



ENCA's 50th

Unfortunately, this landmark event in the history of ENCA coincides with a resurgence of death squad activity in Honduras. (The two events are not related.) Inside this 50th edition we report on the situation faced by many of our Honduran counterparts and partners, small-scale, local, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that seek environmental and social justice through their work. Since the June 28th 2009 *coup d'état* in Honduras, many people and organisations struggling to defend their environments and communities have suffered increased levels of state repression, and the death squads of old have re-surfaced to reinforce the message of the state. Threats, kidnappings and assassinations are now regular occurrences, and these have continued



since the illegitimate November elections kept the *golpistas* (supporters of the coup) in power. The repression and the activities of the death squads are designed to keep people in fear and to ensure that protest against policies which take away their basic rights and their natural resources and which treat them like plantation and factory fodder will not be tolerated. What stands out in these dark Honduran days is the courage of the resistance movement and the determination of many people to continue with their own forms of development which aim at sustainability, justice and dignity rather than profit. In this issue we also report on the efforts and programmes of two organisations which ENCA has helped to gain funding during the last few months.

To celebrate our 50th issue we will be looking back at the history of ENCA throughout the following pages. These events have shaped Central America and the organisation

The first ever ENN newsletter is a single page raising international support for the massive deadwood clearance projects required in Nicaragua after Hurricane Joan.

December 1988

July - October 1989

ENN's first donations go to the Si-a-Paz ['Yes to peace'] national park project in Nicaragua - £300 allowing the purchase of surveying equipment to kick start Central America's new forest corridor..

DARK DAYS FOR HONDURAS

We begin with extracts from a letter from Dr Juan Almendares, founder of Movimiento Madre Tierra (Mother Earth Movement) to Mother Earth and Humanity.

Let us defend the right to land of the peasants of Aguán and the National Front of Popular Resistance in Honduras.

My grandmother used to say that the umbilical cord is always buried in some place and my mother buried my umbilical cord in the roots of a Ceiba tree, because this tree represents the unity of mother earth with the heavens.

I learned the first lessons inside my mother when she was pregnant through the pedagogy of dreams, based in three principles: an intimate love for mother earth and for humanity, telling the truth and respecting dignity and life. In every little piece of land, or close to the spring or the river - my grandmother would say, "you have to plant a tree or a little nutritious or medicinal plant. Clean earth and the water maintain the health of the body, the mind and the animal and human community."

I grew up watching my mother pedal day and night on a sewing machine to make shirts for a factory that exploited her without minimal labour rights. We were 'those from below' the railway, where poverty, brothels, alcoholism and violence proliferated. On the weekends the 'campeños' - agricultural workers from the banana companies - would come to get drunk and attack each other with their machetes. It was a form of self destruction and of taking out their impotence against the power of the U.S. banana companies.

When I was eight years old, at three in the morning I went with my mother to see the almost decapitated body of my father, who was killed by a hired assassin to take away a piece of land. There were seven of us brothers and sisters, we learned from that not to have

hate or vengeance, nor violence or consumption of drugs and alcohol.

In my years as a secondary student I met the peasant Chepe Campos, of Salvadoran origin, who had emigrated to the city because of poverty. He was a bricklayer; we worked together on the dream of organising a bricklayers' union. The project didn't get finished because of the repressive anti-union forces and because of the flooding that destroyed the brick yards.

When I was studying in secondary school at the José Trinidad Reyes Institute I met a Guatemalan peasant who was an agricultural worker for the banana companies. He explained to us with extreme wisdom the painful experiences of being exploited by those companies.



Dr. Juan Almendares

We suffered hunger, humiliations and poverty to be able to study medicine. I worked with one main idea: to serve the poor, the peasants, workers, original peoples, Garífunas and students. I carried out post-grad studies in medicine in the United States. The peace movement of the U.S. youth against the war in Vietnam, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Gandhi were inspiration for my position against militarism, torture and structural violence.

Nonetheless I came to the understanding that the essence of capitalism is anti-human and racist, ... and that we can't be indifferent nor neutral but have to take a position against injustice, war and the violation of human rights.

I never wanted to stay in the north, even when I was condemned in Honduras by the death squads and the Argentinean Anti-Communist Alliance (Triple A). I have been a victim of the policy of the "three t's": trauma, torture and terror. This has not made it possible for me to hate any of my adversaries nor detractors. I start from the principle that the life of

ENN carries out PatNica – Plant a tree for Nicaragua – UK awareness raising campaign for Si-a-Paz, and is able to send a total of £5,937 to the project over the next 2 years.

ENN appears at the 1991 '500 years is enough' conference in Italy, and brings the FSLN's Francisco Campbell to speak at a rally for the cause in Liverpool in '92.

