

*Let hope FLOW
this Christmas*



Facing the Climate Challenge with Joy

In October, Hurricane Julia swept across Nicaragua causing widespread flooding and damage, including in the rural community of Aguas Calientes where Kelly lives. Like many people who live in the country, her family had few resources to cope, especially when the river they use for water became contaminated.

“My name is Kelly I live with my husband, my son, his wife and my grandson. They live next door because they are building a little house for themselves. I am a housewife. My husband works on the land. He does not earn a lot, but we adjust to what we have.

Both my husband and my son work for farmers. One of the difficult situations we have in the community is that we live in the dry corridor and water is scarce. We have been through a terrible hurricane and ten latrines contaminated the river with faeces. The twenty families in the community depend on the river for water. We clean our clothes in the river or use rockpools after the rain (see below). Clean water has been a very serious problem in our communities for many years.



During the hurricane I was scared because the whole house was moving, and inside the house everything was getting wet. I had to put plastic and aluminum containers out so that the rain would not make mud inside the house and cover the things we have inside. We thought we were going to lose everything, but we kept our faith in our Lord that he was going to protect us during those hurricanes.

When I heard about CEPAD it was a great relief for me because they arrived with food package. We were very happy because we were going to have something to eat for a while. Of that food that I received, I shared a part with my son and his family and kept the other part for my husband and I,” Kelly concludes.

CEPAD also supplied three litres of fresh water per person to Aguas Calientes and surrounding communities affected by the Hurricane each day.



About Nicaragua

Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America and is highly vulnerable to climate change. It lies in the pathway of hurricanes from the Atlantic and on major earthquake faults. Rising temperatures are producing more severe droughts and rainfall is increasingly unpredictable. Rain can be heavy, causing flooding and landslides. Climate change will make it harder for farmers to grow the food the growing population needs to survive. A lack of safe water is likely to lead to greater poverty and poor health outcomes.

CEPAD is preparing communities to cope with these uncertainties and their lack of economic resources. It has expertise in agro-ecological farming techniques that are appropriate for the different terrains where



staff work. Its approach is low-cost. Agricultural specialists train agricultural promoters to grow food in more resilient ways to cope with climate change. The promoters then share what they learn with others in the village and encourage people to share their experiences. CEPAD helps some communities to establish their own nurseries and supplies seeds and plants for households. Other community members attend disaster preparedness training and will make a plan to protect people from harm. CEPAD shows communities how to care for each other in very practical ways.

Most farmers in CEPAD's sustainable agriculture program go from only growing 2-3 staple crops to growing around 30 different types of fruits and vegetables. This improves the family diet and can improve its livelihood.



Rural women attend an agricultural workshop.

About CEPAD

[CEPAD](#) (*Consejo de Iglesias Evangelicas Pro-Alianza Denominacional* – Council of Protestant Churches) works with urban and rural communities to improve their lives and livelihoods. Often made up of recent settlers, the communities have little if any infrastructure or experience in working together. CEPAD assists communities during droughts, and after hurricanes and other disasters.

Staff work with the communities for five years, leaving them with shared resources and skills to make change happen in the future. In 2021 staff began working with 42 new communities.

Under CEPAD's guidance, the communities:

- devise a village plan
- elect a Local Development Committee to lead the plan
- select agricultural promoters to pass on skills and provide support to local farmers so they can better manage the scarce water supply and improve crop production
- access plants, seeds, irrigation and tools to supplement what is available
- make disaster preparedness plans in case of hurricanes or earthquakes
- work with women to establish home gardens and sometimes give them chickens or a pig to raise
- improve the diet and health of families, including mental well-being
- Support women with start-up loans for small businesses eg to sell local crafts.
- Stopping violence in families and the community
- Organise activities and provide psychosocial support to young people – CEPAD arranges professional support when necessary.



“We walk with a community until it has the skills to walk without us and the people can claim the rights they did not know existed.”

Dr Gustavo Parajón, Founder of CEPAD

Thanks to CEPAD for the stories and images.