

THE GIFT OF TOGETHERNESS

A RESOURCE ON POVERTY, COMMUNITY AND LAND RIGHTS FOR THE POST PRIMARY CLASSROOM



INSIDE:

DISCOVER about **HARDSHIP** in the beautiful land of **HONDURAS**
Watch **VIDEO CLIPS** of two **TEENAGERS** LIVING IN 'LA CONFIANZA' online
JOIN us on **FACEBOOK** to learn more about **CAMPAINING**
Message in a Bottle – **TAKE ACTION!**

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TROCAIRE
Working for a Just World

WELCOME!

**"GRIEF SHARED
IS HALF GRIEF,
JOY SHARED IS
DOUBLE JOY"**
(HONDURAN SAYING)

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DISCOVER AND INTERACT

This magazine is aimed at Post-Primary Religious Education teachers and will provide you with material to explore the issues in Honduras in an engaging and interactive way with your students. They will firstly be introduced to the problems faced by those living in Honduras and then informed about 'La Confianza'. They will witness firsthand what conditions are like through two teenage guides, Naheli and Henry (see Worksheets 2 & 3). Finally students are invited to take action and join with Trócaire to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a fair and just world in our 'Message in a Bottle' campaign.



EXPLORING THE ISSUE

This magazine focuses on the community of 'La Confianza' in Honduras, the second poorest country in Central America. The name 'La Confianza' in Spanish means 'trust' which is what this community is built on. They are living in poverty with lack of access to basic resources such as adequate nutrition, health, education and land. Yet, they have come together to support one another in their struggle to reclaim land that was unfairly taken from them. Read on to explore the issues of poverty and land rights and to hear the inspirational story of the 519 families that form the community of 'La Confianza'.



WHAT'S NEW?

Go Online! – Students can immerse themselves virtually in the community of 'La Confianza' by watching online videos. These clips (available at www.trocaire.org/education) can be shown on interactive whiteboards in the classroom.

Facebook! – Students are invited to join us on 'Facebook' to complete a homework activity and to learn more about our campaign.

Easy to photocopy Worksheets

Message in a Bottle! – Students are encouraged to take action in Solidarity with the community of 'La Confianza'

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'community' comes from the Latin word, 'communitas' which directly translated means 'Gift of Togetherness'.

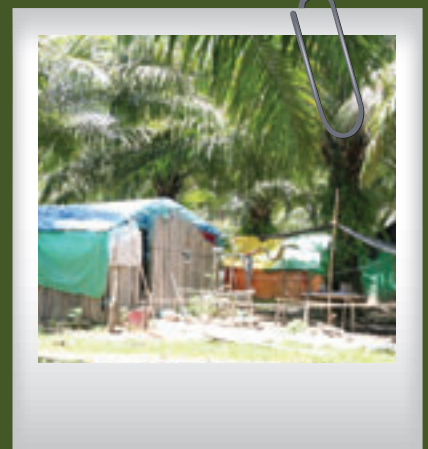
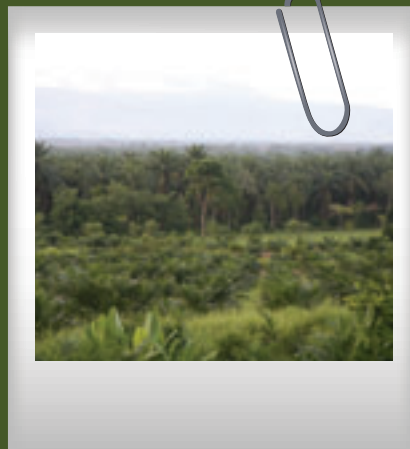
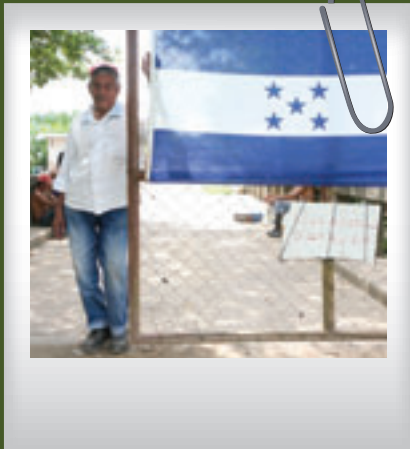
MAKING LINKS

The theme and material contained within this resource can be linked to several topics in the RE Classroom.



