



ANNUAL REPORT 2012



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
DEPARTMENT FOR WORLD SERVICE - CENTRAL AMERICA PROGRAM

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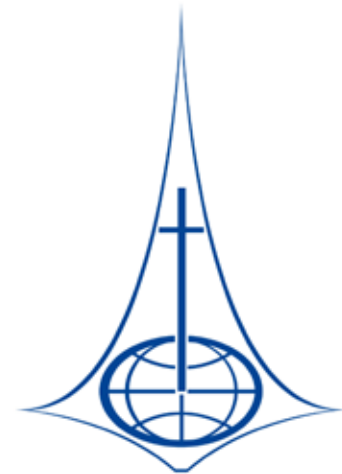
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Who We Are



Youth take classes at a school in Ciudad Quetzal, Guatemala, organized by the partner organization Caja Lúdica. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF now has 145 member churches in 79 countries all over the world, representing 70 million Christians.

The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches along common interests such as ecumenical and inter-religious relations, theology, humanitarian aid, international affairs and human rights, communication, and mission and development work.

The LWF General Secretariat is located at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, Switzerland.

Department for World Service (DWS)

The Department for World Service (DWS) is cooperation branch of the LWF for humanitarian relief and development.

The DWS is rooted in Christian values of love, reconciliation and justice, and it responds to human need in countries where the LWF programs are located. The DWS works together with local and international partners to alleviate suffering, combat injustice and poverty, and lay the foundation for a life with dignity for all. The DWS works in regions and countries with high levels of vulnerability to natural disasters and a high concentration of poverty. The work of the DWS is spread across in 34 countries through 15 programs with thematic objectives for: disaster response and risk reduction; creating sustainable communities;

combating HIV and AIDS; promoting peace, reconciliation and human rights; transforming gender relations, and; protecting the environment. The DWS serves all people irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, race, or political conviction.

ACT Alliance

The LWF is a founding member of the ACT Alliance, which is a global coalition of 125 churches and agencies throughout the world, dedicated to development, humanitarian aid, and advocacy. Its members work in 140 countries. ACT Alliance regional and national-level forums exist in the Central American region.

Central America Program

The LWF/DWS “Sustainable Development and Advocacy Program” in Central America aims to contribute to the reduction of the root causes of vulnerability in Central America, taking innovative steps through a rights-based approach and a framework of holistic action for sustainable development.

The program’s regional office is located in El Salvador, where it coordinates work for emergency and humanitarian response and rehabilitation activities. The program is also implemented through national offices in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

Additionally, regional activities are conducted to ensure social coordination across all levels.



The LWF/DWS Central America Program responds to the objectives laid out in the 2008-2013 Strategy:

General Objective:

Contribute to the reduction of the causes of vulnerability in Central America, with innovative actions based on rights in the framework of integrated sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 1:

Build capacity of families and production groups in the communities on food sovereignty and security, and advocacy in decision-making on the appropriate use of natural resources.

Strategic Objective 2:

Help community and social organizations to promote dynamics to establish inclusive public policies.

Strategic Objective 3:

Build capacity for joint action for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response.

Strategic Objective 4:

Improve the coherence, effectiveness, visibility, and quality of the regional program strategy.

Children at a school in Ciudad Quetzal, Guatemala, where the Central America Program works with the partner organization Caja Lúdica. July, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.





Our Region

The social, economic, environmental, and political conditions in Central America make it one of the most vulnerable regions in the world.

In terms of the **political and democratic situation** in the year 2012, El Salvador underwent an inter-institutional crisis among the three branches of the State, as a result of non-compliance with the election criteria for the selection of Justices to the Supreme Court in 2006 and 2012. In December, United Nations Special Rapporteur Gabriela Knaul urged the Salvadoran government to work to resolve the challenges to judicial independence. At the end of that same year Honduras underwent a crisis of its own, as the National Congress removed four Justices of the Constitutional Court from their posts, leading to a crisis between new and old Justices.

Municipal elections were held in Nicaragua in 2012. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party won in 75.69% of the municipalities. According to the NGO Transparency International, Honduras and Nicaragua are among the least transparent countries in terms of governmental performance.

In Honduras, the causes and effects of the 2009 coup still persist; historic state institutions have lost credibility and are unable to resolve the issues of poverty, exclusion, and obstacles to sound governance. In the year 2012, the political situation in Honduras was delineated by internal and primary elections. Following these elections results, there are now nine parties legally registering candidates for the general elections to be held in November, 2013.

Several public opinion studies reveal that between 65% and 70% of the population of Honduras disapproves of the President Lobo administration. Some 52% of those surveyed report mistrust of political parties, 50% are mistrustful of the National Congress, and 45% mistrust the police.

With respect to **inclusive public policies and advocacy**, the Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women came into effect in Nicaragua in June, 2012. Nonetheless, the state does not have sufficient resources to enforce this law; approximately 100 complaints are filed daily at the Police Office for Women and Children, but the majority are simply not processed and the aggressors go free.

In Honduras, women and youth account for 53% of the population. Despite this ratio, these groups have yet to reach even the minimum threshold of 30% representation in public offices. Despite the fact that there are laws on the books and national and local-level structures in place to protect women, youth, and children, there is no political willingness for enforcement.

In Guatemala, the promise of passing the Rural Integral Development Law has gone unmet, leading to a tense environment of pressure by rural farmers' groups and blockages from the private sector. The United Nations noted the initiative as a debt due since the peace accords were signed in 1996.

With respect to the **economy and vulnerable sectors**, the Multi-Purpose Household Survey (EHPM by its Spanish acronym) revealed persistent inequality between men and women in El Salvador in areas such as access to education, healthcare, employment, and the quality of these services. National illiteracy rates are at 12.8%, but this overall figure hides a 15% rate for women, while men come in at 10.2%.

Honduras is considered to be the third-least equitable country in Latin America, after Haiti and Colombia, to the extreme that just 205 millionaires in the country control 27 billion dollars. It is estimated that in Honduras just 30% of the

population is able to earn the minimum income necessary to meet their basic needs, including the upper and middle classes. Among the rest of the population, 26% are considered recent poor, 10% structural poor, and 34% chronically poor.



A woman walks and carries her child in a community in Chinandega, Nicaragua. October, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

At the end of the year 2012, the Government of Honduras endured an economic crisis of such magnitude that by December of that year they could no longer pay wages and benefits for many public workers in the healthcare or education sectors. The government is facing a fiscal deficit of 20 million lempiras (\$1,014,208 dollars). The unemployment rates further complicate this situation, with 853 thousand young people unable to find job opportunities, 337 thousand children and minors working at high risk and with low salaries, and 700 thousand adults over the age of 60 without pensions, supported only by their families.

The treaty to institute the Unified System for Regional Compensation (SUCRE) was passed in

November in Nicaragua, as a member country of the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our Americas (ALBA).

