

Growing with water

Campaign 2018

El Salvador is a country with abundant rainfall, yet it is currently suffering from a severe water crisis. How is that possible? The causes are various. Over the past several years, climate change has produced severe weather phenomena resulting in both, flooding and prolonged drought. There are man-made causes as well, including deforestation, the destruction of soils through inappropriate agricultural practices, pollution and over exploitation of key aquifers. The root of the problem has to do with the management of water and the lack of good governance in the water sector due to inadequate policies, programs, practices and effective institutional structures.

This situation has led to chaos, scarcity and hunger for small producers, especially women working in the agricultural sector. During the last several years, record breaking temperatures have been registered and flooding or prolonged droughts have destroyed agricultural crops. Planning for future crops has become riskier and traditional livelihoods are being threatened. In the meantime, Salvadorans are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good water management for the future viability of their country and for the generations to come. Water is now seen as a strategic resource, essential for life and for sustainable development. In that regard, it is considered a basic human right and a life or death issue.

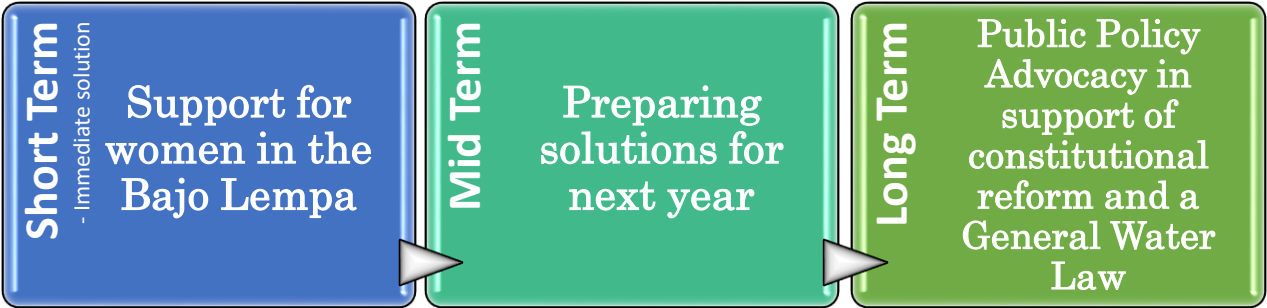
According to the United Nations, El Salvador has the most devastated natural environment in the western hemisphere, after Haiti, with 93% of its surface waters polluted by toxic chemicals, heavy metals and waste matter. And the Latin American Water Tribunal reported recently that El Salvador is on the verge of a severe water crisis, in terms of quantity, quality and availability. With a population density of almost 300 inhabitants per square kilometer (the highest in the western hemisphere), the environmental situation of El Salvador is likely to worsen in the years to come if efforts to attain legislation for more effective integral management of water resources is not forthcoming. This process has to include constitutional reform recognizing water as a basic human right and legislation assuring the effective regulation of the water sector.

Opposition from big business in the National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP in Spanish) and right wing political parties associated with economic interests aspiring to privatize water continues to block this strategic process of reform, according to Andrés McKinley, a policy analyst from the Jesuit University, UCA, in San Salvador.

The Share Foundation’s “Growing with Water” campaign is a social awareness movement supporting the ongoing struggle to overcome this opposition and establish a General Water Law in El Salvador capable of assuring good governance with equitable, efficient and sustainable water management through direct support to affected communities, especially women, and through public policy advocacy. Our job, and our moral obligation as SHARE Foundation, is the accompaniment of organizations and communities that are fighting for the right to ensure reliable and sustainable water resources and sanitation services for all citizens in El Salvador with a rights based focus. On March 29th, 2017, El Salvador became the first nation in the world to exercise its sovereign right to say “no” to metallic mining after carefully analyzing the costs and benefits of this industry. This struggle was built upon the notion of water as the source of all life and as a basic human right. The struggle continues today for legislation and constitutional reform recognizing this right through humanitarian efforts to assist victims and through the empowerment and accompaniment of traditionally marginalized communities in El Salvador as they strive to meet their immediate needs and to construct long-term solutions.

Structuring the campaign:

Our campaign proposal, “Growing with water”, is designed to provide support and accompaniment in the struggle on the right to water. The campaign consists of three interrelated phases focused on strengthening livelihoods and generating social change in El Salvador related to water.



