

Name:	10. DROUGHT-RESISTANT AGRICULTURE IN EL SALVADOR		
Region	Latin America and the Caribbean	Country	El Salvador
Ecosystem	Agriculture		
Nature of approach	Improvement in capacity, design and policy measures (incorporation into relevant strategies); Implementation of EBA measures (natural resource management, diversifying livelihoods, changing management practices)		
Description of approach	<p>Objective/Expected outcomes</p> <p>El Salvador regularly suffers from droughts leading to damage to crops including maize, bean, rice, sorghum and watermelon. Following an earthquake which further reduced the amount of land available for agriculture, and other crises including significant unemployment in the agricultural sector following a crash in global coffee prices, the Drought Response and Mitigation Project was initiated as a disaster relief programme. The project had one overall objective, to increase the capacity of subsistence farmers in the east of the country to better respond to and recuperate from future unfavourable climatic conditions. Specific objectives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the effects of drought; • Providing technical assistance to diversify and market crops, to improve income and daily diet; • Improving environmental conditions through reforestation using fruit trees, integrated management of plagues and soil conservation measures <p>Actions</p> <p>Affected farmers and their families were initially given food aid for several months, in cooperation with the World Food Programme. This was followed with a programme of activities to restore agricultural productivity, including soil conservation, stubble treatment, use of sustainable agricultural techniques for basic cereals and vegetables, crop diversification, reforestation with fruit trees use of organic fertilizers and small-scale irrigation systems. For example, barriers consisting of stone and planted pine suckers were constructed with the labour provided by community members to protect the soil from erosion caused by water and wind. Farmers received tool kits to help them prepare their land for sowing, and seeds from the first harvest of maize and beans were used to plant the next crop. Throughout the process, project technicians provided training and constant technical assistance to guarantee and improve production. Support was also given in post-harvest management and the marketing of vegetables produced.</p> <p>Results achieved</p> <p>300 priority families benefited (approx. 1,500 people), mainly small producers for whom agriculture was their only source of income and who lacked other goods. The project led to more reliable food production as a result of the improved condition of the ecosystem, and the diversified practices. The cultivation of crops in the summer, which was not previously possible because of insufficient irrigation, was a significant achievement. Planting pine suckers (7,000 were planted, with an average of 35 per family), provided socio-economic co-benefits to the local communities: within a year their fruits can be eaten, thus improving the diet, whilst also providing income generating possibilities. This greatly reduced the operational cost of farming crops, in a way which enabled beneficiaries to use locally-available resources. Farmers were able to store food reserves for subsequent selling or subsistence use having been provided with metal silos. The project has continued, despite the end of funding. The beneficiaries have continued to plant more fruit trees, and to sow more vegetables. In some instances, they have discontinued their traditional production, as the crops which were introduced during the project have proved to be more economically viable.</p> <p>Lessons learned (particularly highlighting the benefits and challenges related with ecosystem-based approach)</p> <p>Savings from the low cost of the ecosystem based activities allowed the project to</p>		

	<p>be extended to more people. The project also provided a good case study for developing longer-term efforts to reduce vulnerability to future drought in the region. Novel, low cost, practical methods (such as new irrigation practices) were readily accepted by the local community because they could see the results (in terms of increased productivity).</p>		
Type of organisation	NGO; UN Agency	Name of organisation:	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; World Food Programme
Further information and contact details	http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Case%20studies/Disasters/cs-elsalvador.pdf Salvadorean Red Cross Society: socorrocruzroja@navegante.com.sv		