HARDSHIP IN A BEAUTIFUL LAND HONDURAS

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HONDURAS

Honduras is the second largest and second poorest country in Central America. After two and a half decades of mostly military rule, a freely elected civilian government came to power in 1982. However in June 2009, the elected president, Manuel Zelaya, was removed from his position in a military coup. Honduras is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. It left more than 5000 people dead and caused approximately \$2 billion in damage. Two thirds of Hondurans still live in poverty and nearly half of the population live in extreme poverty.

LAND ACCESS

Lack of access to good farming land is a major cause of poverty for poor rural Hondurans who depend on crops to feed their families. Eight out of every ten rural families have no access, or insufficient access, to land. In the 1990s wealthy landowners unfairly took land from farmers living in Northern Honduras. The best fertile land is found along the coast. It is mostly owned by three plantation owners leaving the poorer quality land for small farmers who have less than 5 hectares of land. This is not enough to grow food to feed and support their loved ones.

LA CONFIANZA

In 2009, 519 families in La Confianza came together to reclaim land that had been unfairly taken from them. They face constant threat. They cannot build strong houses because they are often attacked and burnt down by the landowner's security. Flooding occurs for two months every rainy season. When this occurs the community have to pack up and move to higher ground. Even though they are living in poverty they believe that living and working together will provide the solution. The families are split into five groups and are given a specific job to complete; working on the plantation, kitchen duty, teaching the children, maintaining the camp and security.



To discover more about 'La Confianza', photocopy Worksheet 1 for each student and ask them to complete it in pairs. When completed come together and discuss the story further as a class. Use the information in this resource to tell your students more. **Answers for Worksheet 1:** 2, 5, 7, 3, 1, 8, 4, 6.

ACTIVITY THE IDEAL COMMUNITY

- Discuss as a class what the word community means.
- Identify the different types of communities that exist.
- Are you part of one or many communities?
- Create a poster (in small groups) to show what a community needs to live a prosperous and peaceful existence. Display posters and share ideas with whole class.

Homework Activity: Write about the benefits of being part of a good community.

DISCOVER COMMUNITY LIFE IN LA CONFIANZA



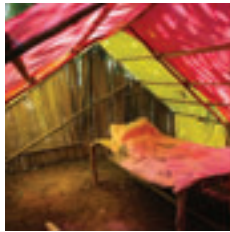
COMMUNAL COOKING

Women get up at 4am. They light the wood for the fire to make tortillas. They prepare beans and if they have enough money they make coffee for the men to drink. Lunch consists of beans, tortillas and, sometimes, fish from the river.



PLANTATION WORK

The workers get up at 4am. They have an early breakfast as they may need to walk for an hour to the area they work in. Palm oil is extracted from the pulp of the fruit of the palm tree. The trees are 10 metres high. The men get the fruit down while the women chop the grass and prune the trees. African palm oil as well as being used as cooking oil, forms the basis of many soap products in your home.



LIVING CONDITIONS

Home is a tent made from wood and plastic. Beds are made from palm leaves. At night the tents get so warm that some of the community describe them as ovens.



SCHOOL

Access to education is poor. On average children receive three years of primary school education.



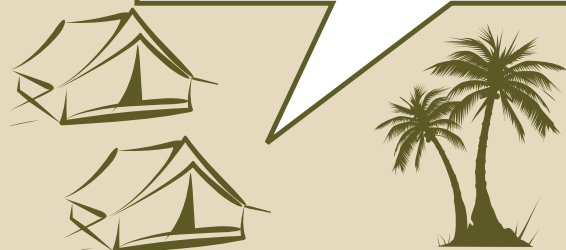
SECURITY

The entrance to La Confianza is guarded at all times. Each year there have been several attacks on the community by the landowner. The people have fled to the river during these attacks. Several people have been killed and community property destroyed.



ACCESS TO WATER

A small amount of drinking water is piped into the community and rationed among the families. They bathe and wash their clothes in the nearby polluted river.



GO ONLINE TO WATCH NAHELI AND HENRY TELL THEIR STORY!



Trócaire
has created
video footage
suitable for
interactive
whiteboards!

Case studies
are available on
worksheets
2 and 3.



ACTIVITY PAPER CAROUSEL

Ask the students to read the stories on Worksheets 2 and 3 or watch them online.

