

## Honduras



**Project Overview** – revised activities due to COVID-19 pandemic

**Name:** School Gardens for Healthy Nutrition

**Location:** 3 municipalities in El Paraiso region

**Timeframe:** May 2020 - TBD

**Grant Amount:** \$36,390.73 USD

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In the dry corridor of Honduras, where there is the highest concentration of poverty in the country, the rates of malnutrition among children are very high. There is limited availability of food due to recurrent droughts in the region. Through this project, Multiple District 19 Lions have chosen to fund CARE's work to increase nutrition through the establishment of school gardens. Now, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and spread of the virus, there is an added urgency to address hunger in the targeted communities. We thank Multiple District 19 Lions for helping us respond to this urgent situation by allowing CARE to redirect a portion of the budget towards emergency activities related to the coronavirus. This summary describes how CARE intends to utilize a portion of the MD19 grant, while still reserving core funding for the development of some school gardens. In this way, MD19 Lions will be addressing the issue of hunger and nutrition through two approaches, one short-term and one longer-term.

The government of Honduras, in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus, has mandated social isolation requirements. While there are good reasons for doing this, the result is an economic impact on families in the project area. Being having to stay at home and not being able to conduct business as usual, the ability of families to carry-out their regular business and earn an income for their families has been greatly reduced. Already, these families were already facing great poverty and so they do not have reserves and savings to rely on to get them through this difficult time. There has been an increased shortage of some basic food supplies and a food crisis is beginning to emerge. Because these communities are especially vulnerable, it is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance. CARE has identified an immediate need for emergency food distributions. While CARE still plans to carry-out the school gardens model to develop the communities' longer-term ability to provide for themselves and have a nutrient-rich diet, this work has temporarily been put on hold in order to address urgent food needs.

The new COVID-19 response activities will target boys and girls from the schools CARE had already identified and worked with. These children are directly affected by the closure of businesses and the decrease of daily work since many of their parents are daily laborers. Also, those who earn an income by selling to local markets are also affected due to lack of mobility. With the agricultural stores being closed they will not be able to access the inputs in which will affect the production and productivity of their crops, therefore, the availability of food at home.

Emergency help will be directed to three municipalities in the El Paraiso region of Honduras. These communities are facing severe food insecurity as well as malnutrition, as shown in the following table:

Municipality	Identified levels of food insecurity	Rate of chronic malnutrition in children
Vado Ancho	Severe	46.88
Texíguat	High	40.79
Soledad	High-Severe	33.07

Fuente: Manual Operativo Proyecto ACS PROSASUR, 2017

The project will now have two primary interventions:

### 1. Humanitarian Response – related to COVID-19

The incorporation of humanitarian actions into the project will benefit families in El Paraiso with school-age children who currently are unable to access food due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MD19 grant will benefit families from four schools in the municipalities of Soledad, Vado Ancho and Texiguat, within the dry corridor. In addition to providing food to families, the grant from MD19 Lions will also be used to provide education about the coronavirus and how to prevent the spread of the virus, such as by implementing good hygiene practices.

The humanitarian aid package will be organized by CARE and distributed to beneficiaries with the coordination of the municipal authorities, teachers from selected schools, and parents' organizations or community leaders. This package will include cash transfers or vouchers which can be used by families to purchase essential food and hygiene items. In case it is not feasible for families to redeem the vouchers themselves (due to limited mobility), the food packages and hygiene kits will be delivered directly to the beneficiary families.

