

Indigenous Land Rights in Honduras

South-South Facility Development Outcome Story



Boosting shared prosperity through land titling

THE CHALLENGE:

Up until 2011, land rights of the Miskito people, a large indigenous community, were not protected in Honduras. This needed to be addressed as secure land rights matter deeply for social inclusion and are fundamental for stimulating investment and growth. Despite numerous efforts to reach consensus about the demarcation of indigenous territories, lack of trust had hindered an effective dialogue

among Honduran government officials and Miskito people.

Additionally, there were several government agencies with

competencies over land, which complicated harmonization and the introduction of new legal concepts, such as inter-communal land agreements. “We want to receive recognition for our land rights” said Norvin Goff Salinas, President of MASTA, the umbrella organization of Miskito federations.



AT-A-GLANCE

CHALLENGE

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SSF GRANT

\$141,500

KNOWLEDGE RECIPIENT

Honduras

KNOWLEDGE PROVIDERS

Nicaragua and Colombia

SDGS SUPPORTED



IMPACT

Experiences from Colombia and Nicaragua showed Honduras possible pathways for recognizing indigenous land rights. The knowledge exchange also helped build trust between Miskito people and Honduran government officials. As a result, a strategy for indigenous land demarcation and titling was agreed upon. As of today, the government of Honduras has provided titles to 24 indigenous territories, totaling 1.4 million hectares, equivalent to 12.5 percent of the national territory.

THE EXCHANGE:

To overcome the barriers that had prevented the Miskito people from obtaining land rights, the World Bank connected the Hondurans with their international peers. Experiences from Colombia and Nicaragua showed them that consensus can be reached on complex social issues. A carefully designed knowledge exchange was executed, which included a planning workshop, two study tours, three policy dialogues, action planning, expert visits, and a final workshop for validating plans at the local level. Roman Alvarez, National Coordinator of the second Land Administration Project reflects: “The South-South exchange was enormously helpful as it brought the position of the government and of the indigenous organizations closer together, because we participated together [...] [it] helped very much in establishing a clear path, in establishing clear procedures that were going to be followed in land titling”.

THE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME, SEVEN YEARS LATER:

The knowledge exchange was critical for advancing the recognition of historic land rights of Miskito indigenous communities in Honduras. It helped build trust between Miskito people and government officials and brought agencies responsible for recognizing indigenous land rights closer together. Colombia and Nicaragua have shown a pathway forward that was agreeable to all Honduran parties involved. As a result, a strategy for demarcating and titling of Miskito communal lands was agreed upon. As of 2018, the government provided titles to 24 indigenous territories, totaling 1.4 million hectares, equivalent to 12.5 percent of the national territory. The indigenous communities now have legally recognized land rights, including the management of their natural resources. Also, the government prepared a regional development plan for the territories, bearing in mind the culture and needs of the indigenous people. “I am proud that we received the first communal land title that the government of Honduras has delivered. Now we own this land” said Gilberto Maibet, President of the Territorial Council of Katinasta, and participant in the knowledge exchange.