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Case Study Information Sheet

Region: Latin America and the Caribbean

Country: Honduras

Title: Copan: Collaboration for Identity, Equity and Sustainability

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Other Information: (i) Original language: English; (iii) Partner: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Abstract: This case study details the process of resolving a conflict over land tenure rights of the Chortis (indigenous farmers) in the Copan area of Honduras. In 1991, the Honduran government ratified ILO Convention 169, aimed at protecting and benefiting the indigenous communities and to improve their access to land, health care, etc. Following this, the government signed an agreement with CONICHH (the national Chorti organization) offering 2000 ha of land in Copan to the Chortis, out of which 350 ha were given in 1997 to 5 Chorti communities. This new organization involved NGOs, like Caritas and Colabora, to provide technical and organizational recommendations about land use management. A series of workshops were conducted to understand the viewpoint and needs of the different stakeholders involved in the conflict. However, failure of the new government to abide by, and fulfill the promises of, the previous government has been a potential source of a new violent conflict within the communities. Caritas, by breaking up the larger conflict into many small issues and resolving them one at a time, has been able to make impressive headway in the existing volatile situation. The paper elaborates on the role of the collaborative efforts of CONICHH, Caritas and Colabora in strengthening the capacity of local people, so as to provide the political will and ability required to solve conflicts and arrive at a consensus on several issues of disagreement. Finally, the paper asserts the importance of international attention, external material and moral support in assuring a 'level playing field' for the different stakeholders involved.

Themes (prioritized): 4, 2, 1

Subsistence Practice: Agriculture

Resource Types & Ecosystems (prioritized): Land, Domestic animals, Forest

Key Terms: Civil society, Community consultation, Conflict management, Land use management, Multi-ethnicity, Regional cooperation, Traditional knowledge, Traditional leadership, Training

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