

# People-to-People



## Linking Canadians & Salvadorans--SalvAide's Annual Newsletter

### HURRICANE IDA RELIEF EFFORTS—SALVAIDE IS WORKING SOLIDARITY

On November 7-8 2009 El Salvador was unexpectedly hit by Hurricane Ida, resulting in more than 355 mm of rain, lethal flooding and landslides. SalvAide works directly in six of the seven regions directly impacted (Cuscatlan, Cabañas, St. Vicente, La Paz, San Salvador, and La Libertad). In the areas most negatively affected--Guadalupe and Verapaz--CRIPDES' youth committees were among the first to arrive and provide relief to those in need.



The outcome of the resulting rain from Hurricane Ida has been devastating. The Salvadoran government estimates that at least 194 people were killed, more than 17000 people are in shelters and at least 100 people still missing, many of whom were buried in mudslides. This type of destruction has also created an intense food shortage in the country, as rural livelihoods were literally swept away in Ida's wrath.

The recently elected FMLN president Mauricio Funes has declared a National Emergency and has appealed for international support. SalvAide working in conjunction with its local partners CRIPDES and CORDES has responded to this international call for justice.

In the immediate term, SalvAide is helping with the urgent needs of the affected areas, such as basic hygiene kits, medicine, and food. In the medium term, SalvAide is committed to supporting the reconstruction efforts, particularly for the rural poor. This type of support will include support to local schools, health centres, and agricultural rehabilitation.

Please help us work in solidarity with the people of El Salvador to ensure that rural communities can continue to survive despite the setbacks caused by Hurricane Ida. *Thank you so much to those who have already placed their trust in us!*

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP SCHOOL – OPPORTUNITY IS THE BEST PREVENTION TO GANG VIOLENCE

Although this year marks 17 years since the end of the civil war in El Salvador, violence remains a serious challenge in the entire country. It is estimated that more than 30,000 youth in El Salvador are currently involved in gang activity. Social and economic disparities combined with few opportunities for youth in the country-side are cited as key root causes to this on-going crisis.

In 2002-2003 SalvAide first recognized the difficult situation to which youths find themselves. In response, SalvAide in partnership with CIDA created a School of Leadership where youth representatives congregated twice a month to learn about topics of interest such as leadership, self-esteem, community development, violence against women, gang violence and the importance of environmental sustainability. Utilizing a "training of the trainers" approach, each representative would then recreate the workshop within their own communities. In total, more than 400 youth benefited from the program.



Based on the tremendous success of our first phase of this project, SalvAide is starting to raise funds for a second phase, hopefully starting at the end of 2010. *Please help us provide rural youth with valuable and much needed leadership opportunity!*

### Testimonials of Success:

*"The Youth Leadership School helped develop my capacity to participate actively in the youth committee in my community and the inter-community groups for youth set up by CRIPDES. Apart from all of this, I am involved in a Micro-credit Savings Cooperative which has about 2 thousand people affiliated within the cooperative..."*

*While I have decided to pursue my post-secondary studies at University I continue to support the Savings Cooperative and the youth committees...*

*I would strongly recommend that SalvAide starts a new phase of the Youth Leadership School. It was extremely fundamental in youth formation and development. The Leadership School allowed us to be a part of the solution to the problems that plague the young people of El Salvador and the entire country." Ana Deysi Alfaro Calles attended school at age 17.*

*"All that I learned at the Youth Leadership School has helped me greatly with my work, allowing me to be more efficient, with new technical skills, and to know community development work in El Salvador much better..."*

*A few years back I became a project coordinator through CORDES. I was in charge of implementing a number of projects with youth and various other community development initiatives. During this time, I was putting into practice all of what the School of Leadership taught me years back...*

*In July 2009 the CRIPDES' General Assembly [consisting of representatives from 360 communities] elected me to be a part of the national Board of Directors as the treasurer for the organization. As a former student of the School of Leadership and a representative from CRIPDES' Board of Directors, I would like very much if other youth had this phenomenal capacity building opportunity. I would strongly recommend it." German Gonzalez attended school at age 16.*

### WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES IN CUSCATLAN AND CABANAS

SalvAide in partnership with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CRIPDES and CORDES launched a new innovative participatory community development project. We are working with three strategic groups—**Youth, Women, and Community Councils** to help develop their capacities in building solutions to key development challenges in their communities (domestic violence, gender equity, environmental degradation and HIV-AIDS), through awareness, technical computer skills and building stronger organizations at the community level.

#### Top three results achieved in the first six months of the program:

1. 4 fully equipped open access computer centres providing bi-weekly computer training to youth, women and community councils in Tejutepique, Tenancingo, Jutiapa, and Cinquera
2. Youth –created and led HIV-AIDS awareness campaigns launched at the community-level. These campaigns focus on prevention, awareness and demystifying the disease
3. 34 new community structures (17 women's organizations and 17 youth organizations), translating in to 752 new people being involved in the project



## WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES IN CUSCATLAN AND CABANAS

The next phase of this project in 2010 will incorporate the municipal governments of Tejutepeque, Tenancingo, Jutiapa, and Cinquera. During this time, the community at large led by the Youth, Women, and Community Councils will engage in the creation of a participatory integrated community plan and participatory budgeting for this plan.

