

February 2021 Newsletter

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Disaster Aid Regional Collaborative

Focus on Central America

To help focus our attention in Central America we have partnered with Disaster Aid USA to form a Disaster Aid Regional Collaborative or "DARC".

Disaster Aid Canada will focus on supporting stakeholders rebuilding communities and building capacity in Central America in 2021/2022. This focus is based on our experience with projects in Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico and online meetings with Rotary Clubs and Districts who were impacted by multiple Disasters in 2020. For more information visit [Disaster Aid Regional Collaborative](#)

If you are in a Rotary Club in Central American Districts 4250 or 4240 or if you are a Canadian or US Rotary Club or District that is interested in participating or sponsoring projects in Central America please contact us at gbeltgens@disasteraid.ca.

Your donations to Disaster Aid Canada have already raised close to \$18,000 to provide food, medicine, and rebuilding projects for the communities affected. **We plan to raise another \$45,000 for these projects.** Donations can be made [HERE](#)

If you are donating through our Canada Helps Portal you can scroll down the funds to choose the one that you want to support.

Current Projects that we Support:

Rebuilding the La Mata Water System

Fernando Martinez of the Rotary Club of Comayagua has a project that needs help immediately. The small village of La Mata had lost its water system in the storms. The swollen river had undercut the bank and destroyed the water retention dam, the filtration system and much of the pipe and part of the road to the town.



The original water system had been built by the local Rotarians with the support of a Rotary Club in Comox BC. I contacted Brian Mather of the Club who was immediately interested in helping again. DAC requested that Fernando and the Comayagua Club fill in a project outline and grant application which he did. The project will require a \$10,000.00 US investment and hundreds of hours of volunteer skilled and unskilled labour.

With seed capital from Comayagua and Disaster Aid Canada and the financial support of the Rotary Clubs of Comox, Victoria Harbourside and the Rotary Club of Woodstock-Oxford were able to fund most of the project. This project is now slated to start in the middle of February 2021 if the pandemic allows.

We have approximately \$8,000 US of the funding in place. However we are still short around \$2,000.00 US to finish and cover contingencies. [Donate Here](#)



Skills Training through Manos a la Obra - Guatemala

Building Community Capacity through Training Programs - Approx. \$60.00 Cdn per Student

You can help improve the quality of personal and family life for each participant, generating

paid jobs and motivating them to start their businesses to help fight poverty with sustainable solutions.

Culinary School programs: International Cuisine, Bakery, Pastry, Guatemalan cuisine and Bartending.

Sewing and Dressmaking programs: Dressmaking, machine ribbon embroidery, fabric painting, crafts.

Short Term Goals:

At the end of 2019 the program was active in 17 municipalities servicing approximately 2,450 students. The goal is to serve 100 municipalities by the end of 2022, if the pandemic allows.

Long Term Goals:

Activate the project in all 340 municipalities throughout the whole country.

For only \$60.00 Cdn you can help Guatemalans gain employable skills, find employment or start a business. [Donate Here](#).

View a detailed presentation on the Manos a la Obra project [Here](#)

Capacity Building through "Clothes and Threads"

For \$85.00 you can Sponsor one of the Artisan Women in Samac, Alta Verapaz to Rebuild her Business.

Setesik is a social impact enterprise from Guatemala, that promotes a sustainable method, by empowering artisan indigenous women through their traditional work of weaving and sewing. The women are central to improving their economy and dignifying the quality of life for their families through fair trade.



Samac is in a valley in Alta Verapaz and has a population of around 300 families. This is a project of the Rotary Club of Vista Hermosa in Guatemala with the support of DARC.

One of the goals of this project is to promote the dignity of indigenous women and maintain identity with their culture. They want to continue to make their traditional Guatemalan Mayan clothing. Their artisanship and their skill in the use of foot loom to weave *huipiles* is a sustainable source of income and their products are highly appreciated in the local markets by local and international tourists.

The objective of the project is to give work and capitalize community women in two ways:



- Buy the *jaspe* (the fabric for the *cortes*) from a group of artisan women who work the foot loom. The *jaspe* will be used to make a skirt for 80 women who lost their clothing during the flooding.
- Provide 120 women with thread to weave 240 *huipiles*, one for personal use and one for sale. They can make two to three *huipiles* per month, generating an average income of about \$90 to \$100 per month per family.

For only \$85.00 Cdn you can help a Mayan Woman support her family and restart her business. [Donate Here](#). View more of the project information [Here](#)

What Next

2021 is the year that Disaster Aid Canada and the Disaster Aid Regional Collaborative will focus on our Motto
"Rebuilding Communities... Together"

In 2020 I was privileged to work with many Rotarians and others in the non-profit sector to support the rebuilding of communities hit by the pandemic, storms and flooding in Central America. While we could not travel, we met via Zoom and it feels like I have made so many new friends, united by our commitment to community building.



While Zoom is not like a real face to face meeting it does allow us to meet and work together and build relationships. It feels like my family of colleagues has grown. In 2021 we will continue to build our network and relationships, to affect sustainable change for our brothers and sisters who have been hit so hard in the last year.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Gerry Beltgens
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Disaster Aid Canada is a project of the Rotary Club of Ladysmith and a Member of Disaster Aid International. Disaster Aid International is a Collaborating Organization of Rotary International

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