

Fundación Cepsa Continues to Join Efforts with the Red Cross in Favor of the Victims of the Eruption in La Palma/Fundación Cepsa continues to work with the Red Cross on Behalf of those Affected by the Eruption in La Palma

- **The creation of social eco-orchards joins the joint actions carried out since the beginning of the volcanic phenomenon.**
- **The aim is to improve the physical, mental and emotional health of the different groups affected.**

Fundación Cepsa maintains its commitment to the victims of the volcanic eruption in La Palma, collaborating once again with the Spanish Red Cross, this time in a project focused on the creation of social eco-orchards, which will allow them to regain contact with the land and the natural environment, thus improving their physical and mental health, in addition to betting on knowledge and environmental protection.

This social eco-orchards project promoted by the Red Cross, whose first space has seen the light in the municipality of El Paso, is aimed at the different priority groups with which the organization has been working since the volcanic eruption occurred in late 2021, i.e., children, youth, women at risk of exclusion and the elderly, and plans to involve fifty people throughout this year.

For its development, the land will be compartmentalized into plots, with easy access, tools room and water availability, where users can practice agriculture as a way of occupying their free time, enhancing their personal and social development, as well as strengthening their emotional well-being. All this with the dynamization, accompaniment and support of Red Cross staff, as well as the organization's volunteer network, which will promote the exchange of experiences, mutual support and community development.

In light of the fact that Los Llanos de Aridane, El Paso, and Tazacorte are primarily agricultural, these social organic orchards serve as an effective tool for working on a number of aspects, including insertion, training for employment, good eating habits, physical activity, healthy leisure, connection with nature, the recovery of rural habits and customs, and self-consumption, among others.

Along with cultivating their plots and harvesting them, participants will receive training and advice on cultivation, participate in lectures on healthy habits, and engage in collaborative workshops.

In the opinion of Belén Machado, the Director of Fundación Cepsa in the Canary Islands, gardening is an extremely healthy activity, since it is done outdoors in natural surroundings, and it reduces the risk of mental illness, increases one's sense of well-being and self-esteem, and fosters social ties among participants." "Aside from being

educational and playful spaces, they will also provide a space for those who were forced to leave the agricultural environment after losing their land to reconnect with nature. We also consider the coexistence generated by working the land in a collaborative way to be very positive," she says.

For its part, the Santa Cruz de Tenerife provincial coordinator of the Red Cross, Rubén González, emphasizes that "corporate solidarity is a crucial aspect, as is the fact that it is not limited to the initial emergencies, but goes beyond that, as long as there is still a need, as is the case with the commitment of Fundación Cepsa to maintain its aid to the victims of the volcano in La Palma."

According to the head of the Red Cross, "This new initiative based on social eco-orchards is a resource that complements other measures we have been adopting since the beginning of the crisis, as part of an integrated effort for the full recovery and resilience building of those affected." He points out that "after signing a collaboration agreement with Fundación Cepsa, which will allow financing this project throughout 2023, and once the initial preparations have been made, such as arranging the use of spaces for horticultural activity with local public administrations and the acquisition of tools and materials, the first orchard has already been put into operation in El Paso."

This action corroborates the continuity of Fundación Cepsa's support to the population of La Palma affected by the volcanic eruption, after having collaborated with the Red Cross since the beginning of the situation at the end of 2021, helping to alleviate basic needs through cards for the purchase of food, at first, and then through a psychosocial support service for the victims to improve their mental state and emotional wellbeing.

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Fundación Cepsa
comunicacion.canarias@cepsa.com
Tel.: 922 60 27 07
www.fundacioncepsa.com