Winter 1988

November 1990

1991 - 1992

ENN starts to report on rich countries' dumping of toxic waste in Central America. An ENN circulated petition hands in 9,000 signatures to the London US embassy, directly helping to cancel one such 'trade deal'.

every being on the planet should be preserved and that this principle should be defended everywhere, that is why I have the firm conviction of not being racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, a participant in patriarchy nor authoritarianism; but I can't keep silent before the crimes and lies of the military geopolitics of international financial capitalism, articulated with the oligarchic power and the ideology of neoliberalism. In essence, I am anti-imperialist.

With this preamble of my life I want to respectfully invite the nice readers, friends of life and of Mother Earth to move your consciousness to protest against the injustice happening in Honduras and Meso-America and the plans of war against the peoples of the ALBA [Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas] and Our America.

I have served as a doctor with profound love for the poor and the condemned of the earth who live in the world of injustice. I express my testimony of solidarity against the unjust conditions lived in by the Lenca people, where the oligarchy took ownership of the rivers and wants to build in San Francisco de Opalaca a dam to change the course of the waters and generate electricity for their multinational projects. Nonetheless the Lenca people are enlightened; they reject the shady light of corruption that makes vulnerable the life of the rivers and of the forest; and they join in with the National Front of Popular Resistance to participate in the re-foundation of Honduras and install the National Constitutional Assembly which takes a step towards a Constitution for everybody.

Some years ago I presented my testimony of solidarity against the killing of the Tolupanes in Yoro, caused by the occupation of their lands by cattle ranching. The authors of this sinister plot paid \$500 for each human head. This practice is an indicator of the extreme racism in Honduras and that hired killers have always been a normal tool in the hands of the powerful.

I remember Tacamiche, to cite one of so many violent evictions in Honduras. In July of 1995 close to 500 people who had been living ... on lands abandoned by a branch of the North American business Chiquita

Banana were evicted by the Honduran military. The symbolic cost of these lands for the banana company was one dollar. To evict the peasants they launched hundreds of teargas bombs. We attended boys and girls who were burned and several women aborted because of exposure to the toxic gases. They destroyed the health centre, the church school, and the corn and bean fields. The 500 evicted people were relocated in a building with just one bath and one bathroom.



Confrontation in the Bajo Aguán

If we ask ourselves who are those who have been dispossessed of their lands and waters by the mining, banana, shrimp and wood companies and the plantations of African Palm for agro fuel, it is the original peoples, the Garifunas, the Misquitos and the peasants. They are the ones who make the land produce, who live in pauper conditions, and those who have the worst conditions of health, education, potable water and housing.

Based on these historical antecedents, we appeal to unity, organisation and mobilisation of the local, national and world conscience with the objective of stopping the machinery of geopolitical, ideological and anti-human war against the peoples of Latin America. In Bajo Aguán, in Honduras, plans for a peasant massacre are being developed. The demand for delegations, economic solidarity and every type of humanitarian support for the families of the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA) is an urgent message.

The violence screams in every sweaty pore of the

ENN's reports on the US 'Stone' and Taiwanese 'Equipe Nicaragua SE' timber companies support the massive Central American pressure that leads Nicaragua's government to cancel their timber concessions.

ENN hosts Antonio Ruiz of el Fundación del Río in the UK, where he successfully establishes a South-North link with Norfolk farmers on the issue of land reform.

1992

Summer 1993

Summer 1993

The international anti toxic-waste dumping campaign bears fruit as Central American governments agree on a joint ban of the toxic trade from the North. Within less than a year this ban is used to halt 7 dumping projects across Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

peasant and the system buys the consciousnesses to hide the truth. To defend at all costs the life of humans and of the planet should be our mission. In this small country, with an oligarchic system and an army of international capitalism the multi-millionaire plans for proliferation of military bases, media campaigns and growing religious and media fundamentalism against Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and the suffering people of Colombia are reflected.

They are rehearsing and experimenting with a war in Honduras that begins against the peasantry and the original and Garífuna peoples. It is the power of the arms business against the process of liberation and historic dignity of the peoples of Latin America. We celebrate the strength of the spiritual and cultural unity of the resistance of the peoples of the world against pain and suffering.

The Resistance Movement



The Resistance movement mentioned above is that of the FNRP (the National Front of Popular Resistance). On April 20th the Resistance launched a campaign to collect more than a million signatures. The aim is to show the current government and the powers who staged the coup, that the people demand the re-establishment of Honduras through a new constitution. The campaign will end on June 28th, the first anniversary of the military coup.

It is the FNRP who have borne the brunt of the assassinations and human rights violations which have occurred since the coup and which continue to occur. 43 members of the FNRP are reported to have been killed since the coup, about a half of them trade unionists.ⁱ If anything, the pace of killings has increased in recent months with 13 members of the Resistance and 5 journalists being gunned down in March and April this year.