With respect to **human rights and justice**, Central America was characterized by structural weaknesses within the states and an authoritarian political culture and stance. Violations of fundamental rights such as the right to food, land and territory, a healthy environment, and others, continue to occur and continue to be covered up in the region.

In Honduras there is a persistent scenario of chronic insecurity for human rights defenders, operators of the justice system, journalists, and those who fight for access to land. In the first five months of the year, 3,745 violent deaths were reported related to these issues. Of this total, 2,722 deaths were of people from the ages of 14 to 35. Up to 90% of the cases remain unresolved; 80% of the crimes reported are not investigated, much less tried.

In the year 2012, Nicaragua passed the Law for the Promotion, Protection, and Defense of Human Rights against HIV-AIDS.

Violence and drug trafficking grow each year, according to the 2012 “Regional Security in Latin America” report. Central America boasts the highest violent murder rate in the world; approximately two-thirds of these cases are committed with firearms and linked to crime, drug activity, or human smuggling and trafficking. The 2012 Global Peace Indicator Report revealed that the countries of Central America have some of the highest levels of violence out of the total of 158 countries studied. Honduras comes in at 129 in the peace indicators, Guatemala at 124, El Salvador at 111, and Nicaragua in position 81.

Given this scenario, security is essential. Under the guise of providing security, the armed forces have intervened in citizen security activities in the region, which has led to growing militarization.

The Institute for Strategic Studies and Public Policies (IEEPP by its Spanish acronym) reports a surge in violence along the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, as a result of the area’s geographic vulnerability to drug trafficking, the absence of state presence, and persistent poverty.

Violence continues to increase in Honduras as well; in the year 2012 the United Nations identified Honduras as one of the most dangerous countries in the world. In the last seven years, the country has reported 25,677 deaths from firearms, which represents 75.7% of the total number of deaths registered in the country. An estimated 850,000 weapons are in circulation in the country.

In Guatemala, a military approach to security issues has continued, with the inclusion of military intelligence support and task forces. Despite this approach, the population continues to complain of insecurity.

With respect to **food security and sovereignty**, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that despite the fact that Central America produces over 70% of the food it consumes, 50% of the households that grow basic grains live in poverty, and six out of ten of these rural homes suffer from food insecurity.

In Nicaragua, the basic needs basket is currently valued at 10,092.40 Córdobas (416.27 dollars or 307.51 Euros), compared to a minimum wage with can range from 2,835 Córdobas (116.93 dollars /

86.38 Euros) to 4,609 Córdobas (190.10 dollars / 140.43 Euros). Inequalities in land access continue to run deep and represent a threat to social stability.

In Honduras, 32% of children in the rural areas suffer from malnutrition, compared to 14% of urban children.



Individuals look for their family members who disappeared during the civil war, in Coban, Guatemala. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.

In terms of **natural resources**, the Global Climate Risk Index presented by Germanwatch lists Honduras as the country with the greatest climate risk in the world for a 20 year period; Nicaragua ranks third, El Salvador fourth, and Guatemala ninth. Climate change is a growing challenges for middle-income countries such as the ones that make up the Central American region. This region faces high environmental vulnerability, which is exacerbated by a lack of political will to treat the true causes of the problem.

In Nicaragua, the increase in large-scale industrial activities, or “megaprojects” such as textiles, mining, the construction of a dry canal, and monoculture crops such as African palm, plantains, sugarcane, and the imminent return of cotton production, combined with a weak and corrupt regulatory structure and framework, puts natural resources at tremendous risk. This is especially true in the case of water resources, which are already heavily contaminated.

In Honduras, natural resources continue to be transferred to the hands of foreign capital and the national business sector. The Garifuna communities of the Bay and Tela are being displaced from their lands to make way for tourism projects.

In terms of **emergency response and risk management**, an earthquake registering 7.2 degrees on the Richter scale struck in Guatemala in November. The earthquake affected 1.2 million people in all, killing 49 and leaving 13,000 in temporary shelters.

As a result of the rains in Nicaragua in 2012, floods were reported in 25 municipalities and 13 departments of the country. Damages were

compounded by seismic activity and the eruption of the San Cristóbal Volcano.

According to Germanwatch, Honduras is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, despite the fact that it boasts a National Risk Management System (SINAGER by its Spanish acronym), which lays out a general framework for the actions of the state, civil society organizations, and international cooperation agencies in risk prevention and management. Nonetheless, effective coordination and engagement mechanisms have yet to be instated.

In the year 2012, the work within the **international community** in the region led to the Ortega-Funes-Lobo (Nicaragua-El Salvador-Honduras) agreement on shared sovereignty in the Gulf of Fonseca. This agreement overcame long-seeded conflicts among the artisanal-scale fisheries of the countries, and laid out a framework to take advantage of maritime resources and contribute to the processes of Central American integration.

The President of the Republic of Honduras has expressed interest in opening diplomatic and trade relations with Continental China, which has elicited immediate reactions from Taiwan, which has been a consistent ally of Honduras. As a result, the Government of the United States has not looked kindly on this new openness.



An image of the “Lower Lempa” area of El Salvador, where the Central America Program conducted emergency response activities following Tropical Depression 12E in El Salvador in November, 2011. April, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

Message from the Central America program



The close of the year 2012 brought the start of a new planning cycle for the Lutheran World Federation/Department for World Service (LWF/DWS) Central America Program. In 2013, we will celebrate 30 years of work in Central America, and bring to a close the strategy that we have applied over the last six years. During the year 2012, we received support from our allies through the churches, networks, and partners with whom we work within the region and outside its borders. We would especially like to highlight the support we have received from ELCA, the Church of Sweden, Finn Church Aid, EED/Bread for the World, and the German National Committee (GNC) of the LWF. Thank you for your critiques, questions, visits, flexibility, and brother and sisterhood.

We are also grateful for the collaboration built in ecumenical spaces in the region, such as the ACT Alliance, FECLAI, and CLAI. We are strengthened by the continued dialogue and working support from the national offices and the regional office in El Salvador. I would also like to specially thank the program staff, who have offered their dedication and commitment as the program has undergone changes and faced challenges over this last year. Thank you!

In the year 2012 we launched three new initiatives for the program. First, as the year began, we recognized the importance of strengthening our Advocacy and Communications Department and responded by creating a new unit specialized in advocacy. This is the result of the regional workshop organized by Geneva in 2011, which brought together DWS allies, churches, and programs in the region. This advocacy area will support the program in building analysis and coordination around topics of interest.

Our interpretation of a rights-based approach is that an international organization must contribute to a regional analysis, facilitate regional spaces for exchange and engagement, connect global networks and, as much as possible, build bridges to international spaces such as the United Nations system. We want to highlight the role that the Central America Program and the LWF have played in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) conducted in Guatemala. This review was carried out with a special focus on transitional justice, which also reflects the situation in that country, in which several cases have been successfully taken to national courts. In the case of the Dos Erres and Río Montt Massacre, the LWF partners have participated in the proceedings and justice has been served.

