Name:	20. USING THE MAYA NUT TREE TO INCREASE TROPICAL AGROECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO		
Region	Latin America and the Caribbean	Country	Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico
Ecosystem	Forest		
Nature of approach	Improvement in capacity, design and policy measures (identifying and/or developing adaptation approach, capacity building, raising awareness); Implementation of EBA measures (natural resource management, diversifying livelihoods)		
Description of approach	**Objective/Expected outcomes** Climate projections for Central America predict increasingly dry conditions associated with increases in temperature. In some countries in the region, there is also an expectation of increased extreme rain events. Given the levels of deforestation, the impacts of flooding can have significant consequences.

The Maya Nut is native to the rainforests of Central America, and was used in the past during times of drought, war and other food shortages. It can be dried and stored for 5 years, and can be prepared in a variety of ways, making it an extremely versatile crop, although it has since fallen out of use. With rates of malnutrition high in several Central American Countries, and climate change impacts likely to further decrease food security, the project aimed to provide communities with the knowledge and incentives to maintain and replant Maya Nut forests. Expected outcomes included increased resilience of ecosystems, along with provision of a sustainable source of food through agricultural diversification.

Actions Partnering with local and national Governmental organisations, along with a range of NGOs in several countries, the project empowers communities, and especially women, to manage forest ecosystems through restoring and sustainably using the forests to harvest May Nuts.

Results achieved The planting of Maya Nut trees has helped to increase the resilience of forest ecosystems by ensuring food security during periods of change, including drought and after extreme events such as hurricanes. The long tree roots help to maintain the soil structure and protect watersheds, whilst the leaf litter improves soil fertility. The trees also provide a sustainable source of food and income to local populations.

Lessons learned (particularly highlighting the benefits and challenges related with ecosystem-based approach) The co-benefits from having a guaranteed source of food include communities more able to care for the environment because they understand and value the forest and the services it provides, including it's socio-economic potential, rather than needing to cut down trees to generate income, or to clear the land for agriculture. It also contributes to mitigation efforts by enhancing carbon stocks within the ecosystem. | | |
| Type of organisation | NGO | Name of organisation: | Maya Nut Institute |
| Further information and contact details | ELAN (2011). Case studies on good practices in nature-based climate change adaptation, Ecosystems & Livelihoods Adaptation Network (ELAN).

http://www.mayanutinstitute.org/ | | |