



Juvenile Communication Networks for the  
Care of Our Common Home

Claretian Missionaries

“Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary”

Solidarity and Mission Center in

Guatemala

PROCLADEGUA FOUNDATION

# "Juvenile Communication Networks for the Care of Our Common Home"

The encyclical "Fratelli Tutti" provides an impulse to work together, all "people of goodwill," to improve this world, in line with the objectives of "Laudato Si'," which primarily states that "caring for the planet combats poverty."

The Claretian action, with the conviction that it is necessary to sensitize and raise awareness among the population about the defense of their ancestral territories, as well as to empower communities in their constitutional rights and the application of basic laws for their own community development, shares the principles of the encyclical "Laudato Si'" to put them into practice and bring ecological conversion to communities, especially those most affected by adverse situations in caring for our Common Home.

Our actions have brought together organized community groups with faith and social commitment for training and organization processes, promoting equitable participation between women and men in caring for and defending our Common Home. The active involvement of young people from different communities is significant.

This project aims to fulfill the seven objectives that Pope Francis has outlined in "Laudato Si'" and that have been embraced by the Claretian Missionaries in their latest General Chapter, "Dear Congregation."

<b>1. Response to the Cry of the Earth</b>	
We have never mistreated and harmed our common home as in the last two centuries. However, we are called to be instruments of God the Father so that our planet becomes what He dreamed of when He created it and responds to His project of peace, beauty, and fullness (LS, 53).	<b>We are invited to use clean and renewable energy, reduce the use of fossil fuels, protect and promote biodiversity, and ensure access to clean water.</b>
<b>2. Response to the Cry of the Poor</b>	
Considering that human beings are also creatures of this world, with the right to live and be happy, and with a special dignity, we cannot ignore the effects of environmental degradation, the current development model, and the throwaway culture on people's lives (LS, 43).	<b>This calls us to defend human life from conception to death and all forms of life on earth, with special attention to vulnerable groups, such as indigenous communities, migrants, and children at risk of slavery.</b>

<b>3. An Ecological Economy</b>	
Politics should not be subservient to the economy, and the economy should not be subjected to the dictates and the efficiency paradigm of technocracy. Today, for the common good, we urgently need politics and the economy to be decisively at the service of life, especially human life (LS, 189).	<b>This includes promoting sustainable production, fair trade, ethical consumption, and ethical investments.</b>
<b>4. Adoption of Simple Lifestyles</b>	
It is always possible to rediscover the capacity to go beyond oneself towards others. Without this capacity, we do not recognize the value of other creatures, we are not interested in caring for something for others, and we lack the ability to set limits to avoid suffering or the deterioration of what surrounds us (LS, 208).	<b>This calls for sobriety in the use of resources and energy, avoiding disposable plastics, and using public transportation.</b>
<b>5. Ecological Education</b>	
Education will be ineffective and its efforts will be sterile if it does not also seek to spread a new paradigm about the human being, life, society, and the relationship with nature. Otherwise, the consumerist paradigm transmitted by the media and the efficient gears of the market will continue to advance (LS, 215)	<b>This involves redesigning educational programs that embrace integral ecology with concrete actions and promoting ecological vocation in the educational and ecclesial spheres.</b>
<b>6. Ecological Spirituality</b>	
We are talking about an attitude of the heart, which lives everything with serene attention, fully present before someone without thinking about what comes next, and fully embracing each moment as a divine gift that must be lived to the fullest (LS, 226).	<b>This calls for recovering the religious vision of creation, stimulating contact with nature with a spirit of wonder, praise, joy, and gratitude, promoting liturgical celebrations centered on creation, and developing ecological approaches to catechesis, prayer, retreats, and formation.</b>
<b>7. Communit Effort and Active Participation</b>	
Participation requires that everyone be adequately informed of the various aspects, risks, and possibilities, and it is not limited to the initial decision of a project but also involves constant follow-up and monitoring actions (LS, 183).	<b>This calls for promoting campaigns of popular actions, encouraging rootedness in the territory and local ecosystems.</b>

Since 2022, the project "Guardianas y Guardianes de la Casa Común" (Guardians of Our Common Home) was established, with the participation of 11 communities from different parts of the country, all of whom have acquired knowledge about "Laudato Si'." The project emphasizes the importance of ecological conversion, the self-determination of peoples, and environmental rights, aiming to raise awareness, organize, and integrate relationships among the groups.

The goal is to ensure that these communities are self-formed, promoting the

personal, emotional, and spiritual growth of their members. They seek to instill values such as respect, solidarity, and the dignity of all human life, making them aware of the importance of valuing themselves and others, leading them to be more committed to caring for our Common Home.

Within these groups, the formation of networks with the participation of young communicators has gained relevance. As part of their training, practices have been introduced to create press releases, digital social media content, and videos, all focused on caring for our Common Home.