Following a class discussion, why not try the following;

- Split the class into four groups.
- Give each group a piece of paper with one of the following questions at the top:
 - (1) In what ways are the lives of Naheli and Henry similar to your own?
 - (2) In what ways are the lives of Naheli and Henry different to your own?
 - (3) In what ways are Naheli and Henry denied their human rights?
 - (4) In what ways can we learn from and be inspired by life in the community of 'La Confianza'?

Give each group five minutes to write down their idea on a sheet. Then move the pieces of paper to another group. Give each group another five minutes to read the ideas already on the sheet, ticking the ones they agree with. Then ask them to add their own ideas. Continue the carousel by moving the sheets round so that every group has seen each question and has added their ideas. Finally, pass the sheets back to their original groups and feedback or display the lists.

Students can learn about what life is like for a teenager living in 'La Confianza' by reading two case studies that describe the experiences of Naheli and Henry in Honduras. Alternatively, students can view video footage of both the teenagers. To access this material log on to www.trocaire.org/education and go to the resource section. Here you can download the clips for use on your interactive classroom whiteboard.

HOMEWORK ACTIVITY

Get students to write a response to one of the blogs explaining how their lives differ or are similar. How would they feel if their life or community was threatened? They could offer words of support to Naheli and Henry as they struggle to reclaim the land that was unfairly taken from their community. Link this activity to the Message in a Bottle activity on page seven.

TRÓCAIRE'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Have you ever wondered if the money you drop into the Trócaire Lenten box here in Ireland really makes a difference? Listed below are just some of the ways Trócaire is working on your behalf to help support those living in need in Honduras.



MAKING DECISIONS

An important part of our work in Honduras is supporting organisations in their efforts to influence government policies in favour of the poor. For example, our partner 'Popal Nah Tun' ('place where people meet and share') is helping to organise parents and committees in schools to demand better standards of education.



FOOD AND LAND

Trócaire has been helping Hondurans to get food and money for themselves and their families by supporting them in gaining access to land. We help train farmers to promote their produce and extend the range of their crops.



NATURAL DISASTERS

Hurricane Mitch left more than 5000 dead and over 1.5 million without homes. Trócaire helped people to build houses and to start growing crops again. We work to prevent disasters as well as responding to them. We have helped Hondurans to protect their environment by using sustainable farming techniques.



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Trócaire provides support for women's organisations to increase awareness of women's rights. These organisations put pressure on the government to make new laws to protect the rights of women.



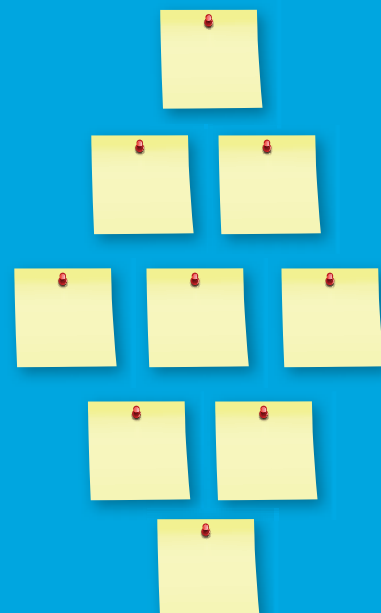
SUPPORTING BUSINESS

Credit unions and training are also provided to help poor people to set up their own businesses. This helps to create income and jobs in rural areas.

ACTIVITY LET'S TACKLE POVERTY

- How do you think Trócaire should tackle poverty and injustice?
- Write each idea on a post-it note and ask each group to arrange their nine ideas in a diamond shape with their highest priority at the top, two in second place, three in third place, two in fourth place and the lowest priority at the bottom. They need to get a consensus as a group and can move the ideas around until they reach an order with which they agree.

IDEAS: improving healthcare, influencing governments to create just laws, improving education, providing emergency aid, helping farmers to improve crops, helping communities defend their rights, improving access to safe drinking water, providing loans for small businesses, informing the Irish public.



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

**BE A
CAMPAIGNER FOR
LA CONFIANZA!**
Go online and join
our campaign action at
www.trocaire.org/takeaction

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF CHANGE!



Since it was founded in 1973, Trócaire has tackled the causes as well as the effects of world poverty. One of Trócaire's key aims is to make the Irish public aware of these injustices and remind governments of their clear responsibilities and commitments to support the poor and vulnerable. Trócaire works to encourage people globally to take action to change *policies* or *practices* which deny people their basic human rights. We believe that actions and words are powerful tools in the creation of a just and peaceful world.