Gilda Batista, director of the Tegucigalpa-based human rights organisation Refuge Without Limits (ASL), says that her research leads her to believe that

the assassination squads are being “financed by the corporatocracy and military.”

Dana Frank, professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz, believes that the killings are “made to look like common crimes, but these [crimes] are all people involved in the Resistance. The military is being very clever. They’re not knocking off the top leaders. They know that if that happened, they would have a tremendous international reaction. So instead they’re going after people in the middle. It’s a form of state terror.”ⁱⁱ

Juan Barahona told members of the national coordination of the FNRP. “We are also calling for the unconditional return of Father Andres Tamayo and former President Manuel Zelaya to the country.”

- i. Jeremy Kryt 'Honduras: Return of the Death Squads', *In The Times*, 28 April 2010.
- ii. *Ibid.* (Kryt).

As we prepare this edition of the newsletter, we hear of the assassinations of Adalberto Figueroa (8.5.10), an active member of the Olancho Environmental Movement (MAO), with which ENCA has cooperated several times over the last few years – see Newsletter Nos. 44 and 46 amongst others – Gilberto Alexander Núñez, leader of the Resistance, and his friend José Andrés Oviedo (16.5.10), and Olayo Hernández Sorto, member of COPINH and communal secretary of the Resistance (18.5.10). We call for exhaustive investigations to bring those responsible for these murders to justice.



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www.enca.org.uk

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Search for
Environmental Network for Central America

The Inter American Development Bank announce a \$50M project to finally clean up Lake Managua ('Xolotlan'), one of the most polluted bodies of water in Latin America and a regular focus of the ENN new sletter.

ENN's Sueños brigade helps to develop our links w ith 'Somos Ecologistas en Lucha por La Vida y el Ambiente' (SELVA). ENN provides \$500 to SELVA in 1995 for its conservation and social work.

1995

1995

1995 - 1996

International advocacy including by ENN's supporters helps make reality the 'BAN-CAM' credit bank for Central American campesinos, crushed by the collapse of national lenders under Structural Adjustment Programmes.

ENCA funding for Honduras

ENCA has recently played a significant role in two funding applications from Honduran organisations, both of which were successful. The two organisations are CIDICCO and COPINH, and the applications were made to the Unicorn Grocery in Manchester.

The Unicorn Grocery

(www.unicorn-grocery.co.uk)

Since opening in 1996 Unicorn Grocery has offered a wide range of fresh and wholesome food to its South Manchester customer base. Unicorn maintains an approach of direct purchasing, and was named The Observer Food Monthly's 'Best Independent Shop' and Radio 4 Food Programme's 'Best Local Food Retailer' in 2008. In this alternative model of trade, ethical principles remain at the core of the business. The focus is always on local, organic, fairly traded and wholesome goods.



Unicorn offers around 70 lines of organic fruit and veg, and now owns 21 acres of prime growing land just 14 miles from the shop, which improves and secures its regional veg supply for the future. This production area keeps shelves stocked with a wide variety of dried foodstuffs, including pulses, grains, nuts, fruits and spices. In addition to organic beer and wine, there's daily fresh organic bread, a deli and environmentally friendly baby products, cosmetics and household goods made from natural ingredients. The shop is full of information about where products come from and related issues, so customers may make informed choices.

Unicorn is a worker co-operative owned and run by its workforce of currently over 40 members. It is a flat-rate pay organisation which makes all decisions by consensus. From its first turnover of £3,500 it has grown to £3.5 million, from 4 members to 50. Amongst other grants made from its profits, the organisation also offers a **Unicorn Grocery 4% Fund**, the fund to

which ENCA made applications on behalf of CIDICCO and COPINH.

The Unicorn Grocery 4% Fund is aimed at projects which address problems arising from unfair world trade and regulations, poverty and unsustainable agriculture. It seeks to support projects that create ecologically and socially sustainable livelihoods, generally on a small scale, where communities and individuals are empowered to support themselves. They focus their donations on projects which are stock-free (i.e., not involving animal farming).

CIDICCO's Intibucá Ecological Project

Funding amount: \$4,500 (at the exchange rate of \$1.6 to the pound sterling, this amounts to approximately £2,812).



CIDICCO is a not-for-profit, non-governmental

organisation formed in 1990. It was created with the aim of locating, documenting, researching and disseminating information on the use of green manures and cover crops in food production systems among poor farmers in tropical countries.

CIDICCO's mission provides the foundation for the promotion of personal development through the process of training and education of women and men *campesinos* to improve their production systems. It begins with training workshops on the subject of the 'Human Farm' ('*La Finca Humana*'), a philosophy of Don Elías Sánchez based on changes in thought and positive consciousness which are reflected in the physical farm or smallholding. CIDICCO produces research publications and documentation for sharing these principles and to stimulate experimentation rather than the promotion of technologies.