For the year 2023, the challenges are even greater. This interaction allows each community to identify its own needs and assess the effects of natural and supernatural events that occur in the environment, leading to the establishment of preventive mechanisms to protect biodiversity in the regions. All this information is shared among the different groups, and the importance of this organization lies in guiding the communities under the same principles, allowing them to consult with each other and exchange work mechanisms, expanding their efforts towards proposing possible solutions to the various problems inherent in each locality.

Testimonies from Alex García: "I am a member of the Communicators of Guardianas y Guardianes de la Casa Común, representing Santa Rosa, Guatemala. Being part of this network is very important to us as it helps us find possible solutions to the different problems we face in our communities. We also learn how to act and respond to different situations. It helps us realize the true reality in our communities, enabling us to see that there are companies that don't want us to see the reality clearly. But through Guardianas y Guardianes, we learn how to differentiate when changes benefit us and when they don't, and this empowers us to make decisions and take action."

Deify Judith González Monroy:

"I belong to the parish of San Francisco de Asís in Chiquimula, El Pato village. As a result of being part of the group formed by the Church and other organizations, I have joined the Guardianas y Guardianes de la Casa Común (Guardians of Our Common Home).

Being part of this group has allowed us to travel to the city, the capital, where we

receive informative workshops. It has also given us the opportunity to meet people from other communities and realize that we are not alone, as the issues we face are similar in different regions.

In these workshops, we have been educated about the care we must have for our Mother Earth, the protection of our environment, and our territories, based on the principle of peace.

Personally, it has helped me a lot because it has expanded my knowledge. Now, I can say that I have knowledge about many things that I was unaware of before. I am grateful to God and to the group of Guardianas y Guardianes for this knowledge, which will benefit us throughout our lives and will help us both socially and personally, as we spread the message to our communities.

I am motivated to continue participating."

"I am Leonardo Gómez Raimundo, from the municipality of San Carlos Alzatate in the department of Jalapa, Guatemala.

I am a member of the group of communicators of Guardianas y Guardianes de la Casa Común (Guardians of Our Common Home). Being part of this group and participating in it has benefited me greatly. In each meeting I have attended, I have gained valuable teachings and, above all, I have been able to learn more about the reality we live in as a country.

It has also helped me to investigate and understand the realities and problems we face in our municipality. The best part is that based on the exercises and knowledge acquired in the meetings, I have had the opportunity not only to understand the problems of my municipality but also to seek possible solutions right here in our territory, where we are identified as the Xinca people.

Currently, we are at risk of having extractive companies enter our municipality, as a former mayor unfortunately accepted mining royalties during his term, leaving us compromised. However, we have been fighting hard to prevent this from happening. A municipal consultation was conducted at the request of the residents, and 98.81% of the population voted against mining in our municipality. We have been actively fighting, and we have also taken actions such as tree planting. We organized a forum in which mayoral candidates committed to not accepting any mining royalties and to contributing to the care of our Common Home."

Edin Leonel Santiago López: "I am from the municipality of Monjas in the department

of Jalapa.

The topics covered in the workshops of Guardianas y Guardianes de la Casa Común have been very beneficial to me. I am part of the Media Communication group, and as bearers of this information to our communities, it has been of great importance, especially during this electoral year when the topics discussed are vital.

We play a significant role in reaching out to others and encouraging them to cast an informed and different vote. Personally, it has served me a lot and has been very beneficial as well. We have received training to identify the various issues we are facing in our communities, and we are committed to seeking possible solutions to care for our Common Home. These are the reasons that motivate me to continue being part of this important group.

### *The Strategic Projection of the Network of Communicators*

The Network of young communicators represents a sustainable and viable organizational strategy that will allow the visibility of community needs and interests to be projected at the national and international levels.

This organization, created by young communicators, aims to:

- Empower the organization of groups of Guardians of Our Common Home, linked to faith communities, ensuring the articulated sustainability of the communities.
- Consolidate the network of alternative communicators, ensuring the effective participation of correspondents in the spaces where the Guardians interact.
- Pursue an organized, secure, and compelling course of action, aimed at seeking solutions, dialogues, alliances with entities aligned with the cause, and existing organized groups. This is done to develop and plan strategies for adaptation, prevention, adjustment, repair, and/or correction, as the case may be.
- Strengthen the community structure for an organized movement of communities with a concrete action plan.
- Publicize the actions of representatives from social organizations, indigenous and peasant communities who denounce, inform, care, negotiate, and defend against territorial conflicts and threats posed by extractive activities.

NOTE: The video presents the main Project with the participation of young people throughout the training and implementation process in their communities, directly supported by the PROCADEGUA Foundation and its cooperants.

