

Why Participate?

A Study of Participation in Environmental
Groups and Water Committees
Organised by a Local NGO in Rural Honduras

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Abstract

In all developing countries there are many NGOs working on ‘development issues.’ Organisation of beneficiaries in groups and participation through groups is a common strategy to reach goals in development projects. On the basis of the work of Comité Central pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira (COCEPRADIL) and the fieldwork I conducted in Lempira with their help in the summer 2003, this study is intended to contribute to the knowledge of how participants in a local NGO perceive participation, what factors that contribute to the participation of women, and to find if there are any observable relations between the organisation of people and spin-off effects that are perceived as positive for those living in a rural area in Honduras.

The decision on whether to participate or not in organised activities is to a large extent based on incentives. On one hand, how this incentive is followed up – the degree to which the beneficiaries are organised, expressed through what is required of them – determines the degree to which the process of being organised lead to positive spin-off effects. The members express that the committees and groups give them new experiences, and new knowledge. Other positive effects were the involvement of women, dynamic meetings and the use of organising for problem solving in the communities. On the other hand, the lack of flexibility when it comes to the fulfilment of the eventual requirements makes it harder for vulnerable groups to become or stay member, unless they manage to mobilise relatives to work for them.

The focus on the positive effects of participation of people can distract the focus from this discussion on which institutions that are responsible for satisfying basic needs of people in rural Honduras. To reduce poverty, and to create more equal living conditions in the country, it is necessary to place the responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants. People are working very hard to get access to basic needs that people in rich countries take for granted that the public sector provides.

To achieve COCEPRADIL’s goal of comprehensive development, a structural change is necessary, so that basic service delivery in the country is not dependent on whether people are poor or wealthier, nor on which department they live in.

Declaration

This thesis is submitted for my MSc. Degree in Development Studies. I declare that the contents in the thesis are original, and that this work has not previously been submitted for any type of academic degree, nor to any other university than the Agricultural University of Norway. The use of material other than mine has been acknowledged to the authors.

Ås, June 2004

Gunnell E. G. Sandanger

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Gunnell E. G. Sandanger

Acronyms

ASONOG	Asociación de Organismos No-Gubernamentales de Honduras
CG	Consultative Group
COCEPRADIL	Comité Central Pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira
CODECO	Consejos de Desarrollo Comunitario
COHASA II	The Hondura-German Cooperation for Food Security
COHDEFOR	Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal
COPINH	Civic Council for Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras
COREPRADIL	Comité Regional Pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
FHIS	Fondo Hondureño de Inversion Social
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FMLN	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
GAD	Gender and Development
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HDR	Human Development Report
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WID	Women in Development

1 Introduction

Why do people in poor rural areas choose to be members of a local non-governmental development oriented organisation and participate in its activities? To what extent are projects started on rural people's initiatives and does the organisation of people to achieve specific objectives lead to positive spin-off effects¹?

This study aims at answering these questions on the basis of the work of Comité Central pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira (COCEPRADIL) and the fieldwork I conducted with their help in the summer 2003. COCEPRADIL is a Honduran private non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in the southern part of Lempira, a department in the south east of the country, bordering to El Salvador. In relation to the questions above the study investigates how dependency on external funding influences the work of local NGOs.

COCEPRADIL has had several projects; this study focuses on two of them: a Water and Sanitation project with water committees, and a project for Rehabilitation and Management of the National Park of Congolón (Panacon), with environmental groups. The organisation organises amongst others local village² based water committees and environmental groups.

The study is limited to NGOs within the development sector³. In all developing countries there are many NGOs working on 'development issues', also called Development NGOs or Non Governmental Development Organisations (NGDO); here the term NGO will be used. The definition of what an NGO is varies, this study will use a structural- operational definition described by Tvedt (1998): NGOs are formally constituted; they have a formal structure and are to some extent institutionalised. The government does not control them, although they can receive funding from the government. NGOs are self-governing, which means that they are equipped to control their own activities; they are non-profit distributing; they do not distribute profit from one year to owners or leaders but recycle them for organisational use. NGOs are to some extent voluntary, which means they have a voluntary component (Salamon and Anheier in Tvedt 1998:15). They receive donor funds through the aid channel and they can be national or international and based in the south or the north (Tvedt

¹ Positive spin-off effects is here defined on the basis of what respondents have described as positive outcomes of the work in the organisation, outcomes that are not part of the objectives of the project.

