

Newsletter November 2018



Dear Friends of Centro Madre

The crisis in Venezuela is continuing. There are a few improvements in some areas. We can get cash money again, which solves some problems. There are more staple foods such as rice and oil in the stores. But in general, things are still quite difficult. Many big supermarkets are half empty. Food (and everything else) is limited and very expensive; many medicines are not available. Many stores, small businesses, private schools, etc. have closed or are barely making it. There is tremendous desertion of children from the schools. Crime and corruption continue to be a problem. Those who depend on public transportation face much difficulty. And many areas in Caracas as well as in other parts of the country are having serious water shortages.

A crisis has a cause and provides new opportunities for growth. An overall weakness in the Venezuela society is “dependency versus self-sufficiency”. The national economy is highly dependent on oil, many Venezuelans depend on the government as their provider, and many young adults live at home having their parents provide for them. Self-sufficiency was always an important issue for the farm Centro Madre in Barlovento. We are now applying almost 20 years of experience in farming and community work to different projects, continuing to stimulate self-sufficiency.

Alliance

Centro Madre has made an alliance with the “Foundation Territorio K-Ribe” and the “Consumers’ Cooperative Zamorano”, both located in Guatire, a city half an hour east of Caracas.

The purpose of the foundation is organic agriculture and community service. They started in the year 2007 with 10 hectares of land and were successfully cultivating different crops, constructing areas for workshops on making soap, carpentry, etc. But the foundation was affected by the many problems the country is going through, and by the time we started to visit them in March this year, it had almost collapsed. We made a plan to help them recover by doing one or two concrete and successful projects with them: planting 4000 tomatoes and bell pepper seedlings, as well as a variety of other crops that can be sold directly to the community.

The consumers' cooperative was founded in 2013 with the goal to buy cheap bulk food for their members. But due to the food crisis they have not been successful.



Thanks to our alliance, the members of the food co-op go to the foundation Territorio K-Ribe to help clean the land and plant. They grow corn on the land of the Foundation for their members. The members of the Foundation become members of the Consumers' Cooperative. This way we are all benefitting. I grow turmeric on the land of the foundation.

Nelson of Centro Madre had a grinding machine made which can be used for making flour of different crops such as corn. This provides all of us with corn flour, a major ingredient for the Venezuelan breakfast: local production for the local community.

During our regular visits, Centro Madre provides a soup for all the members and volunteers working there that day. Sharing a meal and having regular meetings create a bond between the members of the different groups.

The situation at the Foundation has improved much and many give credit to Centro Madre, saying it is due to our presence.

Centro Madre, the Foundation, and the Cooperative together visited a poor community called Tapayma of 100 families, where people live in shacks. They want to learn how to make their own blocks for construction so they can build a community center, and they want to learn how to grow their own food. The people of the village, together with Nelson, looked for suitable soil right in their own community, which they found. Another day, members of that community visited the Foundation to learn how to make compost.



Visiting Tapayma community



Making corn flour with the Coop



Making soup for everybody

A group of 17 people requested Nelson to give a course in Caracas about spirulina. We are planning to restart the spirulina production which we had going in Centro Madre in Barlovento. The challenge will be to get the ingredients to feed the spirulina.

Center for Holistic Health

We made an alliance with the “Fundacion para el Bienestar de la Mujer” (foundation for the welfare of women). This foundation was running a preschool they had to close when the person running the project left the country. We are going to start a “Center for Holistic Health”. We will give courses about a variety of subjects about physical and mental health. We hope to bring a doctor on a regular basis to serve the local community.



Our team for the health center

Education for young girls and a little boy

Melqui is 19 and is the mother of Juan David who lives with me in Caracas. She has moved into the house with me because her boyfriend of three years is going to Peru, like so many others, to earn money. Melqui will finish high school (which she interrupted at age 14 when she became pregnant), will get a job to provide for herself and will help take care of her son. Jessica is 17 and is starting her studies in a university in Caracas. Her mother was a long time friend of Centro Madre in Barlovento and participated in many of our projects. She does not have the money to rent a room for her daughter. In order not to lose her opportunity for her studies, Jessica is living with me.



Juan David, 4 years old

Thank you all for your support and your faith in us.

Hendrika

For more information about Hendrika's work in Barlovento please refer to her website www.centromadre.org . If you want to contact her, or support a project, please write to centromadrebartovento@gmail.com

You can also contact our Dutch organisation: www.centromadre.nl

Michele Montenegro, secretary
Van Linschotenstraat 3
5021PL Tilburg
Nederland
+31 6 5580 3337
info@centromadre.nl

Maarten Broekers, treasurer
+31 592 310 853
Donations are welcome on our bank account:
Stichting Centro Madre, IBAN: NL02ABNA0418992800
BIC: ABNANL2A, Assen, NL
info@centromadre.nl