Another advocacy topic for 2012 was protection of human rights defenders, especially in the case of Honduras. In the framework of the LWF Illegitimate Debt Program, an ecumenical conference was organized with the historic Churches of El Salvador, the CLAI, and the NCA, building upon the audit experience from Ecuador. This conference garnered significant media attention and helped to position the program and Churches in the region.

Another aspect of the use of a rights and human dignity-based approach is accountability to the target populations and those that provide resources to support our work. In the year 2012, we created a new position for Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PME) and Accountability. We believe this new post will help strengthen our ability to respond to complaints and to provide trainings for partners and allies such as the ACT forums. We have had several learning experiences

experiences with complaints, which have helped to strengthen the program and provide criteria to improve quality and fulfill our duty vis-à-vis our partners, target populations, personnel, and donors. Several institutions have now identified us as a resource on these matters.

The Central America program now includes a Emergency Preparedness and Response HUB. This HUB was created in keeping with the new strategy of the LWF/DWS for improving preparedness and humanitarian response around the globe. During the year 2012, the HUB provided support to create contingency plans in the four countries and in two missions, as well as Damages and Needs Assessments after the earthquake in San Marcos, Guatemala, and Hurricane Sandy, in Cuba.

For the latter event, we collaborated directly with the ACT Alliance Secretariat in Geneva and the ACT Forum in Cuba.

The offices were fortified with new specialists in projects and work with partners; the main focus of the program continues to be to work with civil society and grassroots organizations to strengthen a civil society in Central America.

Along these lines, we continue our work on themes of food security and sovereignty, natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, and inclusive public policies. In the year 2013, an evaluation and the opinions collected from related agencies, churches, and allies, will provide important inputs for the new 2014-2019 strategy. We will need these valuable insights with respect to the role of World Service in Central America in the future.

The girls and boys in the communities in which we work are at the center of our attention. They are joined by women and men who live in a region still dominated by inequity. This is a region in which, despite investment and liberalization of trade, their perspectives for nutrition, income, safety, access to justice, and participation in the decisions

that impact their lives have not improved. A region in which these gaps do not simply close on their own; they need the force of a responsible state. These populations experience the consequences of climate changes and mega-projects established around them that contaminate their water, impinge on their areas for crops, and push them off their lands. One thing is for sure: these people have the right to a life and future with dignity. We hope to have your support in order to continue to work for these rights.

“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit”

Zechariah 4:6

For your prayers and your support, we thank you. We are at your service.

Eva Ekelund
Regional Representative
Central America Program
LWF/DWS



Message from Bishop Medardo Gómez

Giving Thanks in 2012, and Great Jubilee in 2013:
The 30th Anniversary of the Presence of The Lutheran World Federation



Just as we say in the liturgy of our worship, "it is a right, good, and joyful thing" to write to give thanks to God, for all that we have been able to do in the Year of our Lord 2012. We cannot deny that we have been accompanied by the Hand of God, as He has sent his sons and daughters to perform the work of his Kingdom.

It is this divine delegation that accounts for the presence of the Lutheran Communion and The Lutheran World Federation in Central America, and the history that they have made. This coming year, 2013, will mark 30 years of a Lutheran presence in El Salvador and Central America.

The diaconal support of The Lutheran World Federation has allowed the Churches to say to our brothers and sisters in Communion, and to everyone in Central America: "The deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, and the gospel of hope is preached for the poor."

This has been the glorious ministry of the Lutherans in Central America and El Salvador, a service performed in the name of God, where He manifests his love for the needy. As a Church here in El Salvador, we have seen first-hand the important role that The Lutheran World Federation has played, and how it has contributed to the processes of peace-building and committed to ongoing collaboration with the local Church.

For this upcoming year we hope to celebrate and give thanks for this important landmark, recognizing the valuable work of the Lutheran Communion as it has given love, life, faith, solidarity, and salvation for our beloved El Salvador and our Central America.

Fraternally,

Medardo E. Gómez
Bishop, Salvadoran Lutheran Church
President, CILCA

Our Actions in 2012

Regional component

1. Food sovereignty and advocacy for the conservation of natural resources

Together with Red Latindadd and networks across Central America and Europe, the Central America program contributed to a regional analysis and the construction of regional positions and proposals vis-à-vis the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Governments of Central America through the Central American Integration System (SICA by its Spanish acronym).

The Mesoamerican Campaign for Climate Justice brings together grassroots and social organizations from six different countries; these working linkages allowed for joint and rights-based proposals to be generated on environmental issues.

2. Promotion of Inclusive Public Policies

In the year 2012, the Bartolomé de las Casas Center (CBC by its Spanish acronym) led a process of masculinity trainings for gender equity. One hundred men participated in these trainings and collaborated in local actions to promote gender equity, equality, and violence prevention. Eight regional organizations approved and applied gender-based institutional methodologies. In addition, a youth exchange with 200 young people from four different countries (Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras) was organized in order to promote a youth leadership role in building the societies of Central America and Colombian.

3. Risk Management and Disaster Response

In this year, representatives from nine partner organizations attended seminars conducted to improve knowledge in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction. A total of 124 people were trained, including 36 women, on Strategic Risk Management topics. Partners and the Central America Program Team at the LWF/DWS discussed the complexity of processes for vulnerability reduction, and reviewed how damage and capacity assessments following extreme events should be incorporated into DRR projects.

Additionally, specializations were defined by type

of emergency response. Guatemala will focus on food security and temporary shelters; Nicaragua will focus on water and sanitation, and; El Salvador will focus on shelters and gender. The ongoing social conflict in Honduras made it impossible to hold a discussion on potential areas of specialty.

Youth exchange program between the LWF Central America and Colombia programs, held in Chinandega, Nicaragua. July, 2012.
Photo by Giovanni Magaña



4. Program Visibility, Quality, and Effectiveness

Work continued in this year to unify the institutional image and message, and to strengthen the identity of the regional program.

In Honduras, funds were collected to carry out a consultancy to draft a submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur, identifying extra-judicial killings and casting a special focus on emblematic cases from the Bajo Aguán region. Different human rights and international organizations in the Association of International Cooperation (ACI) coordinated in this effort. At the close of this report, work to draft the submission was ongoing.

In the framework of the international session to present the Universal Periodic Review on human rights practices in Guatemala, held in Geneva, Switzerland, a side event entitled “Transitional Justice in Guatemala” was held with participation of representatives from the LWF/DWS, RELAGS, the ACT Alliance Secretariat, representatives of the European Commission on Human Rights, international and Guatemalan human rights organizations, and representatives from European governments.

On a regional level the video “Green Flesh, Death Land” was created for advocacy actions surrounding Rio+20. The video continues to be shared through the webpage and facebook. This film has been used in different regional and international events, as it describes the human rights violations committed by multi-national corporations who take advantage of institutional and political vulnerabilities in certain nations, especially Guatemala and Honduras. The documentary film was selected for the Globale Festival held in Bogota, Colombia, which seeks to

provide a platform to speak out, dialogue, raise awareness, and conduct analysis on social and political issues in Latin America.

