

Fighting poverty in Honduras

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By María Josefina Arce

More than 73% of the population of Honduras is immersed in misery and 53% lives in extreme poverty, figures that President Xiomara Castro is determined to reduce, because, as she stated, it is not possible for a country with so much inequality to exist.

Twelve years of neoliberal policies, implemented after the June 2009 coup d'état against then President Manuel Zelaya, put an end to social programs, to the attention to essential areas such as education and job creation, which led the Central American nation to a difficult situation, also marked by high corruption.

According to studies, labor informality and the lack of quality and well-paid jobs are among the factors contributing to the increase in poverty rates.

In the last decade Honduras has been the country in Central America with the highest percentage of informal employment, which translates into minimal social security for these citizens and the impossibility of accessing loans and savings instruments.

The International Labor Organization estimates that people working informally are between two and five times more likely to be in poverty.

This situation is aggravated by the COVID 19 pandemic, the world economic crisis, the effects of hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 and the lack of commitment of the government of former President Juan Orlando Hernández, who did not respond to the needs of the population.

Therefore, among the priorities of the new Honduran executive, headed by Castro, is to improve the living conditions of Honduran families, through a comprehensive program with six work axes, called Red Solidaria (Solidarity Network).

This initiative, which resumes the one implemented during the Zelaya administration, will reach two thousand seven communities in Honduras, where housing will be improved and education will be guaranteed, an area totally abandoned for more than a decade, which prevents the training of young people and their possibility of obtaining better paid jobs.

Pregnant women and malnutrition in the child population will also be taken care of, of which two out of ten children suffer from this scourge that threatens their life and later physical and intellectual development.

The challenge for Xiomara Castro's government is undoubtedly great, but great is also her commitment to the people of Honduras and her determination to provide better living conditions for her compatriots.

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