



REPORT MARCH 2025

EL SALVADOR

FAITH IN ACTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS: LEARNS ABOUT COFOA'S ORGANIZING AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Communities of Faith Organizing for Action (COFOA) received a visit today from the Board of Directors of Faith in Action to learn about the country's experience with community organizing based on faith. The group also visited José Simeón Cañas University (UCA), where we participated in a dialogue on the country's historical memory and socio-political context. During the day, we also celebrated the birthday of Father John Baumann, founder of Faith in Action International.

Board of Directors - Faith in Action

FAITH IN ACTION BOARD VISITS COFOA COMMUNITIES

Members of the Faith in Action International Board of Directors visited a dozen of COFOA's 140 local organizing committees in the three zones of the country: central, western, and paracentral. The purpose of these visits was to learn how COFOA's community organization methodology is applied and to share a question and answer session with the leaders to clarify any doubts. The meetings were very productive and strengthened the bonds of friendship between the leaders and the Board of Directors of Faith in Action.



Comunidad Planes de la Laguna, Santa Ana



Comunidad El Llano 2, San Salvador Norte



Lotificación Miramar 2, San Salvador Sur



Comunidad Las Brisas, San Salvador Sur



El Cocal, Usulután



Comunidad Pitarrillo 2, San Salvador Norte



Comunidad Santa Isabel, Sonsonate

COFOA STRENGTHENS ALLIANCES WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN LA LIBERTAD Y SANTA ANA

With the aim of establishing relationships that will enable community development, COFOA held gatherings with pastors from the departments of La Libertad and Santa Ana to present the organization's methodology for training community leaders who will bring their values of faith to public and private life for the betterment of their communities. That is why on March 5, a gathering was held in the El Cimarrón neighborhood of La Libertad, which was attended by 14 pastors from the area and primary leaders of COFOA, who engaged in dialogue that allowed them to address community issues, such as poor road



conditions, lack of basic services such as drinking water and electricity, as well as the lack of property titles and community organization.

Santa Ana

On March 11, in the department of Santa Ana, COFOA held its second gathering of the month with 11 pastors from evangelical churches with the aim of strengthening relations with religious leaders in the area, presenting COFOA's working methodology, and sharing progress in community organization in the territory. During the gatherings, the pastors expressed their interest in learning more about COFOA's working methodology and putting it into practice in their community development efforts to see improvements in their environments.



RENACER CAMPAIGN SHOWS PROGRESS IN OBTAINING PROPERTY TITLES



O March 6, leaders from the departments of La Libertad and Sonsonate who are part of the Renacer campaign

met outside the Argoz offices to learn about progress in the legalization of their land subdivisions and the process of obtaining deeds. The meeting was attended by one of the prosecutors supervising the case, the director of FONAVIPO, and MIVI authorities, who reported the following progress:

- The San Francisco community: deeds are pending signature of the owner.
- La Aguja polygons 1-15: ready for deeds, regularization of the rest will begin.
- La Encarnación 2 (second stage) and El Trébol 1: In the process of regularization.

-Las Victorias, Corinto 1 and 2, Tihuapa Norte: Involved in lawsuits, work is underway to obtain release to begin regularization.

-Veracruz 2 community: Irregular, three to four months are expected before regularization can begin.

-Agua Escondida 1 and 2: They have old permits, but the plans are missing to complete the deed.

-San Damián: first stage can be deeded, the second is still in regularization.

During the action, COFOA leaders emphasized that progress has been the result of community organization and persistence in every action. They reaffirmed their commitment to continue fighting for the regularization of their land.

POTABLE WATER PROJECT FOR 300 FAMILIAS IN LA LIBERTAD COSTA ADVANCES

About 250 leaders from the communities of San Isidro, Cimarrón, Mangos 1 and 2 met with representatives of the organization Water for All and the mayor of La Libertad Costa, Rafael Ávalos, to deliver the technical dossier and sign the agreement for the project to introduce drinking water to these communities. The project, which will benefit more than 300 families, will cost \$121,446, which will be paid for partially by the residents of the area. For his part, Mayor Avalos pledged to contribute two water collection pumps and to arrange for a backhoe to facilitate the work of introducing water.



This effort has been made possible by COFOA leaders organizing their community and working Water for All and the municipal government to make improvements to their communities.

CASERÍO LOS LUNAS TAKES IMPORTANT STEPS IN ORGANIZING THEIR COMMUNITY

Leaders from the village of Los Lunas, Coatepeque District, Municipality of Santa Ana Este, are beginning their community organization process with achieving the paving of their main street. The work, which was managed by COFOA leaders, had the support of the entire community and the mayor's office. In support of improving the community, the community donated materials and labor, while the Santa Ana Sur municipal government donated 80 bags of cement and gravel for street repairs. COFOA leaders expressed their excitement when they saw the work begin. "Our community was dead.



We had lost faith and trust even in Community Development Association (ADESCO), but thanks to COFOA's process, we feel supported and encouraged. The community has regained strength and hope," added Miguel Figueroa, COFOA leader.

ALLIANCE: MAYOR, EMBASSY OF GERMANY AND COFOA WIN A NEW SCHOOL

In a meeting celebrating community effort and work, 128 COFOA leaders in Nahuizalco inaugurated the Caserío Santa Isabel School Center, located in the La Guacamaya district. This project, which will benefit more than 90 children, is the result of seven months of hard work and dedication by an entire community.

This was affirmed by leader Blanca Carías, who expressed her gratitude to God: “I am grateful to God and to all the people who supported this project. I have five children who study here, and it is a joy for me because they will be in this new school. At the same time, I would like to emphasize that this work was hard, because we worked very hard to see this school become a reality,” said Carías.



This achievement was made possible thanks to the efforts of the mayor of Nahuizalco, Hugo Zavaleta, who had the support of COFOA leaders, the community, parents, school teachers, the Los Izalcos Microregion, and the Sensunapán company, all of whom contributed in their own way.

For her part, Lena Schwarm, representative of the German Embassy in El Salvador, expressed her satisfaction with the collaboration with COFOA: “We are involved in a project that we have carried out together with COFOA, and I am personally delighted that we have created these vehicles because we know that as donors to many projects, we provide financial support but we are not in the field and we do not know the communities, so it is good to create these links with organizations such as COFOA,” added Schwarm.

COFOA LEADERS IN JIQUILISCO RECIEVE TRAINING ABOUT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Leaders from the Jiquilisco community received training from COFOA's legal team in how to form the board of directors of a Community Development Association (ADESCO). During

The training covered, what is an ADESCO? What roles are needed on the board? And why it is necessary to involve every member of the community to have an effective ADESCO and board of directors.



LEADERS FROM THE LAS DELICIAS DE ZACATECOLUCA REPAIR THEIR STREETS ABSENT MUNICIPAL HELP



COFOA leaders from Las Delicias, a development in Zacatecoluca, organized a Community Assembly to inform all residents about progress in repairing the main street in the community. The value of this project is \$5,000 dollars, which was raised by COFOA leaders and private businesses in the area

This was necessary because the municipality did not respond to the leaders request to undertake the project.

COFOA's regional director participated in the assembly and encouraged people not to lose faith and to continue organizing themselves to improve their community and hold their elected officials accountable.

COFOA LEADERS DIALOGUE WITH MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ABOUT PROJECTS TO REPAIR ROADS AND BRING POTABLE WATER

Leaders from the Brisas del Sur community held a meeting at the Santo Tomas City Hall to deliver two letters, one to the mayor of the area, and the other to the Ministry of Public Works, requesting mitigation works on a 20-meter-deep gully that formed in the area. During the delivery of the letters, they held a meeting with the Deputy District Chief, Gabriela Abrego, who promised to follow up on the issue raised in the letter.

Comunidad San Francisco

Eighteen leaders from the San Francisco community in Santo Tomás met with Deputy District Chief Gabriela Abrego to address important issues such as the introduction of drinking water and the repair of main roads in the community. At the meeting, the leaders delivered two letters, one addressed to the mayor and his municipal council, and another



to ANDA, the water agency, specifying the aforementioned problems.

For her part, the Deputy District Chief highlighted the clarity of the letter and committed to working on a joint letter to strengthen the request and ensure that it is resolved. She also reported that a letter was sent 15 days ago to the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) to request work on those streets. She also thanked COFOA for its support to the community, considering the organization a key ally for development. As a result of the meeting, it was agreed to hold an informational meeting in the San Francisco community within the next 22 days, in which the mayor's office will also participate, in order to continue working together for the benefit of the community.



LEADERS FROM **COMUNIDAD LOS AMATES** WIN PURCHASE OF LAND FOR A **CEMENTARY**



On March 20, the Local Organization Committee (COL) of the communities of San José, Los Amates, Gualcho, and Concepción, located in southern Chaltenango, celebrated the acquisition of land in the area for the construction of a cemetery.

The event was attended by the local mayor, Milton Serrano, who explained the process of purchasing the land, to which the residents contributed a total of \$10,000, while the mayor's office contributed \$20,000 for the acquisition of the lot.

Community leaders expressed their joy at seeing their hard work finally bear fruit. They acknowledged that the process was not easy, but that today they can celebrate the result of their collective effort. They encouraged neighboring communities to organize and work to improve their territories.

HONDURAS

LEADERS FROM HONDURAS CONTINUE WITH WATER PROJECT

Leaders from the Guadalupe Cedros community in Francisco Morazán met to receive training and report on the progress of the drinking water project. During the meeting, problems with the engineer in charge were also discussed. The leaders proposed solutions to ensure the continuation of the work, warning that if the issues are not resolved, they will take measures to pressure the municipal government of Cedros. They also agreed to continue the listening campaign to learn about the community's interests and

ensure the implementation of ongoing community improvement projects.



LEADERS FROM GUADALUPE CEDRO FRANCISCO MORAZÁN EVALUATE THEIR HEALTH CARE CAMPAIGN

Leaders from Guadalupe Cedros Francisco Morazán met with local leaders to assess the health situation in northern Francisco Morazán. Last month COFOA leaders held a large public action at the General Directorate of Public Health in Tegucigalpa to demand improvements in health care, including a regional hospital. The evaluation meeting in March focused on the teams' progress in assessing health conditions in the community and following up on their agreements with Deputy Minister

Nersa Paz, which were shared by leader Raúl Ordóñez, who participated in the meeting with the deputy minister.



GUATEMALA

COFOA LEADERS FROM CHIMALTENANGO MAKE PROGRESS NEGOTATING WITH THEIR MAYOR



Leaders from the community of San Miguel El Cedro, Parramos, Chimaltenango, achieved significant progress thanks to negotiations with local municipal authorities. The community received a valuable donation of 35 eight-centimeter corrugated pipes, each valued at Q695.00, for a total of Q24,325.00 (\$3,100 USD), to be used for the installation of a sewage drainage system that will significantly improve health and living conditions in the area. In order for families to obtain sewage service, they will have to pay a fee equivalent to Q500.00 (\$64 USD). Likewise, leaders continue to work to legalize green areas to ensure the development of sustainable projects in the community.

ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRACION

COFOA PARTICIPATES IN MIGRANT WAY OF THE CROSS

With the aim of raising awareness in the community and promoting the rights of migrants, COFOA participated in the Migrant Way of the Cross entitled “Migrants Missionaries of Hope,” which took place in the parish of San Miguel Ingenio, in Metapán, Santa Ana. This activity, organized by the Clamor Network, gave COFOA the responsibility of representing the third station of the Way of the Cross.



ALLIANCES WITH MEDIA

COFOA appreciates radio and television stations that allow us to publicize our organizational work within the country. They also give us space to express our position on issues of national interest.

-On March 11, executive director, Alberto Velázquez Trujillo, participated in the television interview “Bajo Fuego” on TVO Channel 23, hosted by journalist Raúl Beltrán Bonilla, addressing COFOA's RENACER campaign and the reactivation of metal mining in the country.

-On March 13, we participated in the radio program “Voces de la Cordillera,” addressing the theme “Yes to Life, No to Mining,” discussing the negative impacts that metal mining would have on the country if it were reactivated.

-On March 26, we participated in the television program “Encuentro con Julio Villagran,” touching on national issues and the work that COFOA is doing with community organizations,

including the introduction of drinking water and electricity, alliances for constructing schools, road repairs, RENACER, the campaign against mining, and COFOA's health campaign. -On March 27, COFOA leaders participated in the radio interview “Voces de la Cordillera” (Voices of the Mountains), addressing the impact that the reactivation of metal mining will have on our rivers.

