

ADAPTATION FUND NGO NETWORK BASELINE MAPPING SERIES

# Insights from Honduras

by Edas Muñoz Galeano



## Brief Summary

The Honduras Project “Addressing Climate Change Risks on Water Resources in Honduras; Increase Systematic Resilience and Reduced Vulnerability of Urban Poor” was approved by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) with a budget of USD 6,945,000 and is currently in its implementation stage. Main implementing agencies are the Honduran Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources Environment and Mines (MiAmbiente) in conjunction with the UNDP. The project is intended to provide communities around the capital city Tegucigalpa and surrounding communities in the Choluteca River Basin with better infrastructure that allow them to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Some examples of adaptation measures underway include the installation of rainwater harvesting systems, the construction of storm drains and ditches and the creation of 46 weather monitoring stations around Tegucigalpa.

Some project delays have been encountered as a result of political turnover, infrastructure problems and safety issues within the country. However, the political scene in Honduras has fostered the implementation of the Adaptation Fund (AF) project and recognized the importance of addressing climate change by establishing monumental legislation such as the Climate Change Law (January 2014). Many workshops have also been held within the country to ensure cooperative measures are being taken between all parties involved including community members, stakeholders, NGOs and governmental officials. As a regular victim of extreme natural disasters, most Hondurans are aware that climate change exists and is harmful to their country; however, further initiatives are being taken to continue raising climate change awareness within the country.

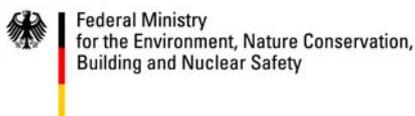
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# 1. The Adaptation Fund and the Adaptation Fund NGO Network

The Adaptation Fund (AF) was established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The AF is innovative in the way it is funded, managed and governed: Developing countries have a majority in the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB), the governing body who manages and supervises the AF. Moreover, the AF is financed with 2% of the Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) issued for projects of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Lastly, the AF offers the opportunity to access to its resources through direct access, which as a unique approach in the realm of international climate finance.

The Adaptation Fund NGO Network is a coalition of NGOs and interested stakeholders following the development of the Adaptation Fund and its funded projects. It strives to provide a sustainable and dynamic influence on politics and promote the engagement of civil society. It believes in the great chance to contribute to a successful implementation of projects funded by the Adaptation Fund (AF) in developing countries, especially for the benefit of people and communities particularly vulnerable to climate change. The Network directly supports NGOs in a number of developing countries, with a focus on AF direct access countries, by increasing their capacity to escort all relevant issues around the implementation of the project throughout the implementation period.

The Adaptation Fund NGO Network was established in 2010. The first phase lasted from 2010 to 2013, and the second phase is currently running until 2016. The Network is a supporting facility forum for NGOs in developing countries. Through this channel, developing countries can follow the development of the AF and specifically observe direct access and the implementation of the projects through National Implementing Entities. This approach aims to enable multi-stakeholder participation in the AF procedures. Through this open exchange and participation, the Network assists its NGO partners to contribute to a successful outcome of the funded projects in their own countries. Their participation during all stages of the project – from its design to its implementation – is in the interest of improving the conditions of those less privileged and most vulnerable to climate change.

Currently, the Adaptation Fund NGO Network is comprised of ten active partners in their respective countries: Fundación Vida in Honduras, Panos in Jamaica, ENDA in Senegal, Indigo in South Africa, Forum CC in Tanzania, Practical Action in Kenya, The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan, Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement in Benin, Association pour la Conservation de la Nature in Rwanda and NGO Forum in Cambodia. In addition to these active members, the number of Adaptation Fund NGO Network members is constantly growing. To date, there are more than 115 member organisations that associate themselves with the Adaptation Fund NGO Network.

This Baseline Mapping has been produced by Fundación Vida, our Adaptation Fund NGO Network partner in Honduras. It aims to inform the climate adaptation and climate finance community about the Adaptation Fund project in Honduras as well as to provide insight into the overall climate change policy landscape and civil society's perception on climate change issues in the country.

## 2. Overview of the AF Project in Honduras

The Adaptation Fund Project in Honduras titled "Addressing Climate Change Risks on Water Resources in Honduras; Increased Systemic Resilience and Reduced Vulnerability of the Urban Poor" is an initiative aimed to benefit more than 3,000 Honduran families directly. The amount of funds allocated to the project is USD 6,945,000. This money has supported the development of pilot projects, which focus on rain water harvesting, technical training, designing a biological corridor surrounding Tegucigalpa and strengthening micro-watershed committees scattered within the Choluteca River Basin.

