

Organizations in Guatemala present strategies to boost food security while addressing the effects of climate change

- *Through the Resilient Central America (ResCA) project in Guatemala, innovative strategies are being implemented in the Western Highlands to increase agricultural productivity and to address the effects of climate change.*
- *The Western Highlands - a region where 90% of the vegetables consumed and exported by the country are produced - is highly vulnerable to droughts, frosts, storms and floods which severely impacts farmers way of life.*
- *ResCA is transitioning producers to more resilient models in the face of climate change to increase their productivity.*

Guatemala City; October 5, 2018 - In a press event, the Resilient Central America (ResCA) project, led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and its local partners in Guatemala - AGEXPORT, Asoverde, CDRO and FUNDAECO - presented today the agricultural strategies that are being implemented to improve the country's food security. These initiatives respond to the effects of climate change that affect the productivity of crops from intense droughts, frosts, storms and floods, especially in the Western Highlands region.

The situation in this region represents an urgent challenge for food security, since in the Western Highlands 90% of the vegetables consumed and exported by the country are produced here and over 5.5 million people depend on them, many of them indigenous communities.

Therefore, ResCA, a project funded by the US Department of State and supported by the AgroLAC 2025 multi-donation platform, works with local producers in order to increase the yield of their crops and move towards a sustainable development model that is resilient in the face of climate change. The objective is to generate opportunities for rural workers to improve their livelihoods as well as provide benefits for future generations regarding food security.

"A great example of where ResCA is intervening is found in the Municipality of Olinetepeque, where we have already managed to recover forests and priority watershed areas, ensuring the conservation of soil on which farmers depend," said **Pedro Ventura, Board Council Member of the Olinetepeque Municipality.**

ResCA works in four major areas for healthy agricultural systems in the effects of climate change:

1. The analysis of climatic and weather information to ensure proper conservation of agricultural crops and forests.
2. The training of public and private sector officials and field technicians.
3. The implementation of demonstration sites with specific practices that deal with changing weather patterns.
4. The development of mechanisms which improve the development and implementation of public policies in Guatemala.

Fausto Valiente, agricultural specialist for AgExport, mentioned that the interest of his organization is to continue working within ResCA to strengthen the value chains of coffee, fruit trees and vegetables. The aim of their project is to increase productivity in 12,000 hectares which will in turn make the Western Highlands region much more competitive in agricultural markets.



Within the framework of pillar one for ResCA Guatemala, the analysis and dissemination of meteorological information, ResCA has promoted the creation of a communications network with more than 800 local producers. Farmers receive text messages on their cell phones about weather conditions ahead of time, as well as specific recommendations they can implement to take assertive preventive measures before extreme weather events.

Antonia Churuc of CDRO, said that another key result of ResCA's work has been the delivery of the Agro-environmental Diploma, which is currently educating 56 students in the Totonicapan region. *"This is a training program for community promoters and will train citizens to become more aware of the economic and social development that is possible in harmony with our natural resources,"* she added.

Regarding pillar two of ResCA, 27 institutions have been strengthened through training programs aimed at government agencies, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and academia. To achieve this fundamental training component, ResCA partners held workshops and delivered supplies to improve agricultural production.

To achieve long-term scale, within pillar three, 20 demonstration plots have been established in San Juan Ostuncalco, Quetzaltenango and Chichicastenango. In these pilot cases, climate-smart agriculture practices and strategies such as water harvesting, integrated pest management, and the construction of crop protection structures against frost and hailstorms, amongst other practices, were implemented.

Finally, within the fourth pillar with public policy, ResCA is also working to benefit sustainable livestock. TNC has joined the National Cattle and Livestock Board to generate the National Sustainable Bovine Livestock Strategy and to design a Manual of Best Practices for Improving Climate Change Adaptation for Cattle and Livestock. This manual will be available to the public and private sector at the end of October 2018 for the training of government stakeholder's and field technicians.

"Our work in ResCA seeks to reverse the impacts of climate change on production and its devastating impacts on Guatemalan farmers. Our goal is to empower the local producers and generate opportunities in harmony with the environment, so that within their communities they have the economic conditions necessary and will not have to migrate to urban centers or out of Guatemala," said **Jorge Cardona, Project Manager for ResCA Guatemala for The Nature Conservancy**.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. We are tackling climate change, conserving lands, waters and oceans at unprecedented scale, providing food and water sustainably and helping make cities more sustainable. Working in 72 countries, we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. To learn more, visit <http://www.tncmx.org> or follow [@Mexico_TNC on Twitter](https://twitter.com/Mexico_TNC).

AGEXPORT is an organization established in 1982 that represents and supports 1,100 Guatemalan businessmen who export goods and services with the aim of improving their access to international markets. 85% of its members are small and medium producers; In this sense, AGEXPORT seeks to promote equitable rural development, eliminate poverty and promote the generation of employment and income.

El Centro de Desarrollo Rural para el Occidente (CDRO) is a civil society organization that since 1984 has been promoting and accompanying the integral development of the communities of western Guatemala based on the



Press Release

participation of the community and taking into account the Mayan culture. establish empowered organizations that implement practices in harmony with nature. Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la conservación

(FUNDAECO) is a civil society organization that aims to create, manage and conserve Guatemala's protected areas. Among other efforts, FUNDAECO seeks to incorporate communities that inhabit protected areas and that depend directly on their natural resources in sustainable development processes and strengthen their means and, as a consequence, reduce the negative impacts and degradation of natural resources.

La Asociación de Desarrollo Verde de Guatemala (ASOVERDE) is a civil society organization that seeks to promote sustainable development through the creation of alliances between different relevant actors, the development of capacities and the creation of opportunities. ASOVERDE develops projects of sustainable forest management, food security, integrated water management, inclusive business and climate change with the aim of contributing to the conservation of natural resources and improving the living conditions of the population.

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