With Our Feet on the Soil:
Reaching Farmers with Proven Practices to Address the Climate Crisis in Central America

Graciela Leal, PCI &
Margarita Marroquín, CRS
What We Want to Share

1. Who We Are & What Do We Do in Central America Dry Corridor: Our Proven Practices to Address the Climate Crisis

2. With Our Feet on the Soil: Our SBCC Multimedia Campaign

3. Best Practices
Who We Are & What Do We Do in Central America Dry Corridor
Who We Are

Since 2015 Catholic Relief Services has been implementing Water Smart Agriculture / Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura (ASA) program:

- To revitalize rain-fed agriculture in Central America
- Empower smallholder farmers
- Increase productivity and resilience by better managing soil and water resources.
The Challenge Farmers Face

• An estimated **74% of farmland** in Central America is **degraded**.

• Conventional farming, burning, tilling, and overgrazing on steep hillsides negatively impact soil health and water resources.

• Degraded farmland **makes farmers more vulnerable** to higher temperatures, longer dry spells, and more intense storms.

Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS
Four Core ASA Practices

1. Keep it covered

2. Improved fertilization

3. Crop Crops

4. Cover Diversification
ASA Impact

- Field trials with **more than 3,000 farmers** in five countries.

- ASA practices harvested **41% more corn** and **37% more beans** during severe drought.

- A projected **25% fewer farmers** would require food aid in a year with severe drought.

- Increased soil water retention by **an average of 14 liters of water per m²**.

Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS
Hybrid Extension Framework

• Increase overall awareness of benefits of implementing ASA practices (radio)
• Respond to farmers with targeted answers to questions (technical assistance IVR hotline)
• Peer to Peer support: farmers motivate themselves and others to implement these practices (social media and blog)
• Replicate and reinforce the Farmer Field School educational experience in the digital sphere (ASAvirtual)
With Our Feet on the Soil: Our SBCC Multimedia Campaign
The Three Pillars of ASA SBC communications

Messaging is designed around the agricultural calendar to ensure that farmers have the information they need to successfully implement the ASA practices.

- Evidence
- Experience
- Life Connections
Theoretical Frameworks for Social & Behavior Change

• Social Learning Theory: An on-going process in which personal, environmental factors, and human behaviors influence each other.

• Entertainment-Education: Leverages the power of storytelling to change behaviors by stimulating conversations and role modeling.

• Saturation Model: Maximizes reach by broadcasting messages frequently and targeting popular stations.
Approach & Methodology

**Formative research:** Existing research and consultations with CRS staff and extension workers (*spokespersons*) to identify barriers and drivers of behavior change and develop key messages.

**Production** (phased over time): Develop high-quality and locally resonant materials, in partnership with local production teams.

- 48 Edu-entertainment minidramas produced in four countries (local dialects), accompanied by spots and testimonies.

**Radio Broadcasts:** Six broadcast periods over three years in each of the four countries across national and community radios.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.** Leverages accountability and learning throughout the broadcast period.
Radio Messaging Supported by

1. Spots and testimonies

2. Radio dramas

3. Live call-in shows
Me gustaría saber en qué estado se debe cosechar el frijol?

Ariel Espinoza
El frijol se cosecha en plena maduración, es decir después de las etapas de floración, llenado de grano total sigue maduración esta última fase lo más que dilata son 20 días, se puede hacer en ese momento. Las siembras se calculando la salida de las lluvias por eso muchos agricultura las cosechan en verano.
Social Media

Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura - ASA
12 de mayo 🌱

¿Y ustedes ya ponen en práctica la #DiversificaciónDeCultivos? ¡Es también parte importante de la restauración de nuestros suelos! Escucha más sobre esta y otras prácticas en los espacios radiales #ConLosPiesEnLaTierra en tu país.

#CultivandoConociemiento
#TodosSomosASA

Agua y Suelo para la Agricultura @AguaVerdeASA · 16 jun.

Hoy don Cristiniano, de San Francisco Lempira, Honduras, nos cuenta del manejo de los rastros y cómo esto mejora la salud de nuestros suelos.

¿Quieres saber más? ¡Síguenos cada semana con más historias!

#ElRastrojoVale
#TodosSomosASA

Abouk Ayuel Awan Nyangparliath y 520 personas más 4 comentarios 26 veces compartido
ASAvirtual: A Wider Perspective for the Messages
Julian appreciates that, although he has been farming since he was 16 years old, the ASA radio program provided him with information that contradicted his daily practices and also helped him to understand common mistakes in stubble management:

“I was very concerned about green manure: instead of piling up and burning the ‘garbage’, what you have to do is to leave it watered as if it were a blanket on the ground. I didn’t know these simple things.”

Julián, 65 years-old farmer in Marcala, Honduras.
Our Reach

4 million potential listeners on radio

20 thousand followers on social media (200 thousand reached in one single post)

More than 800 subscribers to the technical assistance hotline
Best Practices for Our SBCC Campaign

✔ It was designed after a survey with technical partners in the field, in which they identified platforms, key messages, and their participation.

✔ The pillar is the radio, but the other platforms adequately the key messages to reinforce them.

✔ After each session, the campaign is redefined according to what listeners and radios partners shared (e.g., national vs local radios).
Culturally Relevant Communications

Technical experts and farmers are spokespersons for the radio, and we share their testimonies on social media.

Scripts were checked and revised to reflect local terms and slang (co-creation).

Four versions of radio programs were produced with different voice actors from each of the implementing countries.

Local languages. Challenges in parts of Guatemala where Q’echi is the dominate language.
Our Results

Of 78 radio listeners interviewed by Computerized Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and 18 key informant interviews:

• 55% of respondents reported they had not heard of the ASA practices before
• 78% adopted ASA practices as a result of listening to the radio segments
• 90% discussed what they heard on the radio with other people around them
¡Todos Somos ASA!

gleal@pcimedia.org
margarita.marroquin@crs.org