The Advocacy and Communications Department published the Report on Human Rights and Conflict in Central America, 2011-2012, distributed via email and the LWF social networks. Complementary to the human rights report, a statement was published in national-circulation newspapers in El Salvador and Nicaragua regarding International Human Rights Day. These statements referred to and highlighted the findings and recommendations calling upon Central American states to guarantee respect for human rights.

Additionally, as an initiative of the LWF/DWS and FECLAI, the “Ecumenical Workshop on Structural Violence: Debt in Central America” was held. This workshop opened a space for dialogue among diverse sectors to promote an audit in El Salvador, beginning with areas of crisis response and rehabilitation, and “humanitarian debt”. One outcome from the workshop was the creation of a reference group for an initial investigation.



Cover of the video “Green Flesh, Death Land”, created by the Central America Program and presented in the Rio+20 Summit.

Seventh Report on Human Rights and Conflict in Central America.

With the support of the Central America Program of the LWF/DWS, the Regional Human Rights Monitoring and Analysis Team in Central America conducted a study and published the seventh Report on Human Rights and Conflicts in Central America, 2011-2012. The report focuses on three trends that were identified in the region during this period:

- Criminalization and persecution of human rights defenders: Severe violations to the physical and psychological health of human rights defenders have been verified in the region; up to this point, these violations have occurred with total impunity.
- Re-militarization and application of security policies in response to drug trafficking, organized crime, gangs, and migration: The pattern among the governments of this region has been to justify the involvement of military forces under the argument that the combination of high crime rates and few police resources demands army intervention.
- Territorial and social conflicts as a result of government-sponsored investment and cooperation models: In the context of the global crisis, models for investment and cooperation have changed; capital is re-accumulating in the hands of multi-nationals, and this concentration has led to forced displacements, disputes, and conflicts over territory.

Also on a regional level following the Rio+20 Summit, a diploma course was conducted with the Mesoamerican Campaign for Climate Justice, entitled: "Rio+20, Green Economies, and Proposals for Sustainability in Central America."

Cover of the Report on Human Rights and Conflict in Central America, 2011-2012.



Report on Human Rights and Conflict in Central America 2011-2012



REGIONAL TEAM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING AND ANALYSIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA



Sisters talk in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, where the Central America Program works through the partner organization ASEDE. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.

Guatemala

1. Food Sovereignty and Advocacy for the Conservation of Natural Resources

In 2012, the Coordinator of Farmers' Associations in Petén, Guatemala (COACAP by its Spanish acronym), along with community representatives, built technical and agricultural capacities for the recovery and use of native seeds. As a result, 60 demonstration plots have been planned, including production of eight different crops and distribution of agricultural input products for the farmers in the communities. At the same time, the Regional Strategy for Fire Management in Petén was completed and shared.

2. Promotion of Inclusive Public Policies

As the "Citizens Observatory" project continues, the Friends of Development and Peace Association (ADP by its Spanish acronym) established two observatories in the Municipalities of San Pedro Carcha and Tactic, in the Department of Alta Verapaz. Additionally, Caja Lúdica, together with the Center for Legal Action for Human Rights (CALDH by its Spanish acronym) and the Guatemalan Network for Community Arts, built capacity through a training process on advocacy and the arts as tools for local and national work.

3. Risk Management and Disaster Response

Over the course of this year, the LWF/DWS national team and partner organizations built capacity in this area; Caja Lúdica, ASEDE, ProPetén, and national office personnel participated together in a regional workshop in El Salvador. As a result of this training, an emergency response plan was

drafted for the Guatemala national office.

On a local level, Early Warning Systems (EWS by their Spanish acronym) were monitored and the operation of the inter-community networks was verified.

4. Program Visibility, Quality, and Effectiveness

In terms of participation and networking with cooperation agencies, meetings were held with different organizations working on human rights and justice issues, such as the Association for the Study and Promotion of Democratic Security (SEDEM by its Spanish acronym) and the Association of Family Members of the Detained or Disappeared in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA by its Spanish acronym); project proposals were drafted to present to different funders.

In the framework of the project for participation and citizen policing, meetings were held with the Forum of International Non-Governmental Organizations (FONGI by its Spanish acronym) to follow up on the UPR, as well as bi-lateral meetings with FAMDEGUA, Diakonia, Trocaire, the Dutch Platform, the Embassy of Norway, the Embassy of Sweden, CALDH, the Attorney General, and the Director of the Public Prosecution Service of Guatemala. A conference was also held with the Director of the Transitional Justice Program, New York. These meetings helped to raise the program's visibility and coordinate with other actors to conduct joint activities on a national, regional, and international level.

Udelia works to reduce community risk

When it rains hard in the community of Tierra Blanca, in the Municipality of Chisec, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, the home where Udelia Tiuxlal and her children live by the river is one of the first ones to flood.

To help her family and her community, Udelia participates in the Community Aid Commission organized by the National Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction (CONRED). She joined in thanks to the work that the Association for Education and Development, a Central America Program partner organization, has been doing in the community.

“Now that I’m on the commission, I’ve really changed my mentality. Now I speak up and participate in the community; I know that as a woman I have the same rights as men do. When there was a flood I used to wait for someone to come help me... now I’m the one who helps to evacuate families from their homes” Udelia commented.



Udelia Tiuxlal and one of her daughters at their home in the community of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. June, 2012.
Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

Honduras

1. Food Sovereignty and Advocacy for the Conservation of Natural Resources

A total of 44 micro-irrigation systems were established by farmers in the National Agriculture University (UNA) Field Schools (ECAs by their Spanish acronym) in the Municipality of Silca, Olancho. To take full advantage of these systems, the families will work on a certified bean seed project to supply seeds to meet regional market demands. The sale of these seeds can help these families gain needed economic resources.

In late 2012, additional funds provided by Finn Church Aid (FCA) were invested to buy input products and irrigation equipment, and expand the coverage of this initiative.

2. Promotion of Inclusive Public Policies

In 2012, community leaders were trained on topics of leadership, democracy, human rights, and development. These leaders then participated in drafting proposals on youth issues, environmental campaigns, election observation processes, and the upcoming 2013 general elections.

Additionally, 34 young people (50% of whom are women) graduated from the Youth Leadership School. These graduates studied topics including social movements, the coup d'état, context analysis, democracy, and citizen participation. With growing citizen participation, mobilizations were held in the Southern region of the country to stop the entrance of mining companies and defend the right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

3. Risk Management and Disaster Response

Further capacity on risk management and the reduction of environmental vulnerability was built with young people from schools in Salamá, Silca, and Manto. This capacity-building was done with collaboration and support from SINAGER and COPECO, who drafted contingency mechanisms and responses for community, sector-based, and territorial plans.