Specifically, CARE will undertake the following activities:

- Determine the criteria for the selection of schools and families that will benefit from food assistance
- Establish coordination with municipal and educational authorities in the selection of schools to be benefited according to established criteria
- Coordinate with teachers, parents/community leaders, and deliveries, based on the fulfillment of selection criteria to favor the most vulnerable families.
- Coordinate with local suppliers, both for the food transfer and for suppliers in small markets and grocery stores.
- Design and deliver educational material to educate benefitting families and communities about how to prevent the spread of COVID 19
- Deliver short trainings to families and communities on good nutrition practices before food vouchers/cash is delivered
- Print and disseminate educational material on prevention practices, where the emphasis will be placed on practices such as distancing, hand washing, etc.
- Print and disseminate educational material for the prevention of violence against women and girls in context COVID19 (CARE's experience shows that women and girls are at greater risk to experience violence during emergencies)
- Establish stations/handwashing demonstrations in strategic places in the community.

The food aid intervention will take place over the period of 1 month. CARE estimates allocating approximately \$22,000 from the MD-19 grant towards the purchase of food and the cost of carrying-out the COVID-19 prevention campaign with families and their communities.

For the above activities related to the COVID-19 emergency response, CARE has set the following goals:

- Families from 12 schools located in the municipalities of Soledad, Texiguat and Vado Ancho will benefit from humanitarian aid that meets quality standards
- 285 families with approximately 570 boys and girls from the identified schools will have food to meet their needs for a period of 15 days

- 285 families put into practice the measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19 with a focus on hand-washing and good water, sanitation and hygiene practices
- 258 families receive information on the prevention of violence against women and girls in the COVID 19 context

## 2. School Gardens

A primary activity of the project continues to be the creation of learning spaces in schools to improve knowledge of agriculture and nutrition, promote a healthy life, and the conservation and preservation of natural resources such as land and water. Producing and preparing nutritious food and vegetables in schools involves comprehensive learning whereby children and teachers will use their knowledge to become "multiplier agents" to improve food and nutrition security in their homes and their communities.

As with the emergency response activities related to COVID-19 emergency response, CARE will target the municipalities of Soledad, Vado Ancho, and Texiguat in the El Paraiso region for the school gardens. The participating schools in the municipalities may be the same or different from those who receive the humanitarian assistances.

CARE will lead the delivery of the four main activities that will establish the school gardens:

- The community organization, which includes the coordination of parents, teachers, students, and the establishment of roles and responsibilities for each one for the essential development of the skills and sustainability of the gardens.
- The implementation of training activities, for which the development of a training plan will be coordinated with the teachers, parents, and students, according to the needs of each school and applying a "learning by doing" approach.
- Development of action plans in each school for staggered and varied vegetable production that makes the availability of nutritious food possible sustainably, using an environmental protection approach, with an emphasis on the protection of water sources (planting trees, talks about the water cycle, etc.)
- Improve nutrition by developing a food and nutrition education plan, aimed at teaching, intensifying, or improving knowledge about appropriate and varied foods, with a focus on reducing cases of malnutrition

The implementation of the school gardens will commence once restrictions on social mobility have been lifted by the Honduras government and CARE can begin holding community meetings again. Originally, we had anticipated the working with forty schools but with the new humanitarian interventions, we will now target 10 schools through the project. Additionally, school gardens can be established in the second year of the project once new funding is received by CARE from MD19. We anticipate that the school gardens and related activities will require a period of 6-months to be fully implemented. The remaining budget from the MD19 grant will be used to purchase materials for the installation of irrigation systems, agricultural inputs for the establishment of orchards, and training materials for students and teachers.

The goals to be achieved are the following:

- ✓ 10 school gardens established with vegetables and fruit trees, with the active participation of students, teachers, and families.
- ✓ 10 established school gardens where good practices have been carried out for the protection of water sources and/or soil conservation and management.
- ✓ 5 irrigation systems installed, which supply water to school gardens.
- ✓ Students, teachers, and families from 10 schools prepare healthier foods and adopt good hygiene and nutrition practices.
- ✓ 10 schools have organic material collection systems for composting and use in school gardens.

**We are grateful for the support from Multiple District 19 Lions. Thank you for helping us reduce hunger and improve nutrition in Honduras, while also working to prevent the spread of COVID-19!**