

## BRIEF OVER VERTREK NAAR CARACAS



Dear friends of Centro Madre

The present situation in Venezuela is very critical. Enormous inflation, political instability and escalating violence, cause us to worry deeply. But everything in this universe has a purpose, and our presence has purpose too, so we continue with our activities as much as we can.

In January, after repeated armed robberies and threats of kidnapping, we decided to leave Centro Madre as we felt our lives could be in danger. I moved to Caracas with two-year-old Juan David. His 18 year old mother Melqui moved in with her boy friend in San José, the nearest town. Nelson would stay on the farm a bit longer while looking for a solution for the project we have dedicated so much of our time, energy and love to. Our first option was that Marco, the local farm worker of Centro Madre, would move in with his family and become the caretaker. But after a few more unfortunate incidents the family became scared and changed their mind. Our second option was a 5 year joint venture with the local university in Higuero and to run the project together. The university has no practical outlet for their agricultural students to experiment and learn. If they agree, automatically security forces will accompany them and guarantee security for Centro Madre, which will allow us to continue to work there. The professors, who have brought their students to Centro Madre for years, are very enthusiastic about the idea, but so far we have not yet received an answer. In the meantime, Nelson is there with no fridge, no tv, no computer or any modern luxuries so not to attract thieves. Several months have passed like this. Recently, several farmers (friends) came to talk to Nelson to ask if they could work our land together with him, as on their own land they cannot produce right now due to insecurity and their families are going hungry. Also Nelson has picked up again the project of producing spirulina.

Melqui became 18 last June. The last few months she has gone through considerable changes. Instead of demanding that we maintain her, she works hard helping Nelson on the land and selling the produce in the local market. We can see now that all the effort we made to raise her from when she was 6 until 16 was not in vain. As she and her boyfriend can barely feed themselves, her son will stay with me in Caracas. Nelson is a tremendous support for both of them. He is looking into courses for them so they can develop skills.



Celebrating Melquí's birthday



A family picnic in Caracas



Juan David in day care

Organic farming is not very widespread in Venezuela. Centro Madre is part of a small group of organic farmers and food processors called "Feria Conuquera". The first Saturday of each month we sell our products in a park in Caracas. Each time it is a wonderful event with farmers selling their produce, and others selling cooked food or handicrafts. There is music, presentations and children playing. In this climate of violence and uncertainty, it feels like heaven. Some of the products Centro Madre sells are dried leaves and fruits. The organizers of the Ecological Fair organized a workshop in which I taught the participants how to dry the produce we grow.



Workshop in Caracas on dehydration of plants and fruits



Selling our products on the Ecological Fair

Food scarcity is a very serious problem we are facing in Venezuela and one of the several reasons for all round discontent and violence. For this reason, Centro Madre is looking into expanding its range of impact to the state of Yaracuy, west of Caracas, where there is far less unrest. Centro Madre has given support to a farmer's family to plant 7.5 hectares of sorghum, a grain that is easy to grow and doesn't attract thieves, as it is usually grown for animal food, but makes good food for human beings as well.



Preparing 7.5 hectares for the planting of sorghum



Distributing food to children in the streets of Caracas

Nelson, Melqui and her family, and I, are deeply grateful for the support you have given us, particularly in this difficult times. With your support more people can benefit.

Hendrika  
Director Centro Madre

Voor meer informatie over Hendrika's werk in Barlovento kunt U zich richten tot haar website [www.centromadre.org](http://www.centromadre.org) . Als u contact met haar wil of een project wil ondersteunen mail naar [centromadrebarlovento@gmail.com](mailto:centromadrebarlovento@gmail.com) .

U kunt ook contact opnemen met onze Nederlandse organisatie:  
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