Equipment was installed for four solid waste collection systems. This equipment was installed in the context of a mini-project on recycling that included awareness-raising campaigns using radio broadcasts, signs, and banners.

4. Program Visibility, Quality, and Effectiveness

The Universities Fighting World Hunger Summit was held this year in Catacamas, Olancho. A public hearing and international seminar on human rights was also held in Tocoa, Colón.

In addition to these events, the public prosecution service of the country took on four cases of human rights violations that occurred in the Bajo Aguán region; COFADEH (with support from the LWF) assisted in the investigations. A visit from a delegation of international journalists was also organized to raise visibility around the human rights issues in the area.



Children in Bajo Aguán, Honduras. May, 2012.
Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

PACOS for environmental improvement

At age 16, Delmer Ávila is already the coordinator of the Community Environmental Promoters Project (PACOS by its Spanish acronym). Delmer has participated since the project began in April, 2011, and he is proud of the work that has been done so far and the knowledge he has gained.

The PACOS course is conducted by the Lutheran World Federation and its partner organization, the Social Ministry of Juticalpa, in the Municipality of Manto in the Department of Olancho, Honduras. "This project has helped me to gain greater knowledge to solve environmental problems. As we have more awareness, we have a greater responsibility to work on the problems in our municipality", Ávila explained.

During this course, young people conduct field visits and participate in workshops, simulations, mobilizations, and experience exchanges. "In addition to learning a lot, I've made friends through these activities, and shifted my studies as well. I love what I am doing now, I feel quite content", he commented.



Youth graduating in the PACOS program.



Men show their crops at their homes in Chinandega, Nicaragua, where the Central America Program is working with the partner organization ADEES. September, 2012. Photo by Giovanni Magaña.

Nicaragua

1. Food Sovereignty and Advocacy for the Conservation of Natural Resources

Eighty families improved their technical capacity by participating in agro-ecology workshops. As a result of these trainings, families were able to produce and sell the harvest from their garden plots in the communities and local markets; this diversification and the sale of these products helped to improve the household economy. In continued work with the Youth Promoters Network, an Environmental Agenda was drafted for the Municipality of Somotillo. This agenda included political advocacy actions for the preservation of natural resources. A project outreach plan was implemented, which included disseminating information through broadcasts on two radios: Radio Joven and Radio Católica.

2. Promotion of Inclusive Public Policies

Education in community organizing for prevention and reduction of family violence, especially violence against women, was fortified and continued in 2012.

3. Risk Management and Disaster Response

Local Disaster Prevention Committees (COLOPRED by their Spanish acronym) in 10 participating communities were officially recognized by municipal authorities and the Municipal Disaster Prevention Committees (COMUPRED by their Spanish acronym). These communities now have emergency plans, risk maps, work tools, and first aid kits.

Additionally, a rescue brigade was formed in the community of Las Mariitas, which also provided humanitarian assistance to the communities of Palo de Ruedas and El Rodeo.

4. Program Visibility, Quality, and Effectiveness

Further visits were conducted to enhance visibility and coordination with the Faith and Hope Lutheran Church, Solidaridad Internacional, the Humboldt Center Communications Department, the Nicaragua Scouts Group, the Central American Institute for Social Integration (ISIS by its Spanish acronym), and the Human Rights Center of Nicaragua, to discuss topics of women, peace building and citizenry, youth, HIV-AIDS, and the environment.

A letter of understanding was signed with the Humboldt Center Communications Department for a "Media Plan" designed to disseminate information and raise the visibility of the country program.

“I used to buy it at the market, now I can grow it myself.”

“We used to only grow corn, but now we’ve diversified. What I used to buy at the market, now I can grow it myself. We have enough for ourselves, and then some to sell at the market, too” noted Oliven Gonzalez, an inhabitant of the community of Los Laureles II in the Municipality of Villanueva, Department of Chinandega, Nicaragua.

Oliven and her family have participated in workshops, exchanges, and fairs to learn how to grow fruit trees and vegetables, make organic fertilizers, raise chickens, and set up household-scale irrigation systems to be successful fruit and vegetable farmers. All of this work comes as part of the “Fostering Food Security and Sovereignty in 10 Villages of Villanueva and Somotillo” project, led by the LWF/DWS Central America Program, with the partner organization Association for Eco-Sustainable Development (ADEES by its Spanish acronym).

“The food for our family has changed since we got involved in this project. We sell our extra crops, and use that money to buy rice, beef, or other goods. The girls are eating better now” reported Oliven, a mother of three daughters ages eight, three, and six-months old.

Oliven shared that the entire family is involved in this food production: “what’s great about it is that my husband and I work as a team, and even the girls help, too.”



Oliven González shows the fruits and vegetables she grows at her home in Chinandega, Nicaragua. October, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

Our Approaches

Rights-Based and Citizens Approach

Through its Regional Program, the LWF has built a distinct vision for development, starting from a conception of the people themselves as the subjects that provoke change in their realities. Diverse local processes have fed into the region-wide work over the course of the year, and the promotion and exercise of human rights is gradually growing stronger.

The application of a rights-based and citizens approach demands not only capacity-building for the subjects of change, but accompaniment as well to help these groups build public opinion, propose public policy, and gain rights-based legislation. Tools such as the Report on Human Rights and Conflict have helped different communities and sectors in the region to perform local advocacy. The Mesoamerican Campaign for Climate Justice promotes a rights-based approach through sustainability. This proposal argues that for governments to guarantee fundamental rights they must appropriately protect and manage natural resources.

Part of the work in building active citizenry, especially in countries who have undergone armed conflicts, is to clarify and resolve human rights violations and provide dignity for the victims and their families. This requires accompaniment

efforts to file complaints and gain and disseminate information on local and national levels. The program accompanied organizations such as FAMDEGUA and CALDH to perform this work in Guatemala.

Internally, the LWF/DWS is reviewing the application of the rights-based approach in DWS programs. This practical application will require manuals and/or policies that allow the program to measure impacts, perform a qualitative assessment of the interventions, and accompany political advocacy.

Gender and Youth Approach

Over the course of this year, a dual approach on gender and youth was effectively applied as a cross-cutting axis within all of the processes performed. With support from a budget with specific allocations for activities under this approach, qualitative advocacy actions for youth and women were undertaken. The Bartolomé de las Casas Center has been a strategic partner for the LWF for incorporating a comprehensive approach to masculinity.

This approach has been applied with partners and other allies, as well as within the institution directly. Sixty percent of the staff have been trained under this approach, and this critical mass has helped to bring about a new style of working relationships within the team, as well as changes in the practice and approach of the staff working in different program areas.

An exchange event among youth organizations working in the Central America and Colombia programs would help to strengthen linkages and efforts among these groups, as well as build innovative proposals for work done by and with young people on broader issues undertaken by

the LWF. Progress has been made along these lines with youth partners in key areas including the use of recreational elements as a new way to incorporate young people, especially encouraging youth in at-risk situations to participate actively.

Progress has been made in Guatemala as well on the implementation of the project entitled “Promotion of Youth Rights through Arts and Culture to Prevent Violence”, which seeks to promote violence prevention within the 12 strategies outlined in INTERPEACE-POLJUVE, 2011. In Nicaragua, special attention has been paid to youth through the project “Eco-Logic for my Community” implemented by Asociación Miriam.



Youth exchange between the Central America and Colombia programs, held at a school in Ciudad Quetzal, Guatemala, organized by the partner organization Caja Lúdica. June, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

Risk Management Approach

The projects and processes that the LWF/DWS supports in the countries of this region incorporate a Risk Management Approach as they seek to transform the causes that lead to vulnerability for the population.

Emergency response plans have been drafted and established based on a regional-level plan. These tools were created together by the partners, national teams, and other allies who provided input for the coordination and communication mechanisms and procedures.

A risk management approach rooted in human rights provides added value for the LWF/DWS position as a leader in this field. Strategic alliances continue to be established with key actors for national and regional-level emergency response. Additionally, capacity-building continues for staff on these issues, as well as efforts to link financial management to risk management and emergency response frameworks.

Do-No-Harm Approach

The country teams have ensured the application of this approach in work done by the LWF/DWS in their territories. Projects with partners and joint actions conducted with allies promote skills development to optimize local capacity, foster autonomy, and ensure that local actors are subjects and protagonists in efforts that take into account their realities and needs.

This approach has been prioritized in regional-level implementation, which will allow local organizations and other actors in the development field to apply their own knowledge of the heterogeneous and complex social, political, economic, and cultural contexts in which

interventions are performed throughout the region. In Nicaragua, opportunities for joint reflection on the LWF/DWS practices for development cooperation and emergency response have been established with partners and target groups. The active inclusion of local communities, organizations, and authorities has also been promoted in project design and execution.

Holistic Approach

This approach encompasses all of the aspects in the scope of the LWF/DWS work. Over the course of the year, each of the projects built links and coordinated with efforts on other themes (gender, masculinity, risk management, environment, food security and sovereignty); this exchange among the partners enhanced the work and allowed its outcomes to reach people and territories on a broad scale.

Program actions are conducted with community groups and families who participate in the projects implemented in the different territories; these actors work in efforts complementary to the program including: promoting active citizenship through local and national public policy proposals; recreational activities to promote rights from a youth-based perspective, and; creation of family agricultural plots with an agro-ecology focus.

Accountability/HAP

As part of maintaining HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership) certification, the LWF/DWS renewed its commitment to applying accountability policies and mechanisms, and providing for institutionally recognized complaint mechanisms in official events.

Program personnel linked to accountability processes (administrators, human resources, etc) were trained at a HAP workshop held in Colombia. The workshop included different analysis and reflection exercises on transparency, participation, and the importance making knowledge and institutional complaint mechanisms available for the target population in order to prevent and/or correct acts of corruption or sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.



Image of the Municipality of Somotillo in the Department of Chinandega, Nicaragua, where the Central America Program works with the partner organization Asociación MIRIAM. October, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

Participation in the ACT Alliance Forums

International-level actions planned around issues of human rights and the environment are discussed and undertaken through the ACT Alliance, thus granting greater force and a stronger voice to the proposals made. The inclusion of APRODEV into the Alliance will open the door to broader efforts around these issues.

The program has participated in three advisory working groups within the ACT Secretariat: Development Policies and Practices; Quality and Accountability, and Advocacy. These groups have held initial planning meetings to define priority work areas. It should be mentioned that the people participating in these working groups represent important channels to communicate the needs and efforts of the forums, and to facilitate exchange and discussion between country or regional forum representatives and the secretariat.

Enhancing these channels for exchange and growth should help to improve the quality of the work performed through the ACT Alliance.

In one example of these measures, the LWF collaborated directly in the construction of the peer evaluation process for members and forums on a global level within the Alliance. Support was also provided for the HAP certification process for the ACT Secretariat, along with follow-up support for the work of the forums in Central America.

The LWF coordinates the ACT Alliance Forum in Honduras, through which advocacy actions were performed on topics of sustainable development. The forum also helped to organize the III Regional Conference on Climate Change, along with other Central American networks.

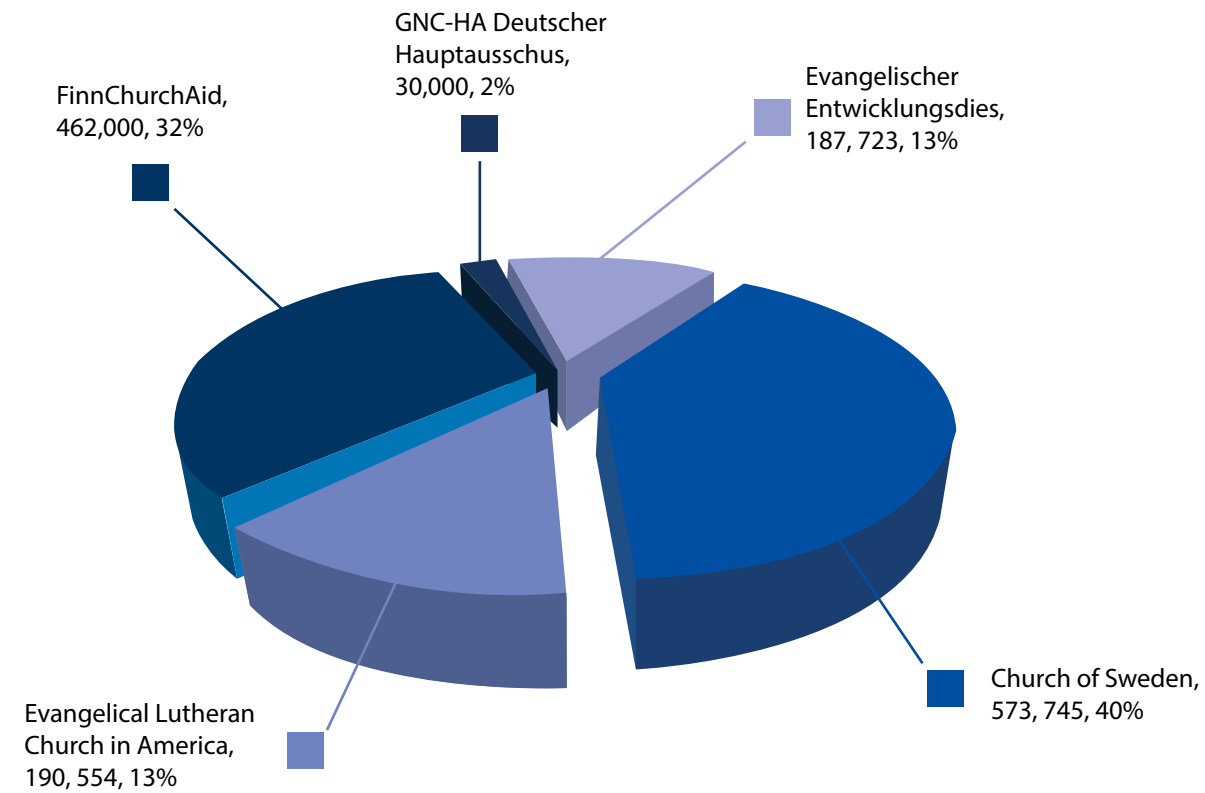


In Nicaragua, the LWF helped to organize the Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the regional workshop on new emergency systems and a seminar on safety standards. The LWF also contributed to efforts for advocacy, development, and emergency response in the region.