² The study will use the word community and village, both covering the same intended meaning. The word used by people in Lempira was 'comunidad'.

³ Tvedt (1998) uses the term aid channel

1998). Tvedt also adds a component that he calls the time factor, to explain that organisations “involved in aid are strongly influenced by rapidly changing political trends and funding patterns” (Tvedt 1998:16).

In *Striking a Balance* (1997:20), Fowler separates between organisations and institutions in the following way:

Where organisations themselves, or where principles or norms of people’s behaviour become a stable, accepted and collectively valued basis on which society works, we can talk of social institutions. However, not all organisations become institutions and not all institutions are made up of organisations (...).

This study divides between local and external NGOs according to their relation to local people. The division can be drawn on the basis of whom the organisation is accountable to⁴. If the organisation is accountable to the local people, i.e. it provides information and is answerable to beneficiaries, it is a local organisation and can be said to have downward accountability. If the organisation is answerable to and provides information to superior levels within the organisation or other organisations or institutions within the aid sector (Kaarhus and Rebelo 2003:2), it is an external organisation and can be said to have upward accountability. In the case of COCEPRADIL it can be seen as a local organisation. The division is not clear-cut; COCEPRADIL is dependent on funding from other organisations and institutions, and therefore is accountable to the donors as well, but the organisation is dependent on having support from the people in the area where it emerged in the 1980s and is working. In the projects studied here, the beneficiaries had to contribute economically to the organisation, so it has to some extent a self-sustainable basis. In addition all the employees in the organisation are Honduran; the last elected leader, teacher Blanca Peres grew up in the area. Catholic Relief Service (CRS), an organisation in Honduras cooperating closely with COCEPRADIL, gives technical and project support and advice, and is external with internal features: the organisation has its roots in the U.S. and the director in Honduras is from the U.S., the other employees, with the exception of a trainee, are Honduran, and know the local conditions well. They are ultimately accountable to the donors in the U.S. and are more dependent on them than on local beneficiaries.

⁴ The following definition is adapted from the definition of Accountability in *CSOs and SWAPs: The role of civil society organisations in the health sector in Mozambique* by Kaarhus and Rebelo (2003).

Latin America has a strong tradition for non- governmental organisations; peasants organisations have been active since the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s and 1990s the amount of NGO's increased, first with focus on human rights or aid more than on workers rights, later with focus on development (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Due to dictatorships in most Latin American Countries until the late 1980s and 1990's, the NGOs operated without governmental support or approval. The democratisation in Latin American countries, in Honduras a process that was not really completed until 1997, put the cooperation between the government and the NGOs on the agenda, after decades where cooperation was not possible (Bebbington and Thiele 1993).

Organisations dealing with development aid apply for funding, describing their objectives and how they will reach these objectives; they describe a project. Funding is then used within the framework of a project.

To achieve objectives in a project, it is a common belief among donors, planners, researchers and NGOs that those who are 'beneficiaries' in a project should participate. The meaning put into the term 'participation' varies. Participation can be divided into different levels, sometimes in ranked levels, where level one is a poor form of participation, and the last level is the ideal form of participation, like Pretty (1995) does in *Regenerating Agriculture*. It is also common to divide between participation as a means, and participation as an end (Ellis 2000).

One way of organising the participation of people at the grass-root level is, as COCEPRADIL does in the above-mentioned projects, to form groups within a certain organisational structure. The empirical focus of this study, based on my fieldwork in southern Lempira, is to find out how this way of working is perceived by the people getting organised.

1.1 Objectives of the study

Organisation of beneficiaries in groups and participation through groups is thus a common strategy to reach goals in development projects. This study is intended to contribute to the knowledge of how