The project for which CIDICCO applied for funding was entitled '*Cultivating My Human Farm: Ecological Food Production on My Physical Farm*'. Its general

As elections commit Nicaragua to another 5 years of neoliberal government and exposure to the global forces shared by its neighbours, ENN widens its focus decisively, renamed as the Environmental Network for Central America.

Nicaragua's President Alemán bans export of the rarest, most lucrative timber species – mahogany, royal cedar and pochote – from Nicaragua.

1996

1997

1997

The ENCA '97 study tour takes 14 ENCA supporters to Nicaragua, making many donations along the way

aim is to promote practical techniques of ecological production for food production and consumption. The project will be carried out in four communities in the department of Intibucá with groups which form part of the strategic network that CIDICCO promotes and manages in the region. These groups are made up of poor families with limited access to food crops but an interest in improving their techniques of production.

The communities involved are El Pahizlal, Planes de Río Grande, Monquecagua and Pueblo Viejo. Thirty poor families will be identified by the limitations on their production of food crops but also by their possession of a plot of land preferably with a means of irrigation that avoids permanent difficulties in food production.

Methods proposed

- Intensive training in the philosophy of the 'Human Farm'
- Training in systems of ecological production, promoting traditional and non-traditional crops
- Educational visits for the purposes of motivation and the sharing of experiences
- Follow-up visits as accompaniment to the participating families.

Technologies proposed

- Construction of small greenhouses for the production of seedlings and small plants using simple techniques and local materials to the utmost.
- Substitution of the use of toxic products with organic biological products in the production systems for fertilising, pest and disease control.
- Making possible the implementation of a system of Integrated Pest and Disease Management.
- Construction of deep beds and terraces for the production of vegetables
- Manufacture of organic fertilisers using biological products to accelerate decomposition.

Much more information about CIDICCO can be found on the organisation's website: www.cidicco.hn

COPINH (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras)
(www.copin.h.org)



COPINH was established in 1993 to unite a social movement with the struggle to defend

forests and the rights of the Lenca people of Honduras. The major focus of their work now is the improvement of the Lenca's living conditions, a revival of their culture and defence of their natural resources against the devastating effects of the neoliberal model. COPINH runs two community radio stations as a medium of communication, training and education for Lenca communities in the departments of Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, Santa Bárbara and Comayagua.

COPINH runs an education and training centre called UTOPIA. At UTOPIA, they grow native, organic maize in order to protect it from the threat of extinction posed by the import of genetically modified maize and to use it as a means of exchange for other products so that the centre can sustain itself. They aim to create a herb garden to safeguard medicinal and traditional plants of the Lenca and to counteract the work of the transnational pharmaceutical companies.

The project for which COPINH applied for funding is organised in two phases:

- The first phase involves experimental work in two communities, Plan de Barrios and Montana Verde. This will include the selection of appropriate and commonly-used plants for planting in communal herb gardens and the preparation of a guide to medicinal plants.
- The second phase involves learning lessons from the first phase and reproducing the herb garden at the UTOPIA centre, which will become a demonstration plot. A medicinal kit containing the natural medicines will be produced for sale with a view to sustaining the centre's activities.

World Development Movement brings the Costa Rican banana workers Carlos Mora and Doris Calvo to the UK, supported by ENCE, to support the 'Go Bananas' campaign against poor practice in banana multinationals.

ENCA highlights UNAPROA's struggles against the PINDECO pineapple company in southern Costa Rica, creating major publicity in Costa Rica and leading to Sainsburys sending out a team to check PINDECO's operations.

October 1997

Winter 1998

1999

Korean company SOLCARSA has its Nicaraguan operations shut down for illegal logging, following a campaign supported by ENCA.

More ENCA Funding

ENCA members Dominic McCann and Kerstin Hansen visited Central America earlier this year. Among other things, they visited IPES, the Salvadoran Permaculture Institute. This is their account.

Meeting with the Red Ecológica de Cacaopera, Morazán, El Salvador (17/03/2010)

ENCA funds Permaculture Design Course for Cacaopera Environmental Network in Morazán, El Salvador (www.permacultura.org/elsalvador.html)

Following the success of the raised vegetable beds project in Santa Teresa and Tres de Marzo in 2007, ENCA decided to support another IPES project in El Salvador. IPES is providing a Permaculture Design course for 25 members of the Cacaopera Ecological Network (CEN), a network founded by indigenous Kakawira people living in the rural Cacaopera municipality in the department of Morazán.

On the 17th March the CEN and IPES were visiting the town of San Francisco de Gotera for a meeting with the new governor and to introduce their project. IPES invited us to join the meeting and get to know the Cacaopera leaders.

