

The Garífuna Emergency Committee of Honduras
With the support of Groots International and AJWS present

**Community Action in Housing
Reconstruction after Disasters**

- 1) **Form construction committees** and other work groups, i.e., for fund raising, community education, clearing the land, advocacy, etc.



With the following **characteristics:**
Transparent processes,
People committed to the struggle,
Recognizing it is a long term process,
Collaborative with other organizations,
Majority women, and including all, i.e. youth.

“We all came together in one mass”

- 2) Seek out **safe sites**, including consulting with the elderly who know the landscape and dangers over the years... Work to get a secure land title for the community.



- 3) **Select ‘beneficiaries’ through open, transparent processes**

- Make and carry out surveys
- Make house to house visits
- Formulate the list of neediest in open meetings
- Allocate support on the basis of
 - 1.the loss suffered
 - 2.for a house – if they still live in a high risk area
 - 3.need, and lack of other resources

- 4) Ensure there is **community participation in the design of the house**:
- Ensure the design is **safe**: you can seek out other grassroots womens' expertise, i.e. hurricane resistant roofs from Jamaica, and earthquake resistant materials from Peru.
 - Don't allow donors to use inadequate materials (i.e. not water resistant).
IMPROVE housing, to ensure a safe, adequate housing with dignity.
 - Use **culturally relevant designs** – consult with the women
 - I.e. a seperate kitchen with cooler thatch roof and ecological stove
 - Community centers for yuca mills or artisan centers
 - Use local materials and labor



- 5) **Seek support** to get housing, through government, international agencies, NGO's, people who have emigrated from the community. And seek support for food to serve to the people as they work to build their houses.
- Insist the the donor **consult with the community** about each step, with direct communication (not just through govt)
 - Look for possible **alliances** with local to international authorities, businesses, relatives, press, activists, etc.



- 6) Lobby and advocate to pressure the government, from local to global levels.
- Use whatever is the appropriate method: letters, meetings, radio, community video, protests, articles, etc. Seek out partners / allies.
 - Don't participate in favoritism by political parties.

7) Work with the following **principles**:

- Requirements that **all contribute** in some way, to avoid dependency.
- But be sure to **include the poorest**: i.e. if donors ask for financial contribution, promote allowing work instead of monetary payment.
- To implement a **democratic process**, you can have everyone work til all houses are done, then at the end, assign houses through a blind draw among all who worked.



8) Emphasize the **empowerment of women**:

- Women and men should be included in all aspects of the project, including women in “**non-traditional**” roles – i.e. building.
- Insist that the donor cover **child care**, so that women can work – it could be the contribution of some participants / beneficiaries in place of working in construction.

- 9) Form community groups to **monitor** – socially, fiscally, etc -- all the processes and construction
- 10) Maintain unity, good communication, and constant consciousness-raising within the community, confronting obstacles, deceit, abuses and neglect. You may see, as we did i.e.,
 - the government may not help in moving the town to safer ground.
 - Corruption, favoritism and theft by government or private parties.
 - NGO's and churches who charge for houses for which they obtained donated money.



Wabaruagon – Forward together, in our language, Garifuna!