

**Climate adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction in practice:
El Salvador and Honduras**



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In Central America and the Caribbean calamities which are caused by nature, by people or by a combination of both, regularly take place. Hurricanes, droughts, floods and earthquakes are extreme events that occur in these areas. Due to climate change the region suffers more often of long periods of drought, extreme and long-term rain fall and increasing wind. Especially the poorest people of El Salvador and Honduras are hit hard.

Background

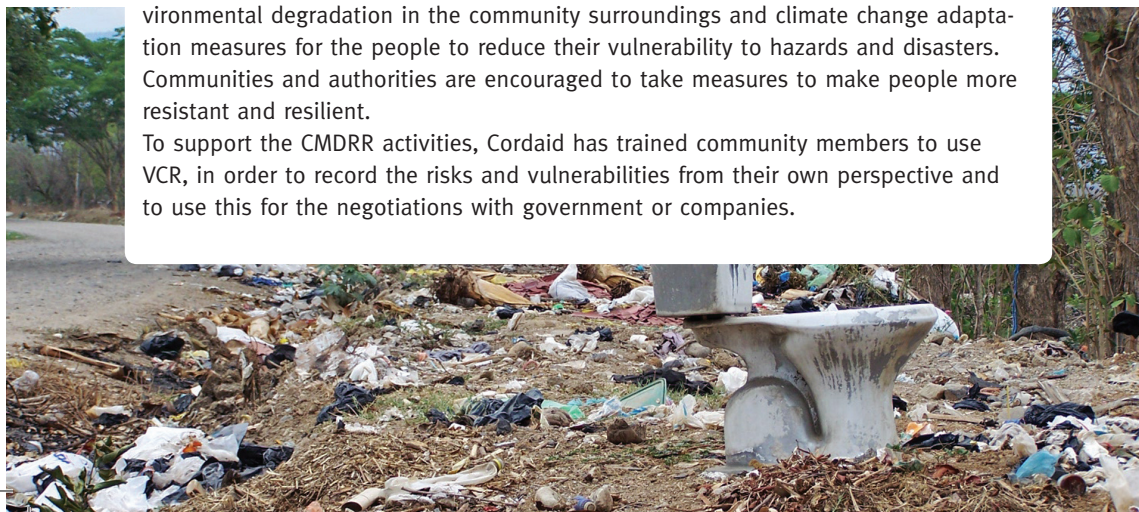
In Central America the environment is degrading fast. Eighty percent of the forests in Central America are threatened and less than 2% of the forest area in the coastal areas of the Pacific is still intact. Waste water dumping in the rivers and in the ground originating from industry, mining, agriculture and households, pollutes and even poisons the river basins. Climate change has a compounding effect on processes of deforestation, erosion, contamination and urbanization.

The poorest people, dependent on agriculture, are the most vulnerable to the impact of extreme weather conditions and natural hazards. The problems in the border area between El Salvador and Honduras are of an equal nature: water pollution, water shortage, drying rivers, environmental degradation, erosion and landslides. In order to improve water quality and quantity in the communities, concrete measures are combined with national and international action for environment legislation and - control and for an increase in investment of national governments in water management and environment.

The Cordaid approach

In this region Cordaid provides aid when disasters strike, like extreme droughts, hurricanes or land slides. The Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction programme (CMDRR) aims at reducing the risks and vulnerability of people to these disasters. The CMDRR activities supported by Cordaid focus on a combination of reducing environmental degradation in the community surroundings and climate change adaptation measures for the people to reduce their vulnerability to hazards and disasters. Communities and authorities are encouraged to take measures to make people more resistant and resilient.

To support the CMDRR activities, Cordaid has trained community members to use VCR, in order to record the risks and vulnerabilities from their own perspective and to use this for the negotiations with government or companies.



Working together

Cordaid cooperates with UNES, a network organisation in El Salvador, which is active in the field of political influence at the national and international level. UNES cooperates with the National Caritas organisation in El Salvador and Honduras. In this organisational cooperation also some water networks are active. Aim is the establishment of a Central American Alliance for Water Conservation. ASPRODE, an expert in the field of Community Managed Disaster Risk reduction (CMDRR) supports and trains the organisations and establishes the link between community activities and political influence.

DRR in practice: adaptation measures

Local communities in Chalatenango, Sonsonate (El Salvador) and Lempira (Honduras) carry out several DRR activities. Erosion is reduced, by reforesting the riverbanks; garbage is cleared from water sources; watersystems are constructed to increase access to drinking water, and pesticides are replaced by environment-friendly alternatives.

Local communities cooperate with local governments in the area of water and environmental management and in the field of planning and implementation of environmental projects.

Activities also focus on influencing policy for improved national and regional water and environment legislation. This is done through an annual investigation of water legislation and management by national networks such as UNES, in cooperation with ESPFERA and other network organisations, in four countries in Central America. The results are used to inform the parliaments and are furthermore presented to CEPRE-DENAC, an intergovernmental executing agency of the SICA (Sistema the Integración Centro Americano). SICA acts as a commission for the regional treatment of the environments and climate problems, established by the national governments of the region.