The project is expected to last five years and was divided into the following stages:

- The first year was dedicated to familiarizing involved parties (technicians, residents, etc.) with the project through the development of technical training programs and thematic workshops in order to enhance their technical knowledge about adaptation to climate change.
- The second year focused on implementing the pilot projects, which included: installing rain water harvesting systems, constructing ditches and storm drains, developing technical manuals and management plans on climate change adaptation, creating a career path for Hondurans interested in the climate change adaptation field and creating 46 meteorological stations located throughout the capital.
- In its third year, the project has continued building techniques and methodologies to improve adaptation to climate change. As a result, it has created two important tools: "The Methodological Guide to Incorporate Climate Change Adaptation in Development Planning" and "The Assessment of Water Resources in the Nationwide Natural Regime," which were prepared by the Honduran Institute of Geosciences and the Adaptation Fund Project.

The main implementing agencies of the project are the Ministry of Energy, Natural Resources, Environments, and Mines (MiAmbiente) in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who operates under the financial mechanism of the Adaptation Fund. The project has created an interagency support mechanism for local organizations including the Honduran National Autonomous University (UNAH), the Municipality of the Central District (AMDC), the Forest Conservation Institute (ICF), the National Water and Sewage Service (SANAA), the Standing Committee of Contingencies (COPECO), and the Honduran Private Development Organizations (FOPRIDEH), which is represented by Fundación Vida.

Honduras is a Central American country that has been severely damaged by natural disasters such as floods and droughts. It remains one of the region's most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, there was a need to create a strategy for Honduras that would promote appropriate measures against climate change -- not only to reduce the negative impacts caused by natural disasters but also to achieve resiliency among resident in the most affected areas.

In 2011, the country's agenda included the need to prioritize actions in order to reduce the effects of climate change. One of the most relevant aspects to be highlighted, which has marked a precedent because it has had a very important interagency development, is the support they have gotten from the academy in the process of carrying out different research studies on water management resources. The other one is the training process on climate change adaptation, which has trained at least 109 technicians from several private and public organizations.

***The Project's Target Population***

The project's target area is the department of Francisco Morazán, which is where Honduras' capital is located. More specifically, the project targets areas within the Choluteca River Basin and Guacerique River Sub-Basin. These areas are home to highly vulnerable and poor communities that are in need of strategies to counteract the damage caused by climate change and natural disasters.

The target population of the project was selected based on two factors, the first being that they live in a highly vulnerable area often exposed to flooding or mudslides. The other contributing factor is the low level of income which prevents them from relocating their households. The project aims to create resilience among people in these communities by enhancing awareness on how to respond to natural effects and implementing risk management techniques.

***Fundación Vida as an Active Member of the AF NGO Network***

Fundación Vida has been part of the AF NGO Network for the last three years. Its main role is to act as a direct observer in the process, focusing not only on how the project is currently going but also on how each of the components relating to climate change adaptation is emerging.

Through the AF NGO Network, lessons learned and good practices can be shared between different NGOs and regions. This exchange builds knowledge based on experiences, and it is displayed in reports from Fundación Vida. These reports are documented annually based on data collected from interviews, discussions with project stakeholders and beneficiaries. Gathering information for this report has been a push for Fundación Vida in order to start taking actions to ensure project sustainability on adaptation to climate change at the country level.

### 3. Current Status of the Project

Currently, the Honduran Project is in its implementation stage. Therefore, the project can already share some products and results such as:

- The construction of rainwater drains in neighborhoods like Campo Cielo and Cantarero López have already been completed.
- 22 new meteorological stations along the Choluteca River Basin and Guacerique Sub-Basin have been created.
- A workbook that has been used as a methodological guide for mainstreaming adaptation to climate change into development planning has been written. This has been the basis for identifying key actors, risk scenarios and seeking measures that prioritize actions towards climate change adaptation.
- A study evaluating water resources in Honduras at the national level is underway.

Some projects delays have occurred as a result of change of government which takes place every four years. Not only does change occur in leadership but also within the structure of government institutions. This eventually forces institutions to make changes to their plans and postpone certain activities that were already scheduled because of the need to teach new authorities in order to re-socialize the project to new government authorities.

