



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Communities of Faith Organizing for Action





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Summary

In 2022, Communities of Faith Organized for Action (COFOA) celebrated its 15th anniversary developing grassroots community leaders and transforming life in El Salvador's poorest neighborhoods and villages. COFOA has become a national movement, with **140 grassroots leadership teams in communities in 11 of the country's 14 departments**. As Salvadorans struggle to defend their democracy, COFOA is demonstrating the power of broad grassroots participation and that it is possible to hold public officials at all levels of government accountable to local communities. And in 2022, **COFOA began building chapters in Guatemala and Honduras**.

COFOA is leading large-scale national campaigns to transform El Salvador. Through the RENACER campaign, families from 80 informal housing developments across the country are campaigning for legislation and a change in national policy to resolve the land titles of **350,000 Salvadoran families** who have been cheated out of their land rights by unscrupulous developers. COFOA leaders are negotiating directly with El Salvador's Housing Minister to end the impasse that is preventing people from receiving land titles. In 2022 COFOA grassroots leaders filed a lawsuit against one of the country's largest developers to hold the company accountable for providing land titles to families who have paid their debts but have been left in limbo.

In 2022, 72 families obtained their titles, worth approximately \$1,052,500. It was a small step in our campaign, but one that meant the world to the families and communities that benefited. In the coming years, **the RENACER campaign aims to transfer titles worth more than \$1 billion** and pave the way for public investment in urbanizations that have been in limbo for years, without water, electricity, paved roads, green areas, schools and health clinics.

In 2022, after Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele centralized control over tax revenue that is supposed to go to community development, COFOA launched a national campaign to pressure the Ministry of Municipal Works to invest these funds in hundreds of local projects, from schools and health clinics to roads and water systems, to improve lives in underserved communities across the country. Since **COFOA leaders delivered requests from 8,000 local residents for 700 priority community projects to the Ministry of Municipal Works** in May 2022, local COFOA teams have secured funding for 8 projects worth more than \$387,000. These funded projects are a small down payment on a movement to transform life in El Salvador and address the underlying conditions that drive so many Salvadorans to migrate.

COFOA continues to campaign for all Salvadorans to have access to clean water, and is leading **a new effort to establish El Salvador's first national unemployment compensation system**. And COFOA is a leader in the Root Causes Regional Initiative, which brings together faith-based and grassroots organizations from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and the United States to push for policy change to improve the conditions that force people to leave their homes and communities, and create safe and legal avenues for people to migrate.

COFOA is demonstrating the power of broad grassroots participation and that it is possible to hold public officials at all levels of government accountable to local communities.

A word from COFOA's Director

On June 16, 2008, I arrived in El Salvador, without having relatives or knowing anyone. I came uncertain, with only my will and passion for social change, to give continuity to an effort by PICO (People Improving Communities Through Organizing), now known as Faith in Action, to support the development of a regional Central American organization dedicated to the formation of grassroots leaders and community organizing through faith values.

On June 21, 2008, COFOA, or Communities of Faith Organized in Action, was born in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Poor in Zacatecoluca La Paz, where more than 400 leaders decided on the name of their faith-based organization.

Since June 21, 2008, until this year 2022, the formation of community leaders through faith has had significant achievements; from the repair of streets in poor condition, drinking water for communities that went without for 100 years, schools where for decades they were lacking, electricity, bridges that meant community development, sewage service, repair of rural streets, health units where for years this service was lacking, property deeds, control of alcohol sales, drugs, and more.

We have won investments in community development valued at more than 30 million dollars. These improvements have come as a direct result of grassroots leaders using COFOA/Faith in Action organizing methods to organize their communities and negotiate with local governments (mayor's offices) and the central government

All of this was made possible through the generosity of individual donors and foundations such as Porticus, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Raskob Family Foundation, the El Salvador Project, and finally the Sobrato Foundation, which has given great impetus to the expansion across El Salvador, and into Guatemala and Honduras in Central America.

I express my deep gratitude to all the donors and foundations that have made it possible for thousands of families to now enjoy a more dignified life, with the hope of improving their lives and those of their families so they can have a dignified and full life that supplies all their needs, improves the economy of their countries through community organization based on faith, and avoids family disintegration and the exodus of thousands of compatriots.

Sincerely yours,

Alberto Velázquez Trujillo

COFOA Regional Director for Central America.



COFOA's 2022 Achievements

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS

Number of grassroots
leaders participating:

610



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Projects approved and
funded in 2022:

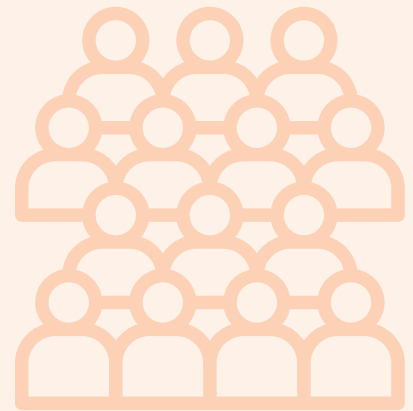
\$387,657

Value of projects presented
in 2022 not yet funded:

\$7,191,485

Families
benefited:

18,286



IMPACT OF THE RENACER CAMPAIGN

Total amount of
approved deeds in 2022:

\$1,052,500

Families
benefited:

72



Value and Focus of Investment By Community

Community	Department	Focus	Value of projects presented in 2022 to be concluded	Value of projects approved in 2022	Value of approved deeds
Lot. Bella Vista, Cuyultitán	<i>La Paz</i>	Paving of streets		\$53,069	
Lot. Bella Vista, Cuyultitán	<i>La Paz</i>	Drinking water tank construction	\$75,000		
Lot. Miraflores, San Pedro Masahuat	<i>La Paz</i>	Street repair with machinery (Terracería)		\$15,000	
El cauca, El Rosario	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$53,600		
Santa Lucia, Santiago Nonualco	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles			\$12,500
El castaño, San Pedro Masahuat	<i>La Paz</i>	Main streets	\$33,000		
La Mayra, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$949,850		
Santa Eugenia, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Main street repair project		\$133,377	
Santa Eugenia, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$960,000		
El Socorro, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$126,000		
Horeb, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Project for the introduction of electric energy	\$9,120		
Horeb, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$221,256		
San Martín, Zacatecoluca	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$1,200,000		
Huisquilapa, Santiago Nonualco	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$108,114		
San José Arriba, Santa Teresa, Santiago Nonualco,	<i>La Paz</i>	Bridge construction	\$80,000		
Ostuma, Santa María Ostuma	<i>La Paz</i>	Land Titles	\$80,344		
Ostuma, Santa María Ostuma	<i>La Paz</i>	Gully repair to protect the street		\$11,000	
El Carrizal, Cojutepeque	<i>Cuscatlán</i>	Health Promoter		\$2,250	
Amatillo 1, El Rosario	<i>Cuscatlán</i>	Paving of streets	\$195,000	\$118,000	
San Cayetano, San Salvador,	<i>San Salvador</i>	Introduction of electric energy	\$30,000		

Community	Department	Focus	Value of projects presented in 2022 to be concluded	Value of projects approved in 2022	Value of approved deeds
Lagunetas, Citalá	Chalatenango	Introduction of pipelines		\$8,962	
Plan del Rancho, Citalá	Chalatenango	School construction	\$6,000		
Pedro Díaz, San Francisco Morazán	Chalatenango	School construction	\$10,200		
El Roblito and El Trigalito, Dulce Nombre de María	Chalatenango	School construction	\$6,000		
El Roblarón and the Dulce Nombre de María Jewel	Chalatenango	Bridge construction	\$95,000		
Los Planes and San Silvestre, Citalá	Chalatenango	Improvement of drinking water system	\$82,000		
Los Amates, Concepción and Gualcho.	Chalatenango	Cemetery	\$50,000		
Las Mesas II	Chalatenango	Improvement of drinking water system	\$45,000		
Santa Barbara, El Paraíso	Chalatenango	Construction of composting latrines	\$82,000		
Plan del Amate hamlet, San Pablo Tacachico	La Libertad	Paving of streets	\$140,000		
Veracruz hamlet, San Juan Opico	La Libertad	Introduction of Drinking Water	\$54,000	\$46,000	
EL Trébol, Colón	La Libertad	Introduction of trash services	\$30,000		
Lotification Encarnación, Colón	La Libertad	Paving of streets	\$110,000		
Lot. St. Mauritius, Armenia	Sonsonate	Land Titles			\$140,000
Lot. Palmyra, Armenia	Sonsonate	Land Titles	\$900,000		
La Planta, El Suncita, Acajutla	Sonsonate	Land Titles	\$260,000		
Lot. San José, Los Amates, Jujutla	Ahuachapán	Construction of a community clinic	\$900,000		
Lot. La Milagrosa, El Guayabo, Nahuilingo	Sonsonate	Land Titles	\$300,000		\$900,000
TOTAL			\$7,191,484	\$387,658	\$1,052,500



Renacer Land Rights Campaign

COFOA Leaders Fight for Their Property Deeds

Since 2018, when families in two urbanizations in the department of La Paz successfully organized to gain title to their land, COFOA has been in the midst of a national struggle for the land rights of one in five families in El Salvador. Without title to their land, people cannot sell their homes or borrow to make improvements, and their urbanizations are left in limbo, without paved roads, potable water, electricity, green spaces, schools and health clinics. The RENACER campaign is a land rights movement that aims to transfer land titles worth more than \$1 billion AND pave the way for investment in the country's most neglected neighborhoods.



*Celebrating
receiving title
to land after
20 years.*

Highlights

On January 13, 2022, in response to the RENACER campaign, Salvadoran government agencies signed an inter-institutional cooperation agreement for attention to cases of land subdivisions and plots for housing use that are in an irregular state. The signing of this agreement gave rise to the Technical Committee for Collective Cases.

The Technical Committee includes the Attorney General's Office (FGR), Consumer Defense Office (DC), Ministry of Housing and the National Registration Center (CNR), along with COFOA representatives.

The first focus of the Technical Committee was to fulfill the promise made by Housing Minister Michelle Sol to to regularize the 80 subdivisions that are organized through the RENACER campaign, which will allow close to 8,000 families to obtain their property deeds.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022.

More than a thousand leaders of COFOA-RENACER staged a peaceful rally in front of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP). The purpose of this action was to deliver a letter to the Minister of Housing, Michelle Sol, to request a meeting to learn about the progress of the Technical Roundtable and request a matrix that showed the status of each of the 80 subdivisions.

At the March 25 meeting a commission of COFOA-RENACER leaders met with the legal team of the Ministry of Housing and members of the Technical Team. A meeting was scheduled for next Wednesday, March 30, 2022, to find out when the RENACER subdivisions will begin to be called before the Technical Committee.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2022.

Nearly 600 leaders of COFOA-RENACER gathered in front of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) to demand that the Minister of Housing, Michelle Sol, speed up the process of deeding land that has been in limbo for more than 30 years.

The leaders explained that since January 13, 2022, when the Technical Committee of Collective Cases was formed, only 46 of 80 subdivisions had their legal status investigated and only the case of the community of San Mauricio, Armenia, in Sonsonate, received approval for transferring deeds.

The leaders delivered a letter to the Minister of Housing, expressing their disagreement with the work being done by the Technical Committee on Collective Cases. The leaders indicated that, in this struggle for their deeds, they represent more than eight thousand families from the departments of: Sonsonate, La Libertad, San Salvador, San Salvador, La Paz, Usulután, Ahuachapán, Cabañas, among others.



Number of families defrauded of their property titles:

350,000

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Total value of property titles for which COFOA is fighting:

More than US\$1 billion

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Number of communities leading the RENACER campaign:

80 representing 8,000 families

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Number of families that received their titles in 2022 and value:

72 families, \$1,052,500

COFOA leaders, organizers and attorney meet with Salvadoran Housing Minister Michelle Sol.

COFOA Leaders File Swindling Complaint Against Developers with the Attorney General's Office

More than 200 COFOA leaders went to the Attorney General's Office to file a lawsuit for aggravated fraud in the form of a continuing offense, as provided for and sanctioned in the Penal Code, against the land developers who have not given them deeds to their properties, despite having paid for them decades ago.

The complaints were filed by leaders of:

- 1.** Subdivision Miramar, Municipality of Santo Tomás, Department of San Salvador.
- 2.** Subdivision Llano 1, El Paisnal, Department of San Salvador.
- 3.** Lotification La Ponderosa, Municipality of San Luis Talpa, Department of La Paz.
- 4.** Subdivision Camp 1 and 2, Municipality of Acajutla, Department of Sonsonate.
- 5.** Subdivision Palmares, Puerto de La Libertad, Department of La Libertad.
- 6.** Subdivision Comalapa 1 and 2, Municipality of San Luis Talpa, Department of La Paz.
- 7.** Subdivision La Paz 2, Municipality of San Pedro Masahuat, Department of La Paz.

The suit was filed against ARGOZ, one of the largest developers in the country, which illegally sold hundreds of lots in subdivisions in vulnerable or uninhabitable areas, such as riverbanks, gullies, walls, and near high-voltage power lines. The families who are in legal limbo state that, since they do not have deeds, they cannot access projects (public or private) for drinking water, street improvement or other benefits to make their land habitable, from their municipalities.

In 2023, more lawsuits will continue to be filed against the land developers that have failed to deliver deeds to the 80 communities that make up COFOA's RENACER campaign.

Lack of Progress by the Technical Round Table on Collective Cases

One year after the Technical Table was created, none of the 80 subdivisions presented by COFOA has been fully regularized. More than 7,500 families are still in legal limbo as they have not had deeds to their properties for more than 30 years. The sole progress made on regularizing titles came through direct pressure by COFOA families, which secured 72 titles in 2022.

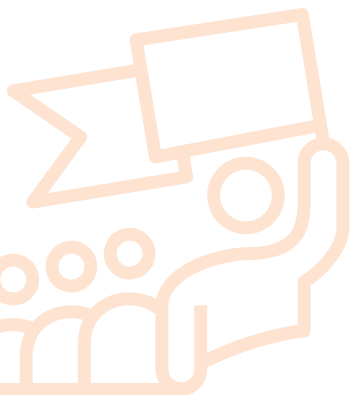
On December 20, 2022, COFOA leaders went to the facilities of the National Fund for Popular Housing, FONAVIPO, to demand that the Technical Committee for Collective Cases move forward with greater agility.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Housing, the Consumer's Ombudsman Office, the Attorney General's Office, the Attorney General's Office and the National Registration Center.

The next meeting with the Technical Committee was scheduled for March 14, 2023, at which the government institutions promised to present to COFOA leaders their proposal for reforming the Special Law for Regulating Lots and Parcels for Housing Use, with the commitment that the recommendations that COFOA has made for said law will be included.



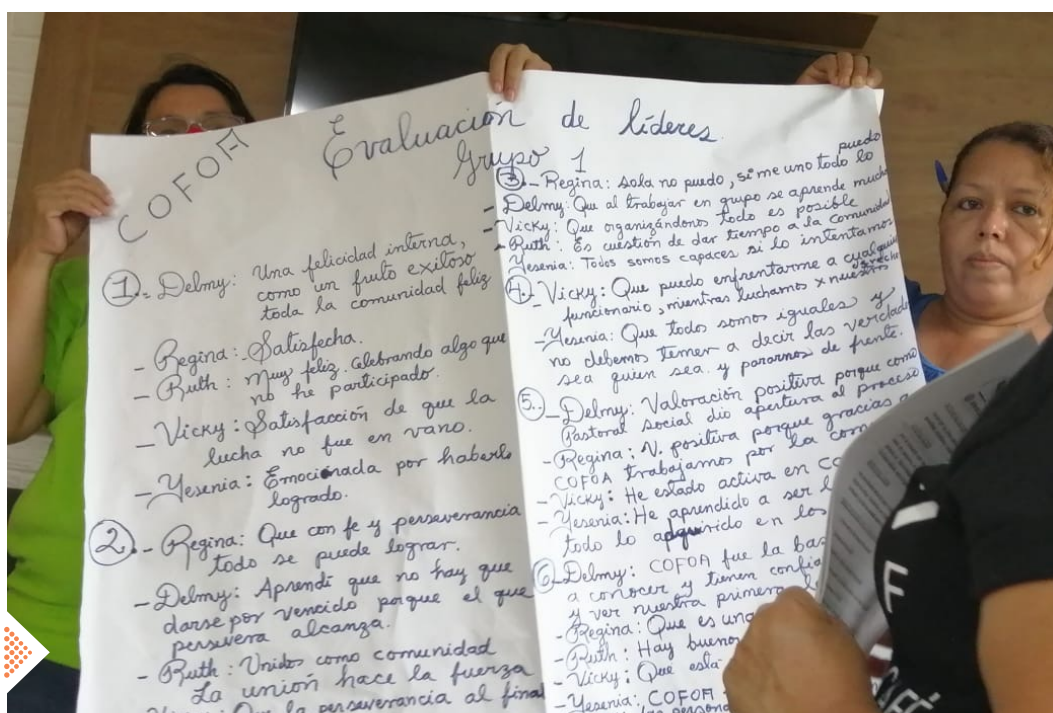
RENACER Campaign leaders meet with senior officials from the Salvadoran Government to press for progress on land titles and new, permanent legislation.



Leadership Development 2022

COFOA's impact on improving lives in Central America is a direct result of the organization's ongoing investment in leadership development. COFOA's community organizers invite local residents to gather, teach people how to organize their communities and train people to listen to their neighbors' concerns and campaign for change. Local residents decide what issues they will work on during large community assemblies. Grassroots leaders learn how to negotiate with their mayors and national officials to bring change to their communities and countries.

COFOA refers to local residents who actively participate in organizing efforts as leaders, because they are responsible for leading their local teams and COFOA's national policy reform campaigns.



COFOA members evaluate their own growth as leaders.

National Training «Building Power From the People»

Seventy-five COFOA leaders participated in a National Training entitled: «Building Power from the People,” which was held February 25-27, 2022, at the Loyola Center, in Antigua Guatemala.

The main objective of this National Training was to strengthen the power and active participation of leaders, using COFOA's methodology for the transformation of political, social and economic structures of the country and to improve the living conditions of their families.

COFOA leaders made a commitment to apply everything they learned during this National Training to continue fighting to improve conditions in their communities. They also committed to hold a national meeting with all the COFOA leadership, in the 10 departments where we are working, where approximately 1,000 leaders will attend.

Community-Led Development

In 2021, Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele centralized control over hundreds of millions of dollars of tax revenue earmarked for community development that previously went directly to local municipalities. This decision was one of many by President Bukele to concentrate power in his own hands, free of accountability.

Over 15 years, COFOA has worked with local residents in dozens of communities throughout El Salvador to negotiate an investment of approximately \$30 million in new bridges, roads, water supply systems and health clinics.

In 2021 and 2022, COFOA leaders were frustrated by the President's decision to centralize community development funding because it meant their mayors had less money to make public improvements.

Through a large-scale listening process, COFOA leaders identified 700+ priorities in 120 communities and collected signatures from 7,990 people supporting these priorities. In many cases, COFOA local organizing teams had met with their local mayors - including from President Bukele's New Ideas Party - and received their support. In May 2022, 800 COFOA leaders attempted to deliver petitions with those priorities from residents across El Salvador to the Ministry of Municipal Works, the agency that now controls many resources for community development.

The goal of COFOA's Community Development campaign is to create accountability for public spending in El Salvador and to ensure that public investment follows the priorities of local residents and is focused on the country's most marginalized and underserved communities.

When COFOA leaders peacefully marched to the Ministry of Municipal Works to deliver the large stack of petitions, Ministry officials locked the doors of both of their public buildings. COFOA leaders had to slip a letter requesting a meeting underneath the closed main entrance.

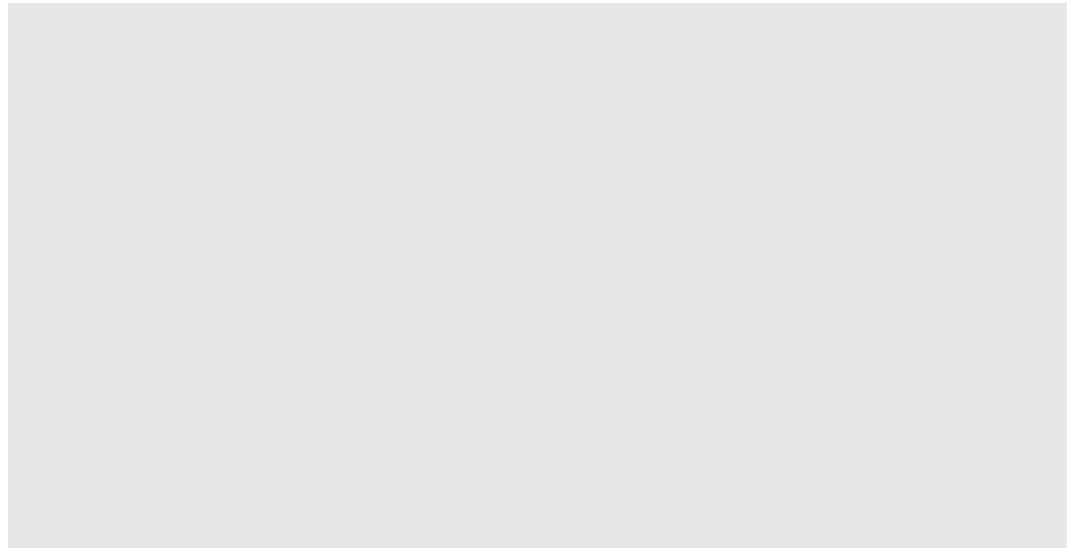


COFOA leader Heidi Zalaya de Henríquez speaks to reporters at large event in front of the Salvadoran Ministry of Municipal Works in May 2022.

Despite the refusal to meet in May, COFOA's organizing teams have seen that, as a result of their organizing pressure, many of their community development projects are being funded.

In 2022, COFOA's local organizing teams in 34 communities successfully prioritized and negotiated 38 development projects with their local mayors for a total value of \$8.6 million. A total of 610 grassroots leaders participated in the process of defining these projects, which will benefit 18,286 families. By the end of the year, nine of these projects, worth \$387,658, had been approved and funded. In 2023, COFOA leaders will continue to push for funding for the remaining 30 projects, and teams from more than 100 other communities in which COFOA is organized will continue to turn their priorities into defined proposals for paved roads, bridges, schools and health clinics.

These achievements are notable for not only making concrete improvements in neglected communities in El Salvador but also creating democratic accountability between local residents and public officials, which is so important for increasing people's rootedness and changing the underlying conditions that drive people to migrate.



As part of the Root Causes Initiative, COFOA and other faith-based organizations have met with the leaders of USAID's El Salvador Mission to share what Salvadoran organizations are doing to create accountability between local residents and their elected officials. COFOA has urged USAID to change its approach to development by supporting long term, locally-led campaigns and organizations working to create public accountability and mobilize domestic resources, rather than operating through short term projects crafted and managed by foreign contractors and USAID staff.

The following are some of COFOA most notable achievements of community-led development in 2022, all of which involve mobilizing domestic public resources.

La Paz

Bella Vista - STREET PAVING

COFOA leaders achieve paving of important street in Cuyultitán

COFOA leaders from the community of Bella Vista, municipality of Cuyultitán, La Paz, met with Mayor Susana Amaya to share their community improvement priorities. They reached agreement on a framework for paving and inauguration of the only access road that connects the communities of La Loma and Bella Vista.

The leaders recognized that this achievement was possible thanks to their community organization. Mayor Susana Amaya is also expected to sign an agreement with the community to promote the construction of a potable water tank.

Value of completed project:	\$53,069
Families benefited:	150
Number of leaders organizing:	40

Miraflores - STREET REPAIRS

The Miraflores subdivision began its community organizing process with COFOA in 2019, defining street repair as the most important issue for the community.

After several meetings with members of the Municipal Council, the mayor made a commitment to the community to make the necessary arrangements with the Ministry of Public Works to repair the streets. It was not until December 2022 that the Mayor's Office of San Pedro Masahuat began construction on the streets, with machinery to level the land, in the five parts of the subdivision. The community will continue to fight for the streets to be paved as well.

Value of completed project:	\$53,069
Families benefited:	150
Number of leaders organizing:	40

Santa Eugenia - STREET PAVING

The subdivision Santa Eugenia started the organization process with COFOA in 2019. The Mayor's Office of Zacatecoluca told COFOA leaders that it was not possible to invest in the land parcel because it was not registered in the National Registration Center, but that if the land developer (ARGOZ) donated the streets and the green area to the Mayor's Office, the main street of the land parcel could be repaired.

Once all the requirements for the donation were fulfilled, on February 25, 2021, in a Community Assembly, the mayor signed the commitment to build the internal streets of the Santa Eugenia subdivision and the communities of El Papayo and El Hormiguero.

Cost of completed project:	\$133,377
Families benefited:	110
Number of leaders organizing:	10

After the 2021 mayoral election, there was a change of municipal council and COFOA leaders resumed lobbying, until the first stage of the paving project for a section of the street was completed.

Santa María Ostuma - DITCH REPAIRS

The subdivision Santa María Ostuma has been in existence for 30 years; it began its community organization process with COFOA in August 2019.

The community assembly decided that the gully on the main street was the most urgent to repair.

They began negotiations with the mayor and the Plural City Council, who approved \$11,000.00 for the construction of the wall that would prevent the gully from continuing to grow. By 2022 the wall was completed and the gully had been filled in.

Value of completed project:	\$11,000
Families benefited:	65
Number of leaders organizing:	10

La Libertad

Veracruz 1 - POTABLE WATER

The community went more than 70 years without potable water. During the summer residents traveled more than 4 kilometers to get water from the Pacayán River and, during the winter, they accumulated rainwater in containers or had to buy water from a truck, spending up to US\$60 per month, but it was not fit for human consumption.

The community began organizing with COFOA's methodology in January 2021 and achieved the drilling of a well in December 2022.

Despite the community's efforts, no public institution provided support. So, through community organization, each family contributed financially to the project and the community legalized the land where the well was drilled.

Value of completed project:	\$46,000
Families benefited:	120
Number of leaders organizing:	14

Waiting 50 Years for Street Improvement in La Libertad!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022.

A total of 98 COFOA leaders gathered in Plan del Amate, San Pablo Tacachico, La Libertad, to sign the community agreement on the prioritized issue: Improvement of the main street known as «La Cuestona».

The leaders explained that they have been enduring serious inconveniences for approximately 50 years due to the poor condition of this street. One of them is the lack of transportation. This is due to the fact that only four-wheel drive vehicles can drive up the road.

For his part, Francisco Portillo, mayor of Tacachico, assumed the commitment to provide the materials for the repair of «La Cuestona» and the labor. He also indicated that these works will begin on November 28, 2022.

The leaders of COFOA recognize that this achievement has been possible thanks to the process of community organization, which they began more than a year ago, with the objective of working together to improve the living conditions of their community.



Waiting 20 Years for the Introduction of the Sanitation Services in La Libertad!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022.

A total of 87 COFOA leaders gathered in El Trébol, Colón, La Libertad, to sign the community agreement on their prioritized issue: Introduction of sanitation services and garbage pick ups. This community is made up of 70 families, who have been waiting for this service for two decades.

The leaders explained that, due to the lack of the sanitation services, they have suffered from stomach illnesses, diarrhea, vomiting, infections and food poisoning, among other ailments.

COFOA leaders also indicated that they are currently depositing garbage in a vacant lot.

The property is a transit point for other communities, and many of the locals take advantage of their passage to dump their garbage there.

For his part, Samael Rivera, Mayor of Colón, expressed his support for COFOA's leaders, and made a commitment to the community that the introduction of the sanitation services will be completed by March 2023 at the latest. This work will cost \$30,000



Construction of Main Street in La Libertad to Begin!



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2022.

A total of 129 COFOA leaders of Subdivision Encarnación II, Colón, La Libertad, celebrated the signing of the community agreement on the issue: Construction of main street. This community is made up of 110 families, and belongs to the Santo Cristo de Esquipulas de Colón parish.

The leaders explained that they have been waiting for 20 years for an access road in good condition. In this regard, they indicated that many older adults have suffered falls, which have caused them severe injuries. Also, if they have a vehicle, they must use other roads to access the community. As if that were not enough, the leaders pointed out that this situation worsens even more when the winter season arrives.

For his part, Samael Rivera, Mayor of Colón, expressed his support to the community for the construction of the main street by March 2023 at the latest. This will benefit more than 400 families. It should be noted that the investment of this work amounts to: \$110,000.

Sonsonate

La Milagrosa - PROPERTY TITLES

The La Milagrosa subdivision began its commercialization in 1997, with 87 lots, whose owner is José Mauricio Orantes Escalón. The property was not regularized due to a mortgage. In order to solve their situation, the community approached Nahuilingo mayor's office, the Attorney General's Office, the Consumer's Ombudsman Office and the National Registration Center.

Value of completed cases:	\$900,000
Families benefited:	60
Number of leaders organizing:	14

The subdivision began to be organized with COFOA's methodology in February 2021, impacting 80 families in the community.

In December 2022, the owner of the subdivision settled the situation to legalize the subdivision and delivered 60 property deeds.

📍 **St. Mauritius - PROPERTY TITLES**

The San Mauricio subdivision, whose owners are Hilda Graciela Peraza de Morán and Fátima Florencia Morán de Risio, has 61 lots and was marketed privately between 1998 and 1991.

Value of completed case:	\$140,000
Families benefited:	7
Number of leaders organizing:	15

Of the 61 lots, 7 families had not been given their deeds, because the owners had to submit documentation to the National Registration Center, such as some property plans.

The subdivision began to be organized with COFOA's methodology in 2019, affecting 35 families in the community. In 2022, through the Mesa Técnica de Casos Colectivos, the lot holders obtained their property deeds.

Of the 60 cases submitted by COFOA to the Mesa Técnica de Casos Colectivos, 47 subdivisions were called to file and sign complaints against different developers before the Defensoría del Consumidor (Consumer Ombudsman's Office). Of the total number of cases presented, only the San Mauricio lot has been regularized, one year after the Technical Committee began operating.

Cuscatlán

📍 **El Carrizal, Cojutepeque - HIRING HEALTH PROMOTER**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2022.

With a thanksgiving mass, 90 COFOA leaders celebrated the hiring of a health promoter in the community of El Carrizal, municipality of Cojutepeque, in the department of Cuscatlán.

The leaders explained that they had been waiting eleven years for the health promoter to be hired, and recognized that this was possible thanks to community organizing, which they committed to adopt and implement throughout their community.

The Ministry of Health hired José Saúl Orellana as promoter in August 8, 2022, and he began working in the field on September 7, 2022. The leaders explained that more than 700 families will benefit from this achievement.

The mass was celebrated by the priest Bernabé Juárez, who emphasized the importance of the community organizing to achieve improvements in their living conditions.



📍 Amatillo 1, El Rosario - PAVING OF STREETS

Value of completed project:	\$118,000
People benefited:	700
Number of leaders organizing:	96

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2022.

A total of 96 COFOA leaders gathered in the community of Amatillo 1, municipality of El Rosario, department of Cuscatlán, where a community agreement was signed to improve the main street.

The event was attended by Manuel Tejada, municipal mayor, the priest Victor Leiva and community leaders, who expressed their satisfaction with the paving of 230 meters of the main street.

The leaders explained that they had been waiting more than 80 years for this work. They also indicated that one of the biggest difficulties they faced due to the poor condition of this road was that public transportation left their work an hour and a half away from their homes.

They also had serious problems transporting sick people and were affected by the high prices of essential supplies.

The COFOA leaders mentioned that the execution of this work amounts to an investment of \$118,000 and will benefit more than 700 inhabitants of this community. The mayor promised to finish paving three more sections of this road by the end of December.

Mayor of El Rosario,
signs covenant
with COFOA
local organizing
committee from
the community of
Amatillo 1.



Chalatenango

Las Lagunetas, Citalá - ACCIDENT PREVENTION ROAD WORK

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2022.

Faith is the engine that drives COFOA leaders. A total of 112 COFOA leaders from the community of Las Lagunetas, Citalá, in Chalatenango, gathered to celebrate a mass of thanksgiving after achieving a road safety mitigation project in their community.

The leaders explained that they had been facing serious inconveniences for several years, because a deep gully was forming in front of the Catholic church in their community.

They also indicated that this caused several automobile accidents and several motorcyclists to lose control when traveling through this area.

After holding a fact-finding meeting with the Citalá City Council, COFOA leaders were able to secure \$8,961 in funding for this project, which began on July 18, 2022 and ended on September 21, 2022.



NEW SCHOOLS in Pedro Díaz, in San Francisco Morazán; El Trigalito, in Dulce Nombre de María, and Plan del Rancho, in Citalá.

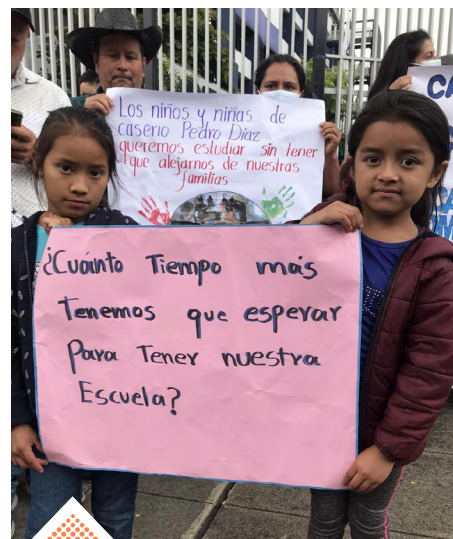
FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2022.

A total of 47 COFOA leaders met at the Catholic Church of El Trigalito, Parish of the municipality Dulce Nombre de María, in Chalatenango, to discuss the construction of a school for the communities of El Trigalito and El Roblito.

COFOA leaders explained that they have been waiting more than 100 years for a school to be built. They also indicated that they are happy because, thanks to community organization, their children will no longer have to walk long distances to study.

The Ministry of Education has already assigned the teacher Reina Victoria Escobar de López to begin teaching 32 children from the communities of El Trigalito and El Roblito on February 21, 2022.

It should be noted that the land on which the school will be built was donated by one of the inhabitants of the community.



How much longer do we have to wait to have our school?

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2022

Under heavy rain, a total of 67 COFOA leaders gathered in front of the Ministry of Education (MINED) in San Salvador, where they demanded that the interim Minister of Education, José Mauricio Pineda, build three schools in Chalatenango, in the communities of: Pedro Díaz, in San Francisco Morazán; El Trigalito, in Dulce Nombre de María, and Plan del Rancho, in Citalá, where they have been without schools for a century.

A commission of five leaders delivered a letter to the interim Minister of Education, in which they requested that the accreditation process for the construction of these schools be advanced.

The COFOA leaders explained that the children have to walk about two hours to get to the nearest educational center.

Currently, these children receive classes in the chapels of each area, where conditions are inappropriate for their education.

For its part, MINED made a commitment to the leaders to travel to: Pedro Diaz, El Trigalito and Plan del Rancho, to help with the process of accreditation of the land, which has been donated by the community.



COFOA leaders from El Trigalito in Chalatenango celebrate agreement with public officials to construct an elementary school in their community.

Looking Ahead To 2023

COFOA leaders will continue to press local mayors, the Government of El Salvador and international development agencies to follow the lead of local residents, who know best what their communities need, and are in the best position to prevent funding from being wasted or stolen. COFOA will work to make sure that dozens of projects developed by local teams are funded in 2023. Organizers will work with local teams across the country to turn their concerns and priorities into concrete projects that can be approved by local mayors and the Ministry of Municipal Works. As COFOA promotes local development, the RENACER campaign will continue pressing the Ministry of Housing and private developers to speed up the transfer of property titles. COFOA will also continue to campaign for El Salvador's first unemployment compensation system to help Salvadoran workers see their future in their home country.

Here are some of the local projects that COFOA leaders are working on in 2023.



COFOA leaders voting on their development priorities for 2023.

Chalatenango – SCHOOLS



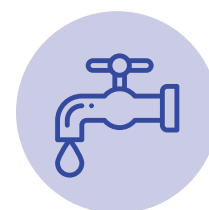
THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2022.

Leaders of COFOA and 84 inhabitants of the community Plan del Rancho, met in the Catholic church of that town belonging to the Immaculate Conception Parish, Citalá, Chalatenango, where the issue of the construction of a school was prioritized.

The meeting was attended by Liseth Flores, Municipal Trustee; Mr. Jorge García Zepeda, human resources technician of the Department of Education; Mr. Juan Jiménez, in charge of fixed assets and legalization of real estate, furniture and equipment of MINED; and Mr. German Valdivieso, director of the Samuel Mendieta School.

COFOA leaders explained that they have been waiting 105 years for a school. For the time being, classes are held in the community's Catholic Church chapel.

Cabañas – DRINKING WATER IMPROVEMENT



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2022.

Twelve leaders of the communities Elen 1 and 2 met at the Mayor's Office of Ilobasco, Cabañas, with the participation of Oscar Armando Bernal, representative of ANDA and Mario Rivas, head of the Social Projection Unit of the municipality.

The leaders explained that 1,500 families are being affected by the unfit water service. Bernal suggested that a letter be sent to José Roberto Miranda, Manager of ANDA's headquarters.

This letter will request the drilling of a well. He also indicated that the community will have to look for land and ANDA will be in charge of preparing the technical file, the cost of which amounts to US\$10,000. The leaders said that they will continue to organize until the water service is improved.

San Salvador – CLEAN DRINKING WATER



OCTOBER 18, 2022.

A total of 32 leaders of Las Neblinas, in Los Planes de Renderos, Panchimalco, gathered in front of the municipal mayor's office to hold an investigation meeting with the mayor, Jorge Mejía, on the issue: Lack of drinking water.

After talking with a commission of seven leaders, the mayor pledged to help in a meeting with Rubén Alemán, president of the National Administration of Aqueducts and Sewers (ANDA), and to find alternatives to solve the lack of water; he also proposed a municipal ordinance, where ANDA would fill the catchment tank proportionally to the thousand families that will benefit from this service.

Las Neblinas has been waiting for 100 years to have potable water in their homes; they are currently supplied by a private service, which costs them US\$100 per month.

ELECTRICITY

MONDAY, OCTOBER 03, 2022.

Seven leaders of Lucita Linda, Guazapa, held a research meeting with the engineer Gilberto Mejía, who is in charge of electric energy projects at the national level for the Superintendence of Electricity and Telecommunications (SIGET), in San Salvador, on the subject: Introduction of electric energy. After listening to the leaders, Mr. Mejía explained that the community must submit a letter of request to the SIGET to the superintendent, Manuel Ernesto Aguilar.

The letter will explain the problems, as well as the number of beneficiaries and the project being requested. A list of the families to be benefited and a sketch of the community were also requested. It should be noted that this community has not had electricity for 17 years.



Sonsonate

For more than a year, COFOA leaders from the community of Loma del Muerto, Sonsonate, have been fighting for their right to water. Loma del Muerto is made up of more than a thousand families, who decided to unite and work with COFOA's community organization methodology on the issue: Improvement of drinking water.

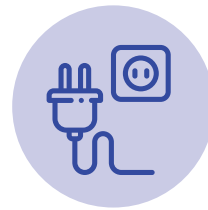
Throughout the organizational process, they were able to meet initially with Mayor Rafael Arévalo, explaining their needs in the community. As part of the agreements with the mayor, a technical inspection was carried out.

Afterwards, the leaders held a meeting with the engineer Salvador Andino, in charge of projects of the mayor's office of Sonsonate, who, after learning the results of this inspection, explained what it would cost to bring the project from the municipality of Nahuizalco, and that it will cost \$100,000.

He suggested that, with this money, the community could build 5 wells and have water for many years to come. For their part, the leaders of Loma del Muerto accepted this recommendation and are willing to continue organizing in the year 2023, in order to have water service in their homes.

Leaders of Hacienda La Pradera, Santa Emilia, Sonsonate, are working on the prioritized issue: Introduction of drinking water, where 210 families have been without drinking water in their homes for more than 40 years.

COFOA leaders explained that they are currently supplied by wells, which are contaminated. For this reason, they are determined to continue fighting for the fulfillment of their right to water fit for human consumption.





COFOA Expansion in Central America in 2022

COFOA was founded as a regional organization to support grassroots faith-based organizing across Central America. In 2022, COFOA launched organizing efforts in both Guatemala and Honduras at the invitation of Catholic bishops in each country.



We Started COFOA Guatemala in 2022

As part of COFOA's regional growth, in July 2022, the organization began sharing Faith in Action's community organizing methodology in Sololá and Chimaltenango, Guatemala. COFOA staff began an exploratory process, by organizing training and listening activities in seven Catholic deaneries, where priests and lay people from different communities were present and COFOA staff shared the organization's methodology.

As a result of these meetings, the first team of leaders of the social pastoral of the parish of San Lucas Evangelista, in the municipality of San Lucas Tolimán, was formed.

Organizing trainings were offered in the form of biweekly workshops, focused on environmental education, with groups of youth and adolescents in the municipalities of Santa Lucia, San Antonio and Santiago Atitlán. The objective was to encourage the participation of young people in society, and to foster leadership in each of them.

COFOA organizers also began an in depth consultation with indigenous authorities and other community-based organizations, including meetings with organizations such as: Authority for the Sustainable Management of the Basin and Lake Amatitlán (AMSA), Authority for the Sustainable Management of the Lake Atitlán Basin and its Environment (AMSCLAE); Centro de Estudios Atitlán, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG), Centro de Investigación Educativa AWÄN, Instituto Nacional de Bosques (INAB), Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (CONAP), Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARN) and Asociación de Padres de Personas con Discapacidad (ADISA).

Educational tours, workshops and exchange of experiences have been coordinated with these organizations to raise awareness among young people about environmental care, and to inform them about the institutions where they can work for the development of change in their communities through COFOA's methodology.



Start Of COFOA's Organizational Process In Honduras

Continuing with the projection of growth at the regional level, in September 2022, COFOA's organizational process began in Honduras.

The first meeting was with Pastor Mario Luque, in the San José Parish, in the municipality of Cedros, in the department of Francisco Morazán, where the organizational process was presented to pastoral agents, who made the decision to implement it in the communities of their parish.



COFOA leaders from Honduras gather under tree for learning and planning together

Later, COFOA staff met with leaders of the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, in the Municipality of Porvenir, Department of Francisco Morazán, led and accompanied by their parish priest Mauricio Mayorga, who opened the doors to COFOA's organizational process and initiated the training day.

Local COFOA organizers from a Honduras began working with these communities to advance the listening campaign stage of the organizational process, with the objective of creating relationships that allow people to detect their own interests, connect their interests with those of other people and begin to act and seek solutions to the issues suffered by their communities.

We also held a regional Community Assembly with the participation of representatives from the different parishes of the Manuel de Jesús Subirana Deanery of the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa, where the priority issue (construction of a regional hospital) was defined and a research committee was appointed to work on the solution.

We hope to continue working as a community, showing the improvements of each of the projects that are planned for the future, which are underway and are projected for 2023.

COFOA expresses deep appreciation to everyone who contributed to our impact and growth in 2022.

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