The Cacaopera municipality (population 17,587) is situated in the department of Morazán, which was particularly badly affected by the war in the 1980s. Repression and military offensives forced many people to flee across the border to Honduras, where they lived in refugee camps for many years. Some areas in Morazán became entirely deserted and the economy was completely destroyed. After the 1992 peace accords many people returned without money or homes to go back to as these had been burnt and the fields destroyed. Since then they have struggled to rebuild their homes and to bring their land back into cultivation. The majority do not have land titles. A 66-year old man told us that in order to obtain legal title he would have to incur legal fees and pay for a survey, searches and entry in the land registry, but he is too poor to afford the fees. Not having any documents is a major problem. It means that the communities cannot

fight hydro-electric dam, mining and other projects. They are effectively illegal squatters on their own land who can be evicted any time.

Cacaopera is one of El Salvador's poorest municipalities and has the second worst level of retarded growth due to malnutrition (41%). Land degradation, inadequate farming methods and climate change have resulted in decreasing harvests. During the 'green revolution' in the 1960s and 1970s, agronomists went to the communities to persuade people to use artificial fertilizers and pesticides. These were promoted by big companies like Bayer by giving out T-Shirts and other 'incentives' whilst promising farmers bigger yields. At first the chemical products were sold at low prices which later increased gradually. Agrochemicals were also given out free in order to buy votes for political campaigns. Cacaopera network members commented that they wanted to



Two members of the Cacaopera Ecological Network

move away from chemicals because these not only contaminate the soil, but the run-off also pollutes water sources, gets into their houses and damages people's health. According to the 66-year old it is time to treat the earth with respect and to return to natural farming methods. Today permaculture is practised by 12 communities in the Cacaopera municipality.

Since the end of the war many organisations have been to Morazán to offer help. One woman said: "But nobody offered what I was looking for... until the

ENCA hosts speaking tour of the UK by Costa Rican journalist Patricia Blanco

A Nicaraguan judge orders 3 US companies to pay \$490M to 583 banana workers affected by Nemagon, a massive victory in the struggle for the banana workers' rights.

2000

2001

2002

ENCA's 2001 study tour of El Salvador visits a dozen organisations in the country and greatly contributes to expanding the breadth of beneficiaries to ENCA's donations through the new millennium.

Permaculture Institute arrived and offered support with natural fertilizers, soil protection, stoves, etc.”

To supplement their income they make hammocks from maguey which they grew themselves. Hence there were no material costs. Nowadays the hammocks are produced from synthetic fibre which they have to buy. They make about US\$3 per hammock each of which takes 18 hours to make. Bus fares for taking the finished product to the buyer in the city have to be deducted from the US\$3.

IPES director Karen Inwood explained why IPES finds working with the Cacaopera network particularly fruitful: “Despite their extreme poverty, the indigenous communities of Cacaopera are resilient and resourceful, retaining many cultural traditions of mutual aid and cooperation. The indigenous

cosmovision is based on a deep respect for the land which facilitates an eager acceptance of permaculture methods... On the Permaculture Design Course, community leaders will learn a mixture of theory and practice and gain a better understanding of environmental problems such as overuse of agrochemicals, climate change and deforestation. They will learn to observe natural ecosystems and recreate nature’s balance in their own land and communities, meeting their needs without harming the environment. They will also learn about systems thinking and design methodology, how to carry out an analysis of their land and choose appropriate solutions for their food, water, energy and other needs.”

www.permaculture.org.uk/node/3587

More ENCA visitors to the region

ENCA member Barney Thompson spent several enjoyable and rewarding weeks in Nicaragua last winter. Here he briefly reports on a couple of the projects he visited that are helping to empower local communities and preserve Nicaragua’s rich natural environment.

FUNDECI/GAIA (www.gaianicaragua.org), located by Laguna de Apoyo in central Nicaragua, is perhaps one of the country’s most beautiful sites. This volcanic crater lake is becoming increasingly popular with visitors - both *Nica* daytrippers from nearby cities and foreign backpackers and holidaymakers. Bars and hotels - many with dubious ‘eco-’ labels - are rapidly springing up on the lakeshore. Human sewage is being released untreated into the lake, which is also polluted by motorboats. Despite being declared a nature reserve in 1991, large tracts of land have been illegally and cheaply acquired for development (in many cases by foreign investors) and deforested, with locals being denied rightful access to parts of the public lakeshore.

This is placing increasing pressure on a biologically important area. Several new fish species, important to theories of species evolution, have been discovered here but are now threatened by falling water levels and rapidly worsening water quality. On land, rapid and

unchecked deforestation threatens rare species of birds, mammals, insects and reptiles. There is imminent danger that if this development continues unchecked the lake’s fate will mirror that of nearby Laguna de Masaya – a dead crater lake used as a dumping ground for human waste.