CAMPAIGNER'S PERSPECTIVE

"Campaigning has always been something I've been interested in. It's about trying to address the lack of justice in the world. Campaigning can make a real difference to people's lives around the world and I get huge satisfaction knowing that the time and effort I put in is helping people overcome the difficulties that have been placed in front of them."

NAME: David Doyle

AGE: 20

LOCATION: Dublin

OCCUPATION: Student of English Literature, World Religions & Theology



**TRÓCAIRE'S
WORK IS ABOUT
CHANGE.
A CHANGE OF
HEART.
RIGHTING
WRONGS.
A CHANGE FOR
THE BETTER.**

HOMework ACTIVITY TAKE ACTION! JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Students can complete this activity in two ways. For those who do not have internet access they can use the campaign material, 'Message in a Bottle' included within this resource folder. Alternatively we would encourage as many students as possible to go to the Trócaire page on Facebook, click on the tab on the top of page called 'Students' and view the range of media information we have made available.

Having studied the plight of the community of 'La Confianza' and the Trócaire Facebook Page get the students to complete Worksheet 4.

facebook.



A LIVING FAITH

Each one of us is called to be Christ in the world and through our actions we can help make the kingdom of God a reality.

"CHRIST HAS NO BODY NOW, BUT YOURS. NO HANDS, NO FEET ON EARTH, BUT YOURS. YOURS ARE THE EYES THROUGH WHICH HE LOOKS WITH COMPASSION ON THIS WORLD."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta



ACTIVITY SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Jesus spoke often about the "kingdom of God." The gospels include many references to the kingdom of God. Consider these few, read them and reflect on what they say about the kingdom of God.

Mark 4:30-32 – The Parable of the Mustard Seed

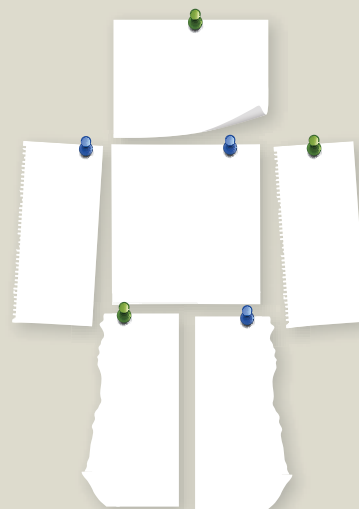
Mark 12:28-34 – The Greatest Commandment

Luke 17:20-22 – The Coming of the Kingdom of God

Matthew 5:1-12 – The Beatitudes

CREATE A PRAYER SPACE MANY PARTS BUT ONE BODY

Invite students to reflect on what they could do to help others in need, especially the poor living in Honduras. Each student should create a picture/mural to represent this. On the wall of the classroom create a person made up of all the images the students have created. During class prayertime students could look at the image quietly and make a promise to take at least one action. They could put the promise in an envelope and be given it at the end of term.



Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Working for a Just World

THE STORY OF LA CONFIANZA

The story of La Confianza is presented below in eight boxes. The rocky road that the community has travelled means that they are mixed up. Read through them carefully, then cut them out and arrange the story in the correct order (answers to this activity can be found on page three of the teacher magazine).



1

The community of 'La Confianza' could no longer export oil. Farming experts advised them to grow oranges and limes. However it takes four years for the oranges to grow and produce any money.

In the 1990s the rural community at 'La Confianza' produced oil from the African Palm crops. They exported it mainly to Mexico. Palm oil is extracted from the pulp of the fruit of the oil palm tree. It is widely used as cooking oil, an industrial lubricant for machinery and forms the basis of many soap products.

2

3

The community had no way to get the oil to the port so they lost their business exporting the oil to Mexico. They started to experience money difficulties.

When they couldn't pay back the loans the bank took their land. They sold it to a wealthy landowner for only 1 dollar a hectare.

4

A wealthy landowner offered to buy the land. He tried to persuade the community that this would be a wise decision. Only 5% of the community agreed to sell.

5

Today the descendents of the original farmers from 'La Confianza' have come together to live as a community on the plantation. They want to reclaim the land that was unfairly taken from them.

6

In order to export the oil to Mexico the community had to hire trucks to transport the oil from the processing plant to the port. The landowner threatened to stop doing business with the trucking company if they continued to transport the oil.

7

The community turned to the banks for a loan but they were given only six months to pay the money back. They had no source of income so this was impossible.

