

# News from Venezuela

## February 2022



Dear friends of Centro Madre,

The economic situation in Venezuela has changed quite drastically since the pandemic began. When I came back to Venezuela end 2020, after 9 months being outside the country due to the pandemic, everything had become dollarized and very expensive. Most of the time you can still pay in bolivars but dollars are preferred. There is no scarcity of goods. Supermarkets and all different stores are full of products. But few people can afford to buy them. Poverty has risen very much.

In 2020 Stichting Centro Madre raised funds through Pifworld for a truck that needed repair. The truck belongs to a group of organic farmers and food processors in and around Caracas called Feria Conucera. Thanks to the donations of many donors and specially thanks to the contribution of the Stichting Miezaan and the Stichting Centro Madre, we were able to raise all the funds needed. Needless to say, the farmers were very grateful.



Due to the pandemic, stores, businesses, schools and projects closed and many people lost their jobs. Such as Maira, who worked in a preschool that closed because parents couldn't pay the tuition fees anymore. Together with Gerardo, who also lost his job, and the financial support of the Stichting Centro Madre, we started a community service project in Caracas called Prama. We started to attend the most important need of the community which was hunger. People in the street are going through garbage containers looking for food, children are working in the street to bring some food home, older people have a pension of only \$1.50 a month, which is not enough to buy 2 kilos of rice. We are distributing about 140 meals a week for the last two years now. Sometimes people ask, what difference does it make by giving out meals? The difference lies in fighting indifference and apathy. Helping people in times of crisis creates a feeling of collective responsibility in the community, versus the collective indifference and apathy so common in our society today. When hearing of our work, some people are coming forward and are giving corn flour or rice. A vegetable store has started to give roots and vegetables.



We also are helping sick people who need medicines they cannot afford. Sometimes we receive donations of food, medicines, shoes and clothes to hand out. Daisy from Yaracuy has thyroid problems. She gets very sick when she doesn't take the medicines she needs. Nelly from Guatire walks a lot as local transportation is difficult. We gave her a new pair of sport shoes which we got as a donation. She said that with her old shoes, she could feel every little stone on the pave walk.



Drinking water supply in Caracas is irregular. The Community Center Prama needed a water tank to store water for the days that water doesn't come. They needed also a refrigerator to store the food for the feeding program. We also have fixed and painted the different rooms of the house to be rented out so the project can generate an income.



Centro Madre continues supporting primarily organic farmers, small scale food production and other wholistic initiatives. Arlenis (Junquito) got \$400 for an irrigation system to grow



carrots. Alfredo (Junquito) grows vegetables and raspberries. He got \$300 to fix his car so he can bring his harvest, and that of his neighbors, to the market. Many farmers are losing their harvest because of problems with gasoline or car breakdown. Jas (Camino de los Espanoles) is a beekeeper and is herding goats for milk production. He got \$400 to fix his car. The farmers from Montemar (La Guaira) got \$400 to fix their car.



Pablo is a beekeeper and rescues bee hives from places where they will be exterminated. We gave him \$200 to buy 3 bee suits. Elio lost his harvest of soya beans due to excess rain. We gave him \$200 to restart. Marianela is a retired professor. The government pays her monthly \$1.50 pension and the university \$5. As a hobby she was growing Californian worms and was giving educational talks about the topic. This now became a needed income for her and her aging mother. We gave her \$100 to buy a PH meter for liquids and also one for solid materials.



We received a donation of organic vegetable seeds which we distributed to the different farmers and those who do urban farming.



Juan David was born on the farm of Centro Madre in Barlovento and came with me to Caracas in 2017. He is now 7 years old. Both his parents are in Colombia and have each started a new family there. He is in the first grade and takes karate classes in Prama. Raising a child is a big challenge for me.



Thank you for your support. With your contribution you help people in Venezuela to face their daily struggle for survival and to find means for their own long term wellbeing.

With much love from Venezuela,

Hendrika Renkers

P.S.: For more information about Hendrika's work in Venezuela please refer to her website [www.centromadre.org](http://www.centromadre.org) . If you want to contact her, or support a project, please write to [centromadrebartovento@gmail.com](mailto:centromadrebartovento@gmail.com) .

You can also contact our Dutch organisation: [www.centromadre.nl](http://www.centromadre.nl) .

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