Fighting to counter this is the not-for-profit

Proyecto Ecológico, which combines a scientific research station with a hands-on approach to protecting the ecosystem and local sovereignty of resources. Biologists, ecologists and conservationists from Nicaragua, Central America

and beyond come to train and share skills. Local people and long-term volunteers help manage the reserve and monitor wildlife populations and jungle ‘health’. Income comes in part from the provision of a low environmental-impact hostel and Spanish school. The project is working with local government to coordinate an environmental management plan focusing on local sovereignty of resources. A major challenge (unfortunately all too familiar to our readers) remains in fighting the powerful and unscrupulous



Laguna de Apoyo

The Ngobe-Bugle region of Panama is awarded a \$33M investment plan to combat the hunger crisis afflicting its indigenous population since 2000, when ENCA first helped to draw attention to their plight.

Among the beneficiaries of ENCA’s appeal, the residents of Los Positos in Nicaragua receive a new solar panel on their school building, installed by ENCA’s Dominic and Kerstin.

2003

2004

August 2004

ENCA runs a special appeal for additional funds for the many new causes connected with since the 2001 study tour, and our supporters exceed all expectations raising a massive £1,866.

developers who are too willing to resort to violence if their profits are threatened.

A successful example of a community-driven approach is **UCA Mirafior** near the northern highlands city of Estelí. As with many areas of Central America, a handful of powerful landowners dominate to the detriment of impoverished local communities. However, there is a strong tradition of co-operatives in the area, and this community ecotourism scheme based in the outstandingly beautiful Mirafior nature reserve is perhaps a benchmark for Nicaragua. It consists of three distinct cloud forest eco-zones, famous for their huge variety of orchid and bird species. Local communities make a living from organic coffee production and other forms of agriculture. We stayed with two families, enjoying their excellent food and hospitality, gaining insights into local culture and exploring the unique landscapes on foot and horseback. The foundation is extending ecotourism activities to include model farms and butterfly farms. (www.thenesttrust.org.uk/ucamirafior.html)

The **Luz Verde** project based in Estelí works closely with *UCA Mirafior* but is also reaching out to other communities. A number of community-driven projects are being developed. These include a youth network (*Red de Jovenes*) where young people trained in sustainable land management practices, ecosystem awareness and reforestation pass their knowledge on to other communities, and building kitchen gardens (*huertos*) to supply organic vegetables and develop seed banks. Support is also provided by a hostel and café (serving excellent organic coffee) in Estelí, raising awareness among the growing number of backpackers travelling through Nicaragua and ensuring tourist spending goes back to local communities. (http://cafeluzyluna.com/luz_verde)

These projects, and many others across Central America that ENCA is in contact with, are always looking for volunteers with a range of skills, from environmental educators to organic gardeners to conservationists, with a reasonable level of Spanish an advantage. Please contact us for further details.

Reflections on the farce that was Copenhagen

ENCA's first reflection on the failure that happened at Copenhagen is given as extracts from a speech made at the Copenhagen Climate Summit (COP15) by Belizean Deputy Prime Minister Gaspar Vega and Prime Minister Dean Barrow.

Belize is a country blessed with the largest barrier reef in the western hemisphere, the second longest in the world, thousands of beautiful coral islands, and abundant mangrove, broadleaf and pine forests. ...



[We] testify to the havoc that is being wrought on our environment and on our people by anthropogenic global warming. As a developing country and low-lying coastal nation, Belize is among the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and is now classified as one of the top ten most affected countries. In the past 11 years, Belize has suffered devastation from six major tropical cyclones: Mitch, Keith, Iris, Chantal, Dean and Arthur. Fuelled by high sea surface temperatures, these destroyed our crops, battered our coral reefs, flooded our streets, washed away our bridges, ruined our tourism infrastructure and ran us out of our homes. Those reefs, Jewels in our environmental Crown, have also been turned to skeletons by massive coral bleaching events. ...

In Belize then, global warming has already eroded our major economic sectors – agriculture, fisheries and tourism – and caused irreparable damage to our ecology. ... Now Belize, with its low level of industrialisation and low population, is one of the minutest contributors to GHG emissions. But we have been at the forefront of innovative mitigation actions. ... We have chartered both solar and hydroelectricity projects; and these have resulted in a drastic 50% reduction in GHG emissions by the energy sector since 1991, despite a fourfold increase in demand. ...

Described as "a historical success for Panama and the international environmental community" by Panama City's mayor, Panama passes a 'Law for crimes against the environment' and simultaneously demarcates a marine sanctuary for migrating whales.

ENCA prints a letter, and invites supporters to send copies to the government of Honduras, demanding protection for the Olancho Environmental Movement (MAO) members being targeted for assassinations for their resistance to illegal logging.

May 2005

October 2006

March 2007

ENCA finally joins the 21st century with our website up and running, helping supporters connect to our partners overseas.

