



Morgan Arnold for LWR

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF NICARAGUA

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF (LWR) began working in Nicaragua in 1972 to promote sustainable livelihoods for rural farmers. As the program expanded to other countries in Central America, Nicaragua became LWR's Central America regional office and currently oversees projects in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti.

Presently, over 75 percent of Nicaragua's population lives on less than \$2.00 per day, making it the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Agriculture is very important to domestic economic activity in Nicaragua, generating 38 percent of rural employment and contributing 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

To fulfill its long-term commitment to rural development in Nicaragua, LWR works in partnership with international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and national NGOs, producer organizations and private sector companies. In Nicaragua LWR addresses development challenges such as lack of smallholder credit access, gender equity in agriculture, transfer of technological innovations for the rural sector, sustainable clean production, and climate-resilient agriculture practices.

AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAINS: COCOA AND COFFEE

Throughout Nicaragua LWR is a well-known development partner helping rural smallholder farmers improve returns from cocoa and coffee crops. Producer associations and cooperatives are essential structures for helping smallholder farmers successfully participate in agriculture value chains. LWR builds the capacity of associations and cooperatives so they are able to help members improve yields, quality, post-harvest processing and storage of crops. Our efforts incorporate environmentally-sound agricultural practices, encouraging organic and Fair Trade certifications, which help producers achieve added value. LWR also helps producer associations and cooperatives engage with external stakeholders to increase their competitiveness in national and international markets.

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Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Lutheran World Relief works to improve the lives of millions of smallholder farmers and people experiencing poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America, both in times of emergencies and for the long term. LWR builds and maximizes community assets to develop strong local economies and resilient communities, toward our mission of an end to poverty, injustice and human suffering.

LWR is supporting the improvement of farm planning and management practices by promoting climate-resilient agriculture initiatives and providing technical assistance using mobile technology. Maintaining a communication network created by smallholder farmers to monitor climate risks in their farm enterprises is helping them achieve export-quality crops and traceability as well as giving them the ability to proactively plan for possible weather-related disruptions.

To improve rural food security LWR promotes crop or income diversification and improved household food production for coffee and cocoa farmers. LWR has assisted communities to establish seed banks and household gardens, which help improve food security and strengthen local economies.

GENDER EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE

In 2013, LWR began working with the Cooperative Flor de Pancasán to improve production of beans and corn. LWR and local partner Asociación para la Diversificación y el Desarrollo Agrícola Comunal (ADDAC) carried out a gender-sensitive needs assessment which identified clear differences in the benefits men and women cooperative members received in credit, training, marketing and technical assistance, as well as differences between women and men in their knowledge of agriculture and marketing opportunities. Only 30 percent of women members were able to access credit, and women were underrepresented in many of the cooperative's decision-making bodies. Not only that, but at the household level, men controlled 42 percent of the income, compared to 33 percent managed by women. LWR works with the Cooperative to increase awareness of the gender gaps and to implement new policies and practices that provide improved marketing and credit services to both men and women farmers. By bridging the gender gap in agricultural production and food security, LWR reinforces both food supply and income for women and men farmers.

CLIMATE CHANGE: ADAPTATION AND DISASTER RESPONSE

LWR supports practices and technologies that allow rural communities to adapt to the effects of climate change and respond to climate-induced natural disasters. Working directly with smallholder producers, who are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, LWR promotes: water conservation; crop diversification; coffee and cocoa production under agroforestry systems; and other climate-smart agricultural practices. This focus has reduced vulnerability to losses caused by unpredictable weather and has increased protection of water sources critical to crop production.

In Nicaragua, LWR implements production and post-harvesting technologies such as ecological wet mills for coffee processing – which use 90 percent less water than traditional methods – and solar dryers for coffee and cocoa. To protect landscapes and improve household economies, LWR works with local partners to construct latrines and gas bio-digester units connected to improved cook stoves which both reduce reliance on deforestation and lessen time-consuming labor burdens for the household. LWR also provides technical assistance to smallholder producers for improving soil fertility, diversifying farm production, and promoting household gardening to increase food security and increase climate resilience.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Due to Nicaragua's geographical position and characteristics many regions are affected by natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, droughts, volcanoes, and landslides. These hazards and the ongoing social and economic vulnerabilities caused by climate change make Nicaragua a hot bed for potential disasters.

Working with rural communities and local institutions, LWR promotes Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) interventions that help protect and increase the resilience of entire municipalities. LWR has increased community resilience by developing municipal disaster preparedness and response plans such as forest fire prevention, fire preparedness plans, fire risk awareness, fire reduction plans, Early Warning Systems, and by training volunteer fire brigades. A Safe Schools program was implemented in the departments of Jinotega and Matagalpa that incorporates emergency preparedness into school curricula, including evacuation route signage, training in first aid, disaster response training and water system improvements which allow school buildings to serve as temporary shelters following a disaster.

LWR has also implemented emergency responses on the local level in answer to the recent flood and drought emergencies by organizing and distributing food and providing potable water for temporarily displaced populations.



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