Short term Solutions; Support to women cattle-raisers suffering from crop loss due to extreme weather phenomena (drought and flooding) in the Bajo Lempa:

El Salvador has suffered from prolonged droughts this year which destroyed thousands of acres of corn, beans and other basic grains, especially among small producers, including women. In response to this emergency, SHARE plans to provide a basket of basic grains, for consumption and for future planting, along with other essentials to 210 women and their families in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador. The women are organized in ACAMG (*Asociacion Cooperativa de Aproveccionamiento, Ahorro, Credito y Consumo De Mujeres Del BajoLempa “Marta Gonzalez”*), an organization that provides credit and training opportunities for women in the department of Usulután with the goal of helping them explore new different forms of income generation, including raising and marketing of livestock, and empowerment in order to strengthen their participation in decision-making within their communities.

Each basket will contain the following:

Basic basket budget for a family of 4 members / two months.

Nº	PRODUCTS	CUANTITY	IN/C	TOT/C
1	Beans	20lbs	1.25	25.00
2	Rice	20lbs	0.85	17.00
3	Sugar	20lbs	0.75	15.00
4	Coffee	4 lbs	5.00	20.00
5	Corn	4 qq	28.00	112.00
6	Concentrate for cattle (fiber)	4 qq	18	72
	TOTAL USD			261.00

Through this effort, with \$130.00, we can provide for a family of 4 (average family members in the communities of Bajo Lempa) for a month. The grains will also be utilized to sustain cattle in order to provide milk, cheese and a source of family income. This action won't resolve the water crisis in El Salvador, but it will help victims of drought meet the immediate needs of their families and livestock as well as remove the sense of being alone in the search for longer term solutions.

Primary objective of short term (immediate) solutions:

- Provide humanitarian aid to improve the lives of women and their families in the area of the Bajo Lempa suffering from crop loss due to extreme weather phenomena (flooding and drought).

Midterm Solutions: Preparing for next year

For El Salvador, as well as the other countries in the region, the rainy season has become unpredictable, revealing the need for longer term solutions to crop loss through flooding and drought. Communities need to be prepared through the use of simple but reliable technology and other sustainable solutions.

Among these are:

- The search for more resistant seeds and crops, planting home gardens and other alternatives to the traditional crops of corn and beans;
- The use of tanks to store and recycle rain water;
- Development of local insurance mechanisms managed by the communities and ACAMG in order to provide emergency funding, seeds and other resources to victims of future crises;
- Construction of irrigation systems (drip irrigation) for sustaining crops during drought;

Primary objective of Midterm Solutions:

- Motivate and support the search for alternatives to traditional agricultural products and practices among small producers (especially women) and develop insurance options to help mitigate crops losses in the future.

Long Term Solution: Promoting and supporting the struggle for a general water law in El Salvador and constitutional reform to recognize water as a basic human right:

- Support to Salvadoran organizations (CRIPDES) involved at the local and national levels to attain a General Water Law with a rights based focus and constitutional reform recognizing water as a basic human right: Specific strategies to support include;

--Lobbying;

--Education/awareness raising;

--Communication and media work;

--Research;

--Mobilization

Our Vision and Results:

Short Term Solution: Humanitarian support to victims of extreme weather phenomena (flooding and drought). Food and grains for aprox. 210 families

Midterm Solutions: Support the search for alternative agricultural crops and practices: Prepare for future crises through experimentation with new crops and agricultural practices,

Long Term Solutions: Support for the struggle for a General Water Law in El Salvador and constitutional reform recognizing water as a basic human right: Empowerment of local and national organizations.



Growing With Water

SUPPORTING A FUTURE WITH SUSTAINABLE
AND EQUITABLE WATER FOR EL SALVADOR

Dear Friends of SHARE:

We come to you wishing health, happiness and well-being to you and your loved ones.

For the past 4 months, El Salvador has suffered a drought that has destroyed thousands of acres of basic grains and left thousands of families in rural areas of the country in despair.

SHARE has decided to launch a national campaign in solidarity with the people of El Salvador to regenerate hope and seek short, medium and long-term solutions to the crisis for small producers, especially women, residing in the Bajo Lempa region.

We hope that our friends from within the Church and from communities across the nation will support this initiative by helping us attain our goal of \$10,000 to provide emergency aid and seek longer term solutions for 210 women and their families residing in the Bajo Lempa region of El Salvador, an area inhabited primarily by families who were forcefully displaced from their communities of origin during the civil war of 1980s and is prone flooding and drought.

We want to express in advance our sincere appreciation for the interest and support you have always shown towards The SHARE Foundation in the difficult moments of our struggle for social justice and sustainable development in El Salvador.

Donations can be sent to our offices in Berkeley, California with the designation: "Women and Water Crisis in El Salvador" or through our website: www.share-elsalvador.org

Again, we appreciate your solidarity and support for the people of El Salvadoran

Sincerely,

Jose Artiga

Executive Director

David M. Mckinley

Development Coordinator

SHARE El Salvador

**www.share-elsalvador.org
2425 College Ave,
Berkeley, CA 94704**