- Protect and manage two river basin areas sustainably, including by protecting water sources for drinking and farming.
- Run pilot projects demonstrating sustainable farming techniques in two river basins.

Strengthen household livelihoods and reduce the risk of food shortages

- Support 15 farming families to assess the risks to their livelihoods and to adopt environment-friendly, productive and sustainable methods and approaches, generating best practices that will be used in other communities, and provide ongoing technical and mentoring support to 50 farming families who participated in this training last year.
- Provide capital and equipment to 40 women and young people so they can undertake new income-generation activities and renegotiate their position and responsibilities within their households and communities.
- Work with 300 families, 200 of which were involved in this work last year, to co-ordinate measures to improve food supplies, such as establishing community food reserves and building rainwater-harvesting systems.

Enhance co-operation between communities, the government, and civil society organisations on climate change policy, and push for increased support

- Boost the influencing, communication and leadership skills of two local networks and two national organisations through workshops and learning events, to enable strong influencing of policies on adaptation to climate change.
- Publicise two examples of the local impacts of climate change and potential solutions, and research the legal and political implications of the project's conservation activities to use as evidence for influencing.
- Develop a mass media campaign on the impact of climate change, particularly on sustainable use of land, water, and forests, and push for more government support for climate change adaptation measures.

BENEFICIARIES

This year, over 1,600 people will directly benefit from having more to eat and from learning new farming techniques. By the end of the project, this figure will rise to over 4,800 people. Indirectly, all of the residents of the two river basins (more than 33,000 people) will benefit from the project this year, thanks to improved management of the river basin, improved community food reserves, and new rainwater-harvesting systems.

MONITORING

Results will be measured against key indicators including household food supplies, and women's participation in local organisations. We will monitor the conservation of areas of forest needed to regulate water supplies and the success of sustainable livelihood activities. Communities' ability to lobby for government support will be judged by public and local authority awareness. Monitoring will be conducted through surveys, activity reports, and resource management plans.

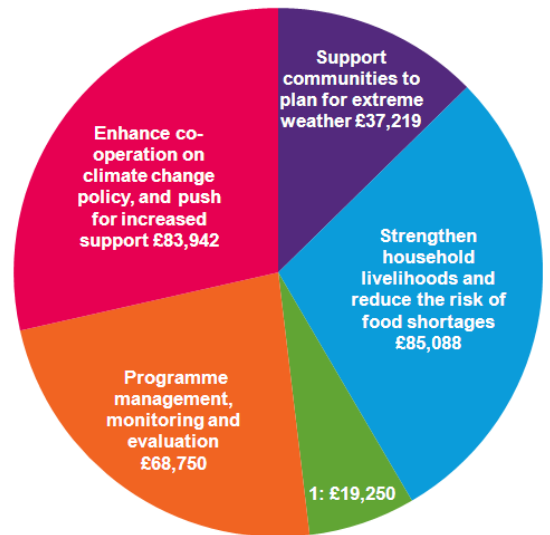
SUSTAINABILITY

The municipal government and local people from 16 communities will take on the responsibility for managing the river basins and adaptation activities at project end. Providing training in climate change planning and sustainable resource management will ensure that the expertise and commitment remain within the communities. This support will also give community organisations the evidence to continue to influence the government and the public in favour of small-scale farming and climate change response.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The cost of implementing this project is £294,250. Costs for some of the key activities are as follows:

- £7,097: Produce legal and policy research on conserving natural resources in western Honduras.
- £21,208: Support 600 people to adapt their livelihoods to extreme weather, ensuring women are included in discussions and decisions, and generating best practices that can be shared with other communities.
- £39,906: Work with 300 families to improve food supplies, including community food reserves; and run pilot projects demonstrating sustainable farming techniques in two river basins.



1. Essential HQ management, support and administration.

CARMEN'S STORY

Carmen Fúnez, 24, is a pioneering young woman leader from Nueva Arcadia in Copan Region. Elected as a leader in her town aged just 18, she has a strong commitment to serving her community and breaking down the barriers which normally prevent young women from taking up leadership positions.

When her community's water source was threatened by a land deal, Carmen was supported by the project to coordinate a community purchase of the land. The project has also helped to install a new water system, meaning that the community now has nearby, secure, clean drinking water supplies.

Oxfam will continue to work with communities and our partners to develop more women leaders like Carmen, as well as supporting local communities to protect the natural resources which they rely on.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST. WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN EMPOWER RURAL WOMEN AND ENSURE THAT FARMING FAMILIES HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT.