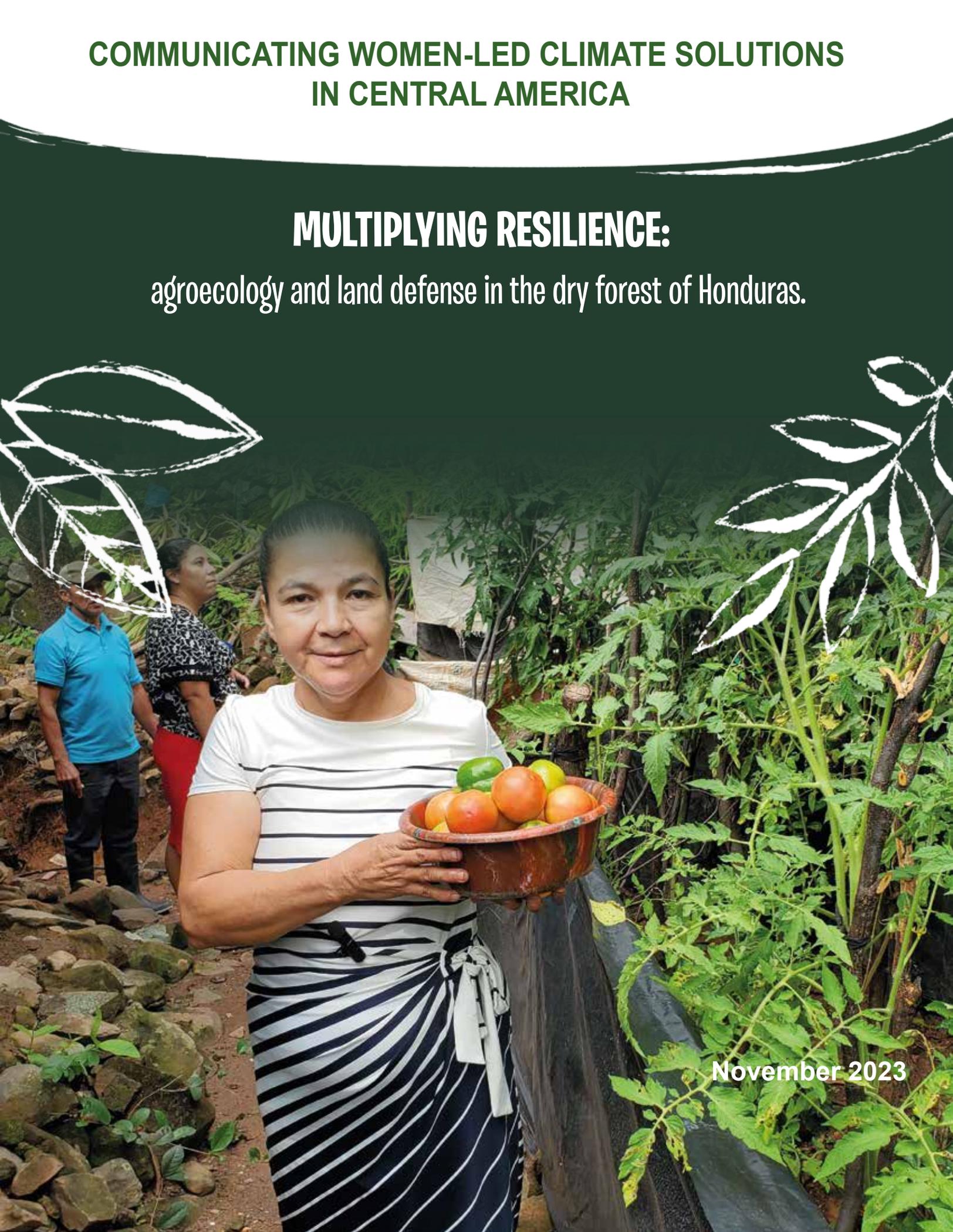


# COMMUNICATING WOMEN-LED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

## MULTIPLYING RESILIENCE:

agroecology and land defense in the dry forest of Honduras.



November 2023



## Multiplying resilience

Following in the footsteps of their ancestors, the communities of Los Horcones and Santa Cruz, located in the dry corridor of Honduras, are looking for the best way to face the drought caused by prolonged summers and erratic rains that damage crops. With the rescue of ancestral seeds that resist adverse climatic conditions and the recognition and strengthening of the leadership of women and young people in the community in the defense of the land, the communities, supported by the Association of Ecological Committees of the South (ACESH) developed solutions that multiply from family to family.

The consequences of climate change have a widespread impact on the community, "but more often it is the women and girls who are most affected; if there is no water, the women have to find ways to clean their homes, cook, and take care of their hygiene," she explains. For this reason, one of the themes underlying ACESH's projects is the training of women.

With the support of the Tierra Viva Fund, ACESH carried out a project to train women in social and environmental rights, as well as in the development of productive enterprises. **"It is they who receive the training in different topics. They receive the training and then they go to their families and share the knowledge with them. This has a multiplying effect where they work cooperatively with their husbands, children, and grandchildren,"** Martínez emphasizes.

While in the past it seemed that migrating and leaving the land were the only likely options for survival, nowadays the Association of Ecological Committees of the South (ACESH) has doubled its efforts: on the one hand, it has found in ancestral wisdom the methods to resist the lack of water and erratic rains. While on the other, it has strengthened the training of women and young people in spaces where they previously had no opportunity to participate.

In this way, the entire community benefits and grows in the face of the challenges posed by climatic conditions and the threat of extractive mining. "Up to 60 percent of our municipality has mineral resources and the exploitation is done via open-pit mining. This would cause the displacement of families, damage to the territory, to the environment, loss of biodiversity and contamination of water sources resulting in health problems," summarizes Unicer Martínez, member of ACESH.

The Committees for the Defense of Nature (CDN) are an ACESH initiative so that each community has a group of people trained in territorial defense, human rights, and environmental policies. "So that they are the ones who are in charge of any situation that arises in the community," says Martínez.

The installation of micro-irrigation systems, the establishment of diversified plots and the use of native seeds made it possible to incorporate the cultivation of medicinal plants, aromatic herbs, and fruit trees. And at the same time, enabling the protection of water resources in the dry corridor.

"In the plots and orchards there are plants that give us short, medium and long term production. We are committed to food sovereignty, and to climate change adaptation" said Martínez.



"These plants are adapted to the area and resilient to climate change. With the recovered native seeds, we have established reserve banks so that the community can make use of them," explains Unicer Martínez. One example is lightning corn, a native seed that is more resistant to the conditions of the dry forest and the impact of erratic rains.

Recognizing the importance of native seeds led to their multiplication in plots and orchards where, in addition to corn, now cassava, mint, aloe, lemon, eucalyptus, lemon grass, valerian, mango, guava, tamarind, and bananas are grown. This diversity opened the doors for enterprises to improve the living conditions of families in the south of Honduras. Among their economic initiatives, the groups supported by ACESH produce homemade bread, jellies, flours and wines. These are all hopeful strategies that strengthen resilience, offer options to migration while protecting and strengthening community livelihoods, especially women and youth.



## ACESH

Association of Ecological Committees of the South  
Concepción de María, department of Choluteca, Honduras.