At this point, the project is in the middle of its implementation stage. In early 2014, the Canadian consultant Dean Pallen carried out a Mid-Term Report which has been used as a basis to define the next steps and line-of-action the project should follow:

1. It is the concern of filling gaps related to the logic of the project on priority issues that may create a greater impact in implementing the project activities.
2. Having a range of values arising from the use of methodological tools.
3. To raise awareness on adaptation to climate change from the perspective of the National Climate Change.



**Photo 1:** Local community members gathering to openly discuss and learn about the Project

## 4. Challenges of the Project

Overall, the project has been implemented in a coordinated, stable, and timely manner. However, the current unsafe condition in Honduras is sometimes problematic. For example, some project sites are located in the most violent and dangerous areas of the capital. Due to safety reasons, guests are often unable to make field visits to these sites.

## 5. The Role of Civil Society

### *The Relationship of Fundación Vida with the Implementing Entity & Others Involved*

MiAmbiente, previously known as Secretary of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Mines (SERNA), in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), oversees that the project meets its objectives and that their activities are conducted in the best possible ways. Another of MiAmbiente's tasks is to serve as a focal point and role model, which will hopefully cause other institutions to fulfill their roles.

Fundación Vida shares a cordial relationship with the executing agencies, and all involved parties are often strategic partners in the development of other projects. For example, Fundación Vida always emphasizes active participation within the Climate Change Interagency Committee. This Committee, which is chaired by the Secretary of MiAmbiente, brings together different organizations, members of civil society, decentralized units of government, private enterprise, donors, and NGOs and allows them to collectively discuss and plan strategies to reduce the impact of climate change.

For beneficiaries who are among the most vulnerable communities, the Adaptation Fund project has been a great help in several aspects. It has already reduced the impacts of natural disasters and the problems that follow in their aftermath such as flooding, infrastructure damage, illness, property loss, and loss of life.

Additionally, beneficiaries have learned more about climate change and expressed interest in continuing to learn more about the topic and how it impacts their communities. According to their comments, they now also recognize Honduras' vulnerability and wish to actively participate in the fight against climate change in their own communities. Some of this work is already underway as the beneficiaries have made profiles, and communities have identified their needs and key issues that must be immediately addressed. Beneficiaries have also started making proposals for pilot projects on climate change adaptation.

## 6. Broader Climate Change Adaptation Landscape in Honduras

### *Policy for Climate Change Adaptation in Honduras*

Honduras has two tools to help reduce climate change: "The National Strategy on Climate Change" and "The Climate Change Law." These are being used as a basis for creating initiatives or plans that address climate change in response to efforts aiming at meeting international commitments to sign and ratify the UNFCCC, since it is the fundamental framework for the establishment of a national policy framework on climate change reference as well as for the definition and implementation of the most appropriate tools for effective implementation, in terms of both adaptation and mitigation.

In addition, the National Strategy on Climate Change was established in 2010 and was framed in the context Country Vision and National Plan responding to the strategic guidelines in July referred to regional development, natural resources and environments. 11 points are relevant to climate change adaptation and mitigation, while 12 address risk management and early recovery of loss and damage cause by disasters.

The Climate Change Law was established in January 2014 and has the main objective of establishing the principles and regulations necessary to plan and prevent impacts caused by climate change in Honduras. This makes Honduras the second country in the region to adopt policies related to climate change.

In the country, there have been a lot of workshops that have been carried out in order to review the Climate Change Law. These events are highlighted the participation of many stakeholders such as government and civil society. The workshops have revealed that the Law has many gaps, as does the actual implementation of the Law.



**Photo 2:** A project worker explaining the climate change adaptation technology to involved members

### *Awareness*

This issue has been of great importance at the national level as the consequences of climate change have impacted social, environmental, economic and financial aspects in Honduras. These are the main reasons why the framework included initiatives that involved actions, strategies, methodologies plans, and policies that are crucial to ensure that the residents of the communities begin to recognize that the impact of climate change is not simply limited to one segment of society.

In the case of Honduras, climate change is one of the major concerns that has prompted the country to take actions that lead to resilience and ensure that the most vulnerable populations are able to reduce the impacts of extreme natural disasters.

It can now be seen that society in general has a real awareness of the implications of climate change for damages causes of action should be taken to counter these effects. The population is more aware that this is a process that cannot be avoided but can be delayed or pause its development.



**Photo 3:** One of the 46 weather monitoring stations installed around Tegucigalpa





*Supporting the most vulnerable to climate change.*