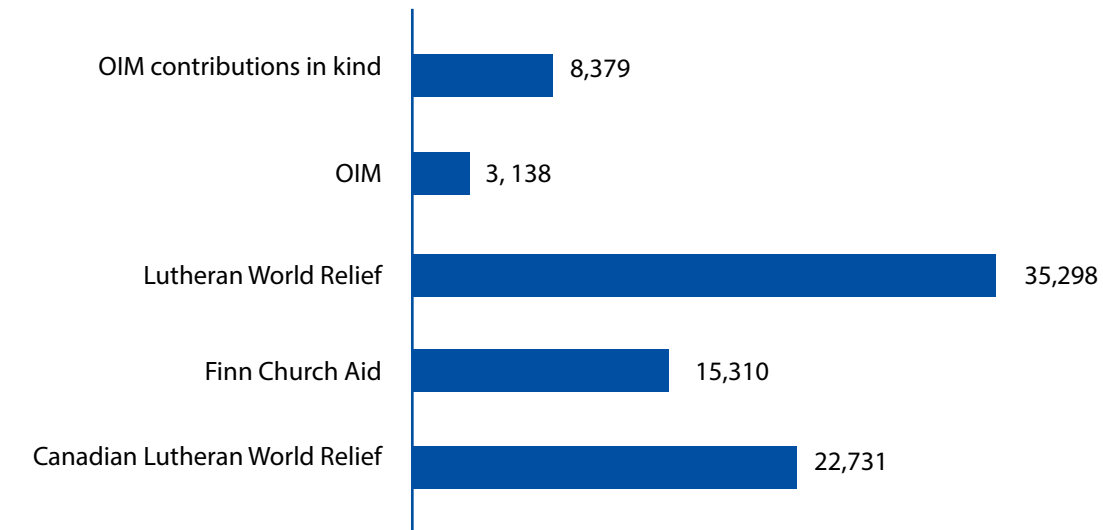
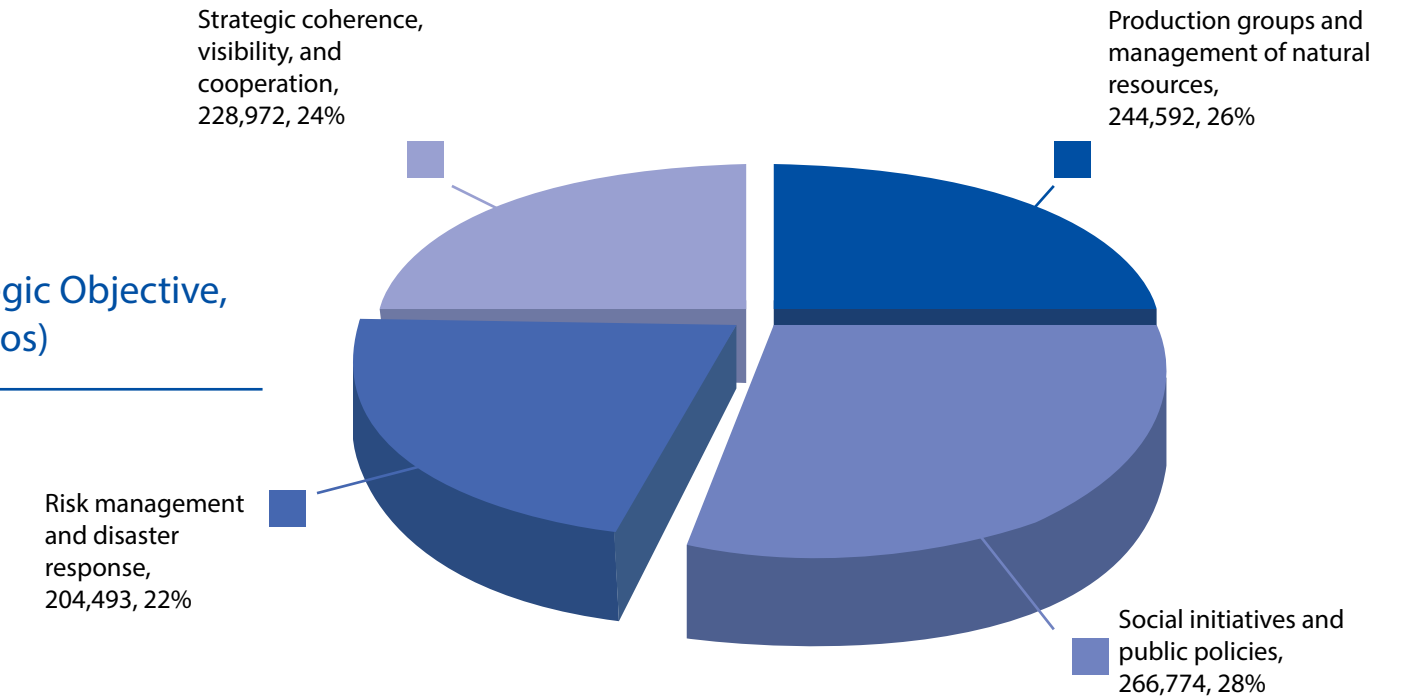
A meeting of the Advisory Working Group on Advocacy for the ACT Alliance is held in Geneva, with a participant from the Central America Program. May, 2012. Photo by Rosalía Soley.

