El Salvador faces two main challenges that are closely linked: water insecurity and an unstable agricultural production; these challenges worsen with increasing soil degradation caused by unsustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore, climate change worsens this situation through drought and rainfall intensification, which impacts crops and water availability in the region.

Other factors that aggravate these challenges are the productivity and economic crises of coffee forests, where water availability in the region has suffered major variations due to the substitution of coffee forests for non-forestry crops such as corn, beans, and pastures that do not facilitate water retention in the soil.

Unsustainable agriculture is the biggest threat to natural resources in El Salvador; this form of agriculture has had diverse impacts on the social, economic, and environmental sectors at a family level, and local and national scale. As a result, the RAICES program in El Salvador carried out through a collaboration between The Nature Conservancy, CRS and ACUGOLFO, supports the development of sustainable systems that improve the management of the landscape and water, benefiting over 160 thousand people by strengthening their resilience against climate change and focusing their efforts in restoring coffee production and establishing governance mechanisms for the adoption and progressive improvement of these system.
Working alongside over 500 producers of basic grains, pastures, and especially coffee, we have obtained evidence of increased productivity, higher incomes, and a higher drought and pest resilience at the farm level through practices focused on Water and Soil for Agriculture (ASA), based on appropriate soil management. In addition, we demonstrated and provided training in the profitability of coffee agriculture.

Promoting the development of a coordinated effort involving stakeholders and mechanisms for the dissemination of knowledge to promote better agricultural practices, and regulate conventional or unsustainable practices.

Contributing to the establishment of bases that promote an increased adoption of restorative agricultural practices at a territory level, improving the productivity, and the soil and water conditions.
Coffee producers have been actively supported regarding their production quality, access to markets, and improved organizational and business capacity. The cooperative ACALEM achieved the first coffee export and established a coffee cupping laboratory. As for the cooperative San Carlos Dos, they have managed to increase their export demand. As a result of the increased quality of the coffee, micro batches of coffee crops have been exported, allowing Morazán coffee to become nationally and internationally recognized.

The improved price of coffee works as an incentive to adopt good coffee growing practices in the region. International purchases fuel an economic incentive recognizing better practices and soil and water resource management.
ABOUT RAICES

RAICES-Morazán is a program developed by The Nature Conservancy, CRS, and ACUGOLFO with the objective of restoring the agricultural landscape and water resources in mount Cacahuatique and the mountains of northern Morazán, in eastern El Salvador. This program promotes the implementation of intelligent agriculture practices, which conserve the soil, increase agricultural yield, and improve underground water reserves. With supporting and increasing the adoption of these practices as a goal, RAICES involves multiple stakeholders to strengthen local governance by designing new policies and collaborative work strategies. As a result, they hope to contribute to improving the state of the environment and the livelihoods of the rural population of El Salvador.

ABOUT ResCA

Resilient Central America (ResCA) is an initiative that seeks to improve the livelihood of agricultural farmers, livestock farmers, and fishers in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, as well as at the regional level in collaboration with the Central American Integration System (SICA). ResCA works in alliance with producers, researchers, the public and private sector, in order to develop productive and healthy ecosystems that will be more resilient to climate change, thus conserving natural resources that support food production, and strengthening the local economies. ResCA is a four-year program financed by the Department of State of the United States, aligned with the multi-donations platform AgroLAC 2025, and lead by The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

For more information:

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