8



Henry Perez Portales, Honduras

Posts >>

Henry Perez Portales Can it really be only ten months since I moved here to 'La Confianza' with my family? The warm welcome we received from the community made up for the poor living conditions we have to put up with. We arrived early that December morning with little more than a small cardboard box containing the families' possessions and the clothes on our back. The community gave us some money to buy plastic and my older brother Samuel and I set about making a house, using branches of wood as a frame. Samuel suggested we use palm leaves to make beds for the family and they were all pleased with the end result. The house is basic and it can feel like you are sleeping in an oven at night but it is dry and is the place we call home at present.

Henry Perez Portales Six days a week I get up at 4am and grab some beans and tortillas for breakfast before walking an hour to the plantation. Working conditions here on the plantation are difficult but I am no stranger to hard work. My earliest childhood memory is when I was taken out of school by my parents to work at a factory. I was given a long metal spike and was expected to raise heavy palm fruit over my shoulders in order to smash it off the ground to break it up. It was back breaking work and we received only 50 cents a day for our efforts. Back in those days we had very little money and my mum would buy food on a daily basis from one of the small shops in the town. My parents moved here so that one day we can hopefully own a small plot of land ourselves and we can begin to feed ourselves.

Profile:

Name:

Henry Perez Portales

Age:

19

Family:

Lives in La Confianza with mum Joaquina and dad Pedro, older brother Samuel (21) and younger brother and sisters Mayra (11), Giselda (8) and Erilin (5).

Likes:

Building and making things.

Dislikes:

Getting up at 4am.

Hopes:

For the family to own a plot of land.

Photo Album:



Mum and Dad.



My sister Giselda standing outside our house.





Naheli Damari Gutierrez Perez, Honduras

Posts >>

Naheli Damari Gutierrez Perez I woke up this morning and felt like I hadn't slept at all. I don't think I will ever get used to sleeping on palm leaves and under a blue nylon roof instead of a house. As time passes I almost forget what our old life used to be like, in our hometown of Cabrera. Both of my parents had good jobs and I was excited about entering my first year of secondary school. However, I don't regret joining my parents here in the camp for a minute. I'm not saying it's easy, especially since both of my parents have lost their jobs due to their involvement in the MUCA land movement. MUCA is a cooperative of 5 communities, one of which is La Confianza. These communities are trying to reclaim 11,000 hectares of land and as a result face violent attacks from the wealthy landowner. Several members of MUCA have been murdered over the past few years in their struggle to win back the land that is rightfully theirs. We face daily intimidation and money is difficult to come by. We cannot build strong houses because they are often attacked and burnt down by the landowner's security. Yet I am really proud of both my parents, especially my mum who is one of the few female camp leaders. Just recently my dad has been elected President of the camp.

Naheli Damari Gutierrez Perez Living here consists of either long hot days working on the African Palm plantations or even longer hotter days working in one of the many camp kitchens. If I had a choice I would gladly work on the plantations, the work is physical and your muscles ache but I get to finish earlier and catch up with my friends in the afternoon. I hate working in the kitchens because it feels like you are working in an oven and the day seems to go on forever. My sister Diana helps me get through it all and because we work together we are closer than ever.

Profile:

Name:

Naheli Damari Guitierrez Perez

Age:

15

Family:

Mum Maria and dad Rigoberto, older sister Diana (17) and younger brother Dani (11).

Likes:

Chatting with friends, spending time with my sister Diana.

Dislikes:

Sleeping on palm leaves, being on kitchen duty.

Nickname:

'Little Warrior' – called this because I have a strong sense of justice.

Hopes:

To become a teacher one day and teach other children who have also been forced from their homes.

Photo Album:



My brother Dani, with my mum Maria.



My sister Diana and I chat to Trocaire workers about life in the camp.





A FACEBOOK FACT FINDING MISSION!



Go to www.facebook.com/trocaireireland and click on the Tab 'Students' to find answers to the following;

⇒ **3 THINGS I FOUND OUT ABOUT TRÓCAIRE**

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

⇒ **WHAT KIND OF ACTIONS ARE TRÓCAIRE ASKING PEOPLE TO TAKE?**

⇒ **HOW DO YOU THINK THESE ACTIONS CAN HELP?**

⇒ **WHAT ELSE CAN YOU FIND OUT ABOUT LA CONFIANZA?**

DID YOU SAY YOU 'LIKED' TRÓCAIRE'S FACEBOOK PAGE?
If you liked Trócaire's facebook page then why not click on the 'Like' icon on the page!