Income and Budget Execution

Contributions of Related Agencies for Regular Programs (Euros) 2012



Investment by Strategic Objective, 2012 (Euros)



Donors supporting bilateral projects en 2012 (Euros)

Our Partners in 2012

Country	Organization
Regional	Association for Eco-Sustainable Development (ADEES by its Spanish acronym)
Regional	Emergency Response in El Salvador (with support from the ACT Alliance, World Food Program, International Organization for Migration, ELCA)
Regional	Bartolomé de las Casas Center, Corporación de Santo Domingo
Regional	Mesoamerican Campaign for Climate Justice, through the Salvadoran Ecological Unit Federation (UNES by its Spanish acronym)
Regional	Regional Human Rights Monitoring and Analysis Team in Central America, through the Foundation for Studies for the Application of Law (FESPAD by its Spanish acronym).
Regional	Episcopal Church of El Salvador
Regional	Calvinist Reformed Church of El Salvador
Regional	Emmanuel Baptist Church of San Salvador
Regional	Youth Security Program in Central America
Regional	Latindadd Network, through the Nicaraguan Network for Community Commerce Foundation (RENICC by its Spanish acronym).
Regional	Salvadoran Lutheran Synod
Regional	Counseling and Training System for Local Development
Guatemala	Caja Lúdica Civil Association
Guatemala	Association of Friends for Development and Peace, (ADP by its Spanish acronym).
Guatemala	Association of Family members of the Detained or Disappeared in Guatemala (FAMDEGUA by its Spanish acronym).
Guatemala	Metaphor, Literature, and Art Association
Guatemala	Association for Education and Development (ASEDE by its Spanish acronym).
Guatemala	Association for Study and Promotion of Democratic Security (SEDEM by its Spanish acronym)
Guatemala	Central for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH by its Spanish acronym)
Guatemala	Coordinator of Small Farmers' Associations of Petén (COACAP by its Spanish acronym).
Guatemala	ACT Alliance Forum in Guatemala, through the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala
Guatemala	ProPetén Foundation
Guatemala	Peer Support Group (GAM by its Spanish acronym)
Honduras	Center for Democracy Studies (CESPAD by its Spanish acronym).
Honduras	Committee of Family Members of the Detained or Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH by its Spanish acronym).
Honduras	Coordinator of Peoples Organizations of the Aguán
Honduras	Reflection, Research, and Communications Team (ERIC-SH by its Spanish acronym)
Honduras	ACT Forum, Honduras
Honduras	Environmental Movement of Olancho (MAO by its Spanish acronym)
Honduras	Caritas Social Ministry of Juticalpa
Honduras	National University of Agriculture (UNA by its Spanish acronym)
Nicaragua	Young Environmentalists Club of Nicaragua
Nicaragua	Century XXI Youth Association
Nicaragua	MIRIAM Association
Nicaragua	Association for the Development of Northern Chinandega (ADENOCH by its Spanish acronym).
Nicaragua	Association for Eco-Sustainable Development (ADEES by its Spanish acronym).
Nicaragua	Alexander Von Humboldt Center - Humboldt Center
Nicaragua	The ACT Alliance forum in Nicaragua through the Inter-Ecclesial Center for Technology and Social Studies (CIEETS by its Spanish acronym).
Nicaragua	Faith and Hope Lutheran Church

Other Projects

Regional	Regional Foundation for Cooperation and Community Development of El Salvador (CORDES by its Spanish acronym).
Regional	Regional Salvadoran Foundation for Development and Humanism (FUMA by its Spanish acronym).
Regional	Regional Women's Collective for Local Development

The LWF Gains HAP Certification

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) is a global quality control system. HAP certification guarantees the quality and responsibility of the actions of humanitarian groups with respect to communities affected by disasters, including organizing, readiness, and emergency response activities.

In February, 2012, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) gained HAP certification following a global-level audit process. This certification was awarded as a result of work to establish accountability and quality control systems for all programs of the LWF, based on a rights-based approach and best practices.

The Central America Program conducted a specific action plan in the year 2012 to build capacity among staff in order to improve transparency in accountability and quality management.

HAP certification was discussed at each of the regional coordination roundtables in the Central America Program. There is now a working complaints mechanism, and the regional Action Plan has been updated to include concrete actions

for 2013, such as a code of conduct review, opening other channels to receive complaints, repeat trainings from the accountability workshop, and other activities.



Staff from the LWF/DWS Central America and Colombia programs participate in the HAP Workshop in Colombia. Photo by the LWF/DWS Communications Team.



Our Team



Regional	Eva Cecilia Ekelund	Regional Representative	
Regional	Doris Pérez Mateus	Regional Program Coordinator	Until 30/08/2012
Regional	Giovanni Magaña Pinto	Regional Program Coordinator	
Regional	José Chacón	Regional SDRM Coordinator	Since 01/05/2012
Regional	Yesenia Ayala de Blanco	Regional Finance Coordinator	
Regional	Francisco Pérez Ramírez	Regional Accountant	
Regional	Nora Alicia Serpas Saz	Regional Quality Officer and Internal Auditor	
Regional	Natalia Analina Cárcamo	Regional Communications Office	Since 16/01/2012
Regional	Rosalía Soley Ramos	Regional Advocacy Officer	
Regional	Luis Alfredo Campos	Regional Assistant and Human Resources	Since 09/04/2012
Regional	Laura Chávez Alfaro	Regional SDRM Program Officer	
Regional	José Antonio Sasso	Regional SDRM Administration and Logistics Officer	
Regional	Eneyda Izaguirre Ramos	Administration and Logistics Assistant	
Regional	Tomasa del Carmen Aguilar	Custodian	
Guatemala	Juan Fernando López Rivera	National Coordinator	Until 14/12/2012
Guatemala	Ana Bella Vargas	National Office Administrator	
Guatemala	Hildebrando Acabal	National Program Officer	Since 01/05/2012
Honduras	Héctor Hermilo Soto	National Coordinator	
Honduras	Marly Roxana García Armijo	National Office Administrator	
Honduras	Lizette Montoya	National Program Officer	Since 01/05/2012
Nicaragua	Julissa Aguirre López	National Coordinator	
Nicaragua	Myriam Montiel	National Office Administrator	
Nicaragua	Mario Roa	National Program Officer	Since 01/05/2012
Nicaragua	Xiomara Beltrand	Custodian	Until 30/06/2012

Acknowledgements

The Lutheran World Federation Department for World Service Central America Program is grateful for the support it has received from many agencies and organizations over the course of this year 2012.

We thank the communities, our reason for being, for opening their doors to us and believing that together we can build a life that is more just.

We would like to thank our partners in the region: the local, national, regional, and international organizations and platforms with whom we work in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and who day by day continue to allow us to accompany them in their efforts to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable people.


Our thanks to the Global, Regional, and National ACT Alliance Forums, the Lutheran Churches of Central America, The LWF Secretariat in Geneva, and all of our teams working with great dedication and energy in Central America.

We would thank the local and national governments who have opened their doors to dialogue and debate proposals that seek to improve the quality of life for the population.

We wish to thank the cooperation agencies with whom we have engaged in this work; our achievements in this year 2012 would not have been possible without their support, contributions, solidarity, and accompaniment.

We hope to continue to work together in the year 2013 to help reduce the vulnerability of the societies of Central America.



Church of Sweden 





Credits

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Cover photographs

1. Mother and son in the Municipality of Chisec, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.

2. A girl in a community of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, where the LWF Central America Program works with the partner organization ASEDE. June, 2012. Photo by Natalia Cárcamo.

3. Mother and daughter show their feet in the Municipality of Chisec, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.

4. Corn crops in the Municipality of Chisec, Department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. June, 2012. Photo by Magnus Aronson.



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