Global warming knows no boundaries and the GHG emissions from the heavily industrialised nations will continue to sink us, both figuratively and literally. We therefore must depend on those nations responsible for the highest emissions ... to act urgently and decisively here in Copenhagen.

As a nation with over 65% natural forest cover, and one that has demonstrated its commitment to sustainable forest management through numerous and innovative conservation activities, Belize also recognises the potential of REDD [*Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation*] as an important component of an overall mitigation strategy. We emphasise, however, that participation in REDD activities cannot serve as an excuse for lessening the commitment

Of course we now know that the high emitters of GHGs were unable to commit themselves to any level of action commensurate with the problem they cause. Our next reflection is adapted by ENCA member Nick Rau from a Friends of the Earth briefing note, January 2010: http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/copenhagen.pdf

Copenhagen – Climate Failure

Ahead of the UN climate change talks there was an almost universal acceptance that what was needed was a legally binding global agreement on climate change that would limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. It was also widely accepted that there needed to be substantial finance for developing countries to adapt to climate change and develop low-carbon economies. There were of course differences of opinion on, for example, how much finance rich countries would provide, and the emissions cuts they would commit to. But the broad thrust of what was necessary was clear. The outcome of the talks is a million miles from this, and will probably make these goals more difficult.

The talks started badly. The Danish hosts of the event were exposed for excluding developing countries from vital negotiations, and drafting a final text of an agreement in secret. And chief US negotiator, Todd Stern, announced the US weren't going to take responsibility for historic emissions, arguing they had no relevance to the negotiations, and that the climate was a shared responsibility.

of Annex 1 countries to drastically reduce their own emissions.

While exhorting all high emitting nations to take action, we simultaneously point out that even the most ambitious cuts in GHG emissions will not be sufficient or timely enough to turn the clock back on the current impacts of climate change. ... We must avert utter social, economic and environmental catastrophes, however; and so we call upon the developed countries to provide a comprehensive financing package that would generate predictable, new and additional funding to support adaptation and mitigation actions in the developing countries.

Increasingly it became obvious that rich countries were not going to move at all even though it was well known that their offers on emissions cuts and finance fell well short of what was necessary to prevent climate chaos and deliver on their responsibility to lead. While rumours spread that progress was being made, the reality was that US intransigence prevented any breakthrough.

The outcome of the talks, now known as the 'Copenhagen Accord' is extremely weak. It is a voluntary agreement, so contains no obligation to deliver. While it calls for global temperature rise to be limited to 2 degrees, the emissions cuts that are being offered point to a temperature rise of 3 or 4 degrees. The money on the table is much less than what is needed, and much of the short term funding is not even new money, or is in the form of loans, not grants, while there is absolutely no guarantee that longer term finance will be delivered.

We reached the end of the Copenhagen conference with no legally binding agreement. Nor is there any timetable to lead to a binding agreement, and the very existence of the accord will weaken pressure for such an agreement. Instead we have an accord drafted by the few that is being forced on the many. The process that led to it will make it more difficult to deliver on any fair multilateral

The new Nicaraguan government reverses the country's earlier support for whaling at the International Whaling Commission, support that – as ENCA had reported – was bought with Japanese aid.

ENCA members visit the Lenca 'Civil Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras' (COPINH), donating radio equipment and being interviewed on their station.

2007

2007

Summer 2007

ENCA's coverage supports a campaign near San Salvador that sees the Salvadoran Supreme Court ban a planned golf course that had threatened the capital's water table.

ENCA members take part in a Study tour of Honduras

process in the future. The poorest and most vulnerable countries will be bullied not only by the rich, but also by the fast-developing countries. While it is not yet certain that global temperatures will exceed 2 degrees, and less certain that they will exceed 3 degrees, the job of getting a strong and fair international agreement is much harder than it was just two weeks ago.

Not all our readers will be aware that after the failure of the Copenhagen Summit, Bolivia hosted a World People's Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth Rights in April this year. The conference was held in Cochabamba, but was also very much an online affair. Reports from the 17 working groups established before the conference to guide the process of discussion and negotiation are available at the conference website: <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/>

Following on with this theme of the effects of climate change on Central America, we offer extracts from an article taken from Revista Ecotopia (No. 251) produced by UNES, the Salvadoran Ecological Unit. It was originally published in the Diario CoLatino and has been translated by ENCA member Suzanne Janssen.

El Espino, Usulután: "What Water Carries away"

According to the locals, this is one of the most beautiful beaches in the country, called El Espino, in the municipality of Jucuarán, in the department of Usulután. Housed along the banks of the beach are hotels, houses, huts and ranches which welcome fewer visitors every day, says Margarita Rosa Cruz Guerrero.

She is 68 and has lived 34 of those years in this zone "when I got involved with this man who keeps me alive." During that time she bore 10 children, 3 of whom died. She raised her offspring with the few earnings she received from a café she has on the edge of the beach. "He rents rooms and I sell food to the people who come to enjoy themselves," she says. Their earnings are not the same as they were 2 years ago because the tourists have less money than they used to have.

But this is not the only thing that worries her. The properties along the beaches at El Espino and Arcos del Espino are being eroded. The sea is gaining ground

every day and, since they can't make improvements in the area, they can no longer get credit from the banks. José T, owner of one of the hotels in the area, bought the property more than 10 years ago, with the dream that the business would guarantee a sound economic future to him and his family. Now he doesn't know what to do; he has employees and out of solidarity he doesn't dismiss them. But the number of guests continues to decline and his income, instead of growing, is going down. The 'last straw' is the fact that the sea is gaining ground every day.

"The sea has eaten a lot here. It used to be some 10 metres further out, and there was a line of coconut trees. After this, I had a wall to stop the waves, and look how much has been eaten away. Soon it's going to take this away too," he says, pointing to a wall in the sand that is being defeated by the tidal force.

"There is a close relationship between this and the melting of polar ice and glaciers, which is fresh water and melting so fast. It is caused by global warming and by increasing temperature. The water obviously has to go somewhere, and so it goes to the ocean," says Carolina Amaya from Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña (UNES).

Some may think that climate change, of which so much has recently been spoken, doesn't affect a village in the east of the country. But the phenomenon affects the world in general, and it doesn't matter how small or large the place is, or whether it is in China or El Salvador. "The problem is not an isolated event. The sea is rising because the glaciers are melting," emphasises Guillermo Rivera, of OIKOS Solidarity. ...

Francisco Méndez, 43, has been a fisherman since he was very young, and knows the behaviour of the sea. He explains that the past few years have been unusual. The 'martial waves' (given their name because they used to appear in the month of March) now appear at any time of the year. ... These are waves which reach more than 5 metres high and enter properties.

It prevents catching much fish. "There is no certainty about our income. Sometimes you can get \$10 each time you go out, others \$15. ... Before, the fish were plentiful, but now it's very little, especially when the martial waves come with the tides," says Abel Ulises Castillo, from Xiracantique in the Municipality of Jucuarán, adjacent to El Espino beach.

The 'Nicaragua – Una Ventana' DVD is released with 5 short videos produced by ENCA's Doug Specht, and by October has raised £245 for our partners' work.

ENCA's 2008 \$1180 donation to the Permaculture Institute of El Salvador reaps benefits for the Tres de Mayo community, where produce from raised planting beds helps maintain the community's cohesion against the harsh environment.

2008

November 2008

Summer 2009

The MAO in Honduras won a massive victory with a total ban on timber extraction from a 13,000 sq km area, potentially halting 80% of illegal logging in their region.

Juan Antonio Velásquez, coordinator of the Mayor's Environmental Unit in this locality, says the municipality is awaiting the help of the population. In the past year, When there were very strong 'martial waves', the locality monitored the zone to avoid tragedies. "As a municipality, we are responsible for Civil Protection together with the Ministry of the Environment to see in which way they can formulate protections or look for resources at an international level," he adds.

Jucuarán is part of the Bay of Jiquilisco, along with the municipalities of Puerto El Triunfo, San Dionisio, Usulután, Concepción Batres and Jiquilisco which work together in the search for solutions to these problems, which are not the only ones which affect this zone. Velásquez speaks of clearing of forests and mangroves to market the wood, which causes deforestation and destroys the local wildlife. There is fishing with explosives which damage the ecosystem because they don't just destroy the commercial species but also larvae and other types of sea life. At the same time, there is the commercialisation of species which are in danger of extinction, such as turtle eggs. ... Perhaps some think the damage is minimal, but there is a popular saying "only so much water can go in the pitcher before it breaks."

Javier García, technician with UNES, explains that the high sea tides are a result of "global warming [which] is causing climate change, and the rise in temperatures which melt the glaciers and raises sea levels." In the Pacific area, where the tides are the highest, "their power is greater," he adds. For José, these explanations suffice. The sea is taking more land every day, and his hotel doesn't have enough income to pay his debts. The bank wants to repossess his hotel. "What am I going to do? I'm going to give them the property because I can't pay more. I can't stop the sea and the people no longer come," he says with frustration.

There are two realities: the business is not sufficient to earn a living, and the sea, capricious and haughty, wants to demonstrate its superiority over humanity who, far from caring for the environment, want to destroy it. But every action has a consequence, and Nature only responds to the damage that people subject it to everyday. In a very few years in the beaches of El Espino and its surroundings, it will be possible to gaze at "what the water carried away."

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ENCA assisted two Honduran NGOs, CIDICCO and COPINH - see this issue of the new sletter - to apply for funding from the Unicorn Grocery in Manchester. Both applications of about \$4,000 each were successful

March 2010

2010

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