

# COMMUNICATING WOMEN-LED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IN CENTRAL AMERICA

## LOVING AGRICULTURE:

How communities in the Gulf of Fonseca, are restoring  
mangrove ecosystems, Honduras



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The mangroves of the Gulf of Fonseca, located in southern Honduras, are ecosystems that play an important role in biodiversity and contribute to the food security of communities whose main activity is fishing. But in recent years the inhabitants of the municipality of Marcovia have been affected by erratic rains and droughts due to climate change.

The communities are also directly affected by deforestation as a result of the advance of extractivism by large shrimp companies. This has a double impact: on the one hand, the inhabitants are more vulnerable to flooding and losing their crops. On the other hand, the loss of biodiversity in the mangrove forests affects one of their main food sources.

But a group of organizations under the Union of Enterprises of the Social Sector of the Environmental Economy of Marcovia (UEDESAMAR) is working to mitigate the effects of climate change and restore the natural assets that guarantee the food security of the communities.

“We are 11 organizations in which there are women and men. We work as a team, we clean the beaches of Eden and Cedeño (two important tourist spots in the southern zone), and also the mangroves.

When you hear that there are hurricanes, we go to the beach to clean up,” adds Mirna Rodríguez, leader of UEDESAMAR. Although she recognizes that “when disasters strike and we have to go to clean up, it is the women and girls who go, that is, there is also more work for women in the rights.”

The pollution that comes down from the big cities through the Choluteca River and poor waste management also affects the population of curiles, a mollusk native to the Gulf of Fonseca. “In 2021 there was a large loss of curiles, that species was lost due to contamination,” explains Rodríguez. UEDESAMAR also works for the conservation of the olive ridley turtle, an endangered species.

In addition to ensuring the cleanliness of the beaches, the members of the organization are in charge of reforesting the mangrove forest through the creation of a mangrove nursery. Mirna explains that between July and August, they dedicate themselves to reforesting using the “candelilla” (plantlet) from the mangrove tree. “It is useful because this is the area where they are being cut down and because of this we have been losing fish and many marine species,” Rodríguez explains.

“It also helps reduce pollution because here in our gulf there is an exaggerated amount of plastic and other waste pollution. Because of these same pollutants there is also a shortage of species because when all this waste reaches the sea the species die,” adds Mirna.



With the ancestral wisdom shared by grandfathers and grandmothers, they were able to recover species that had been lost years ago and that were part of the landscape. Through the family food gardens initiative supported by Tierra Viva, the community recovered plant species that were no longer found in the community.

“Where I live is known as El Ojochal, after the Ojoche tree. I didn't know that tree, but with the project we realized that the grandfathers and grandmothers mentioned that this species had been lost,” says Mirna. They also recovered the insulin plant. “We have the case of the president of the organization who is a diabetic and had to inject herself with insulin, and now with this project we have the plant, and she can drink insulin teas,” she said.

For Mirna, the priority is the “love of agriculture. If you don't do things with love, then nothing is achievable. Thanks to the support of Tierra Viva and GAGGA we now have 85 family gardens.”

The knowledge of older people also offers a perspective that allows them to question the use of agrochemicals and other contaminating methods in crops. “In the communities where we live there are quite a lot of monocultures, and the elders tell us that in their times you wouldn't see those planes fumigating and polluting. Now that they see us using organic fertilizer, they tell us ‘What a beautiful job we are doing’”.



## **UEDESAMAR**

**Union of Enterprises of the Social Sector of the  
Environmental Economy of Marcovia**

Marcovia, Choluteca, Honduras