SalvAide is currently collecting funds for 25% of this program. We are hoping to be able to expand this type of participatory planning to other areas in El Salvador after the 3-year pilot project.

*You can support this project by donating to SalvAide and earmarking funds towards one of the many trainings and workshops we will be providing.*

## TREES FOR PROSPERITY—CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

To promote *organic, sustainable agricultural practices* in rural El Salvador, SalvAide supports an organic cashew tree project called the “Trees for Prosperity.”

This project provides resources for communities to plant cashew trees on small plots of land. In addition, we provide capacity building to local citizens so they can appropriately care for their trees.

In 2009 5 workshops on the organic cultivation of trees and technical assistance related to managing the cultivation of the trees were carried out. In 2010 more than 50 acres of communal land will be reforested. It is expected that this project will benefit more than 200 families.

*Many many thanks to the generous support given to the project, particularly from Sister Evanne and the Loretto Sisters!* It is our hope that this project will be carried out over the next three years and we will continue to collect funds for the program.



## HISTORIC ELECTIONS IN EL SALVADOR – SALVAIDE WAS THERE!



Salvadorans went to the polls twice this year—once in January to elect legislative and municipal leaders and in March electing a new president. SalvAide felt incredibly honoured to support our partners CRIPDES and CORDES throughout this historic period. Most notably we collaborated with CRIPDES on an extensive civic education.

### Successes Achieved:

- More than **50,000 people in more than 100 communities received training related to the voting process**. This included: what to expect on voting day; the platforms of the different political parties, what fraud looks like; how to be vigilant and how to report fraud.
- Because access to elections polls is very difficult, more than **20,000 people had access to supported reliable transportation** on both voting days
- **Two Canadian elections observation teams represented SalvAide** on voting days. These teams went before the elections to observe actions happening in the communities before hand and on election days observed in the Suchitoto region.

Salvaide would like to give a special thank our fantastic observation teams, and our generous supporters of the civic education project. *Your support was invaluable during this incredibly important time in Salvadoran history.*

## DELEGATIONS 2009

### ALGONQUIN COLLEGE/SALVAIDE DELEGATION

The Social Service Worker students at Algonquin College in Perth continue to work in solidarity with people in rural El Salvador. Four delegations of students have travelled to El Salvador and another delegation is planned for February 2010. In the spirit of solidarity, this Algonquin Delegation, spearheaded by Professor Lisa Shaw-Verhoek, has successfully cultivated meaningful cross-cultural learning. *Special thanks to Lisa and the Social Service Worker students for their tireless work and congratulations on your success.*

### COMPADRES--CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHER DELEGATION

For the second year in a row, a group of teachers from different schools in the Ottawa Catholic School Board travelled to El Salvador to learn about sustainable community development and the challenges that Salvadorans continue to face related to access to water, environmental degradation, mining exploration among many others. The purpose of this past trip was to explore different modalities of long-term partnership in hopes of making the relationship as sustainable as possible. A third delegation is planned for 2010 to fortify this relationship. *Special thanks to Paul McGuire and COMPADRES for their outstanding efforts*

### HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL DELEGATION

Health Care professionals from Southern Ontario traveled to El Salvador for the second time in 2009. This group met with our partner organizations and carried out health clinics in the La Libertad region. In 2009 the group raised more than \$35,000 worth of supplies, medication, and eyeglasses, as well as funds to be given to medical centres in El Salvador. *Special thanks to Marion Willms and the health care professionals for their tremendous efforts.*

### NEW BRUNSWICK ECO-DEVELOPMENT DELEGATION

In November 2009 a group of business professionals from New Brunswick will travel to El Salvador as an alternative eco-development delegation. During their time in El Salvador, they will work with initiatives like Fair Trade Coffee Co-ops, Organic Cashew producers, forest conservation projects, several eco-tourism projects, a women's microcredit program, and an appropriate technology irrigation project. This group will also be supporting some of the humanitarian efforts that are currently taking place in El Salvador. SalvAide is very excited to collaborate with you: *Beth, Russel, Anna, Robert, Kendall and Lori.*

## A SNAPSHOT INTO THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR TWINNED COMMUNITIES:

“At this time I want to recognize and thank all the support and solidarity on a national and international level that always accompanied us, and never abandoned us, especially the Sisters of Loretto and the work of SalvAide in Canada, together with Cripdes and those of us in the communities. They helped us in the most difficult moments of our repopulation and you continue supporting us in solidarity now in this new period of our history. The people must always be united, when the poor unite with the poor, we unite in our consolation, in struggle, and in organizing.” *Ernestina Landaverde Viuda de Hernández* from La Bermuda twinned with the Loretto Sisters in Toronto.

*Thanks you Twinned Communities for your continued and loyal solidarity and support, including Windsor Twin City Project, St. Anne's Parish, King's College Chapel Community, the Loretto Sisters, Holy Name of Jesus Parish of Essex, Sisters of Service of Toronto, Sisters of St. Joseph of London and Holy Trinity High School—our newest twin 2009!*



**SalvAide Head Office, Board of Directors, our many volunteers and our communities in El Salvador wish you, our loyal supporters and friends, Happy Holidays with Good Health and Happiness in the New Year**

**SalvAide is a Registered Charitable Organization. Registration No. 11913 3627 RR0001.**

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