

Narrative Report "Recovery of livelihoods: Workshops on organic farming for horticultural crops and grains in indigenous territories affected by Tropical Storm Nate"



We present the following narrative report, which is part of the implementation of the program „Appeal CRC171”, “Organic farming for horticultural crops and grains in indigenous territories” which includes following actions in communication and information

Participants of the Costa Rican Lutheran Church

Coordinator: Oscar Retana, Appeal and forum ACT Alliance Costa Rica

Communication: Rodolfo Mena

Driver and Assistance: Paulino Nájera

Workshop advisor: Paolo Nájera Rivera.

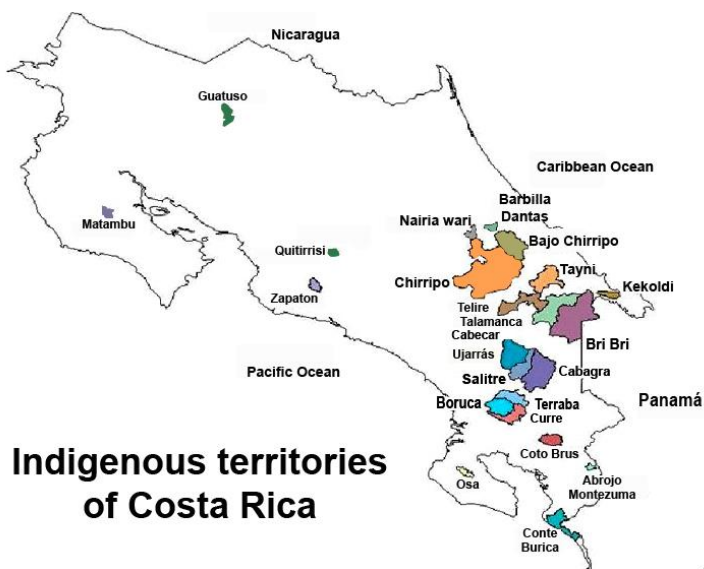
Number	Action	Publication	
1.	Illustrative video of the visit	Web site ILCO and Youtube	
2.	Inerviews (spanish and english text) a) Mrs.Carmen Villanueva: b) Mrs.. María Zúñiga c) Mr. Raimundo Rojas Torres d) Mr. Paolo Nájera	Narrative report, Web site ILCO and Youtube	
3.	Photograph album	Web site ILCO	fulfilled
4.	Article (spanish)	Web site ILCO	fulfilled
5.	Distribution	Sending to mailing list (spanish)	fulfilled

6.	Facebook	Post	fulfilled
7.	Article (english)	Web site ILCO	
8.	Distribution	Sending to mailing lists (german, english and swedish)	
9.	Narrative Report (spanish)	ACT Alliance	fulfilled
10.	Narrative Report (english)	ACT Alliance	fulfilled
11.	Radio programme	Work of ACT Alliance in Costa Rica	to be elaborated

This report illustrates the actions carried out during the visit to the indigenous territories of southern Costa Rica, such as Ujarrás, Cabagra Yuavin, Rey Curré and San Andrés, in order to rescue a vision of hope and struggle after the storm Nate.

It should be noted that this region is made up of different indigenous communities, who have different traditions, culture and language, such as:

Indigenous territory	Workshops	Indigenous people	Language
Ujarrás	San Vicente y Ujarrás Centro	Cabecar	Cabecar
Cabagra	San Rafael y Yuavin	Bribri	Bribri
Rey Curre	Finca Du Tuj	Brunca	Brunca
Térraba	Finca San Andrés	Teribe Broran	Teribe



These indigenous communities have been affected by the storm Nate, which caused heavy rains and flooding of rivers, especially the Terraba River, which has the highest flow in the country. Despite of the difficulties in infrastructure and public services, in each workshop the participants show an enormous desire to learn and be able to face new natural threats in the future. Part of that humanitarian response is the recovery of livelihoods of the affected communities, dedicated mainly to agricultural activity.

The Costa Rican Lutheran Church (ILCO) within the framework of the "Appeal CRC171", Tropical Storm Nate in Costa Rica, is executing a series of workshops in organic agriculture for horticultural and grain crops in indigenous territories affected by the Storm Tropical Nate; in order to have better organic practices for the cultivation and maintenance of the soil.



The objective of the present workshops is that small farmers can substitute as much as possible the chemical inputs to reduce environmental pollution, mitigate the effects of climate change, produce healthier foods, reduce production costs, increase yields and therefore improve their income.

Within the specific objectives of the project, it is intended that the beneficiary communities know and learn about the preparation of liquid and dry fertilizers, soil conservation practices and care of seeds in basic aspects that improve both the treatment with the environment, as well as the quality and yield of the crops they manage.

The workshops are composed of 6 sessions, of which the first one on "Efficient reproduction of mountain organisms, agricultural compost and productive plots".

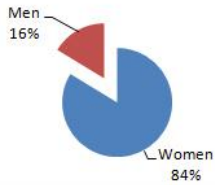
In these indigenous areas, the main economic activity is agriculture that provides a subsistence economic activity, but which is highly vulnerable due to natural impacts and productive techniques with agrochemicals that undermine the sustainability of crop quality.

Gender statistics of participation in organic agriculture workshops

Community of San Vicente de Ujarrás

Women	41
Men	8
Total	49

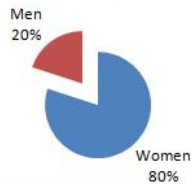
Community of San Vicente de Ujarrás



Community of Ujarrás Centro

Women	36
Men	9
Total	45

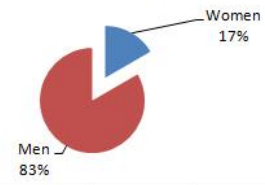
Community of Ujarrás Centro



Community of San Rafael de Cabagra

Women	2
Men	10
Total	12

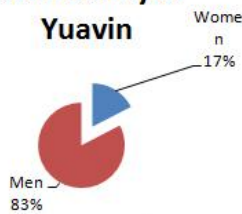
Community of San Rafael Cabagra



Community of Yuavin

Women	8
Men	38
Total	46

Community of Yuavin



Community of Curre

Women	10
Men	6
Total	16

Community of Curre



Community of San Andrés

Women	5
Men	4
Total	9

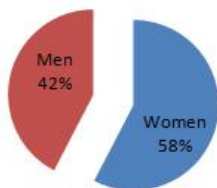
Community of San Andrés



Total statistics

Women	102
Men	75
Total	177

Total statistics



In the future workshops, it will be developed following issues:

1. Pest control and fertilization of fruits and plants
2. Soil conservation
3. Liquid fertilizers
4. Crop association

5. Selection of seeds
6. Fermentation for soil enrichment
7. Preservation of the seed
8. Questions
9. Visit to the plots
10. Certificate delivery ceremony

Agroecology workshops include the delivery of work tools, a machete, a whetstone and a pair of rubber boots per beneficiary. So seeds are also delivered for the cultivation of vegetables and grains, for the recovery of the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, due to the loss of their crops caused by the effects of tropical storm Nate. In this action the participants will receive seeds of onion, watermelon, carrot, radish, lettuce, tomato, sweet pepper and cilantro, as well as beans and bananas.



It should be noted that seeds treatment are one of the irreplaceable activities of food production in indigenous communities and practically all agricultural communities know how to save, conserve and share seeds.

During Tropical Storm Nate most of the beneficiary communities were isolated and affected by heavy floods, which destroyed roads and bridges, whose main affectation was the families' economy, as well as despair and frustration. The beneficiary families receive with joy the training of new methods to improve their crops and guarantee an improvement in the health of their families.

The risks that occur in rural and indigenous communities due to natural impacts are challenges that must be faced, such as the carrying out of training activities that encourage preventive actions, during and after emergency events.

It should be noted that in most of the protected indigenous areas they have great access to natural resources, that have always been part of their worldview that is based on traditional knowledge, with a spiritual basis, which not only depends on the relationship between human beings and nature, but also on the relationship between the visible and invisible world.

This is how the world of spirits is linked with plants and animals. The earth does not belong to the human being, but the human being is part of the earth. From here comes a harmony of coexistence, a dialogue between the past and the present.

As part of the action of the Appeal CRC171, a study was made of the need to distribute water filters, as an alternative solution focused on the development of rural and indigenous communities to mitigate the problems that arise due to inappropriate water consumption — not drinkable - that, on occasion, can cause preventable diseases.

So what is the current situation of this dialogue between nature and indigenous peoples, especially in the field of agriculture and environmental protection? How has the storm Nate affected this dialogue between nature and indigenous people?

To answer these questions we have interviewed some of the participants in the organic agriculture workshops, who tell us part of their experiences and local activities:



Ms. María Zúñiga from the community of San Vicente, Indigenous Territory of Ujarrás, works with a group of women, who are dedicated to agriculture and handicrafts and every two weeks sell their products in Ujarrás, such as vegetables, pinolillo and some meals.

She says; "I found out about this workshop thanks to Mrs. Carmen Villanueva, who offered me a seed workshop. The storm Nate affects me a lot because it destroyed the bridge and at that time I worked in Guanacaste, we lost crops, and a nephew lost everything. I have other crops planted, we use traditional

methods to sow

The organic agriculture workshop has been very good, it's about not harming the fruits and eating healthy vegetables without fear of not getting poisoned, and although the other products look nice, but they do not taste the same as those grown naturally.

This workshop of mountain microorganisms has not seemed difficult to me since I have received certain knowledge previously and all the participants can take advantage of it. These workshops are a great help and there is a lot to learn.

Previously older people used different techniques such as cutting other plants to serve as fertilizer, but these traditions have been losing, since young people do not like to get their hands dirty, it is easier for them to go and bring a bag of fertilizer and prepare the soil.

Before; people let things rot and used waste of corn or beans as a fertilizer and now many people suffer from cancer due to the great use of chemical fertilizers. Like the chickens, they inject hormones, instead we take care of them with homemade food and they taste much better. The agroecology is part of the indigenous culture, but it has been lost, and these workshops are of great benefit, I have worked with organic fertilizer before and people like it.



Mrs. Carmen Villanueva from the community of Ujarrás Centro tells us that she has always been involved in social actions and has established different alliances with organizations, with whom proposals and actions are exchanged.

She explains that: *"The storm Nate affects us a lot, it was surprising, and we ran out of communication, there was no electricity, the radio did not work, the grocery stores closed and the products became more expensive, and as we handle with credit, it was closed, we last approximately 8 days with nothing to eat. Some of us have the crops on the other side of the river, so there was no possibility of crossing to the other side, because the bridge fell, and it affected all the communication."*

After the storm the help came after 15 days, first in Buenos Aires, where educational centers collected some food, and then other organizations helped us like ILCO.

And now the ILCO helps us with these agroecology workshops and these workshops are a good thing and very well thought because they took into account women and almost never took women into account before and as you can see there are many women here. We are happy because we are going to work, many with babies, but they say that even if they are in the house, behind the house they have the garden, it is an initiative that had not been done before, an appropriate initiative when taking into account women and men, a population that depends on crops.

For example, here are some small groups that are making a farmer's market every 15 days, they go to the Ujarrás center to sell. Traditional agriculture has always been corn, beans, rice, taro and yam, the way of planting has always been as our parents taught us, but now with the new technique of organic fertilizer, it will help people a lot, in a short space they will have their own crops and they will harvest well. Women have a lot of interest, they work hard with knives, boots and hats and they plant all kind of vegetables and fruits they need.

The proposal of the church has been very successful in including women, I feel very happy, and they come to improve the way of how to protect the environment. I think the project is very important, for example we are now in sowing time, and we are already working on planting beans.



Mr. Raimundo Rojas Torres from the community of Potrero Grande de Cabagra tells us that he arrived at the workshop after three hours on foot and he is dedicated to agriculture, cattle raising and crafts. He produces rice, beans, corn, plantain, cassava, bananas, taro, potato and traditional plants.

Raimundo tells us: *"Now I am cultivating with chemicals because there are a lot of bad plants that I need to cut and some are difficult to eliminate. If one cuts the bad plants today, the next week it has to be cut again, so it is better to apply the insecticides since there are also a lot of insects."*

In the vegetables we do not use chemicals, since talking to doctors has told us that chemicals are bad for our health and that sometimes we "kill ourselves" and our

families, through what we eat and it is important because we are eating what we produce

The workshops are very important because we contribute to a better health of the people, our families and ourselves, and we guarantee that the product sold is healthy and rich in proteins and favors to elderly, pregnant women and give a change of improving the health.

These workshops of mountain micro organisms are something new, it is a very good idea that motivates me, inspires me in what I am going to put into practice with my family and with my neighbors or people who want to work with me, explaining them how to maintain our health, eating what we produce. The workshops are very beneficial for the area, mainly for people who have that aspiration, and who want to take it as a central idea, in order to prolong life many years more.

Many people of Cabagra, do not buy chemicals because they are very expensive and do not how to handle them, they just sow naturally and do not generate money to buy chemicals.

In my case I have worked more with chemicals and now I plan to finish the workshops because I like it, and it is not complicated to apply it on my farm, I have natural resources, I have about 23 hectares of virgin mountain without touching, and so that the water does not dry out, I will try to implement this new technique, I think it will helps us to maintain the nature.

The workshops are like a light or a good motivation, since sometimes it is difficult since we have the materials but not the knowledge or how to do it, but with the workshops we are learning and if you do it yourself it is not expensive, compared to if we buy the chemical products. The highest priority is the health of people, and if you do not use chemicals is something healthy, something natural, is like going to get something out of the mountain that does not have even the minimum amount of chemicals.

You have to be careful with junk foods to avoid cancer, all those products have many chemicals, like meat, we avoid putting chemicals on them, we always consume homemade chicken, It is important that people become aware, all this has a meaning, it has a value, we work it and we guarantee what we are doing for consumption.



The workshop advisor Paulo Nájera comments us:
"One of the main functions in mountain organisms (MM) is to recover the life and health of the soil, facilitate the availability of nutrients to plants and also perform a biological control of pests. The objective of the present workshops is that small farmers can substitute as much as possible the chemical inputs to reduce environmental and soil pollution, mitigate the effects of climate change, produce healthier foods, reduce production costs and increase yields"

As a conclusion, despite the fact that Indigenous Peoples have walked alongside the nature, projecting their worldview into their reality; they present an alternative way of living, but unfortunately not heard by the modern society, which instead has done everything possible to destroy a harmonious past, increasing racism, an aggressive market and of course the tireless pursuit of the usurpation of lands and natural

resources. Added to this problem, the indigenous communities have natural impacts that as a whole have altered the ancestral natural order.

Although of the fact that the indigenous movements have managed to incorporate their cosmovision locally, and even into international agreements, like autonomy processes for example in Costa Rica, they have been victims of the influence of modern society, where production must be fast and effective, which has led them to use agricultural chemicals, which in some way accelerate production, but chemicals products greatly affect the health of people and nature.

Here we find the importance of these Agroecology workshops, which not only provide knowledge and training, but also return forgotten knowledge over time, specially today, when we have the ingredient of preventive actions, use of existing resources; individual, collective and institutional capacities, towards the achievement of a culture in harmony with nature.

It should be noted that the indigenous worldview not only implies harmony with nature and the care of Mother Earth, but also that it is necessary to decolonize the influence of modern society. One way to achieve this goal of decolonization is to encourage the use of their own resources and knowledge, such as mountain micro-organisms, agricultural compost, pest control and cultural practices for soil conservation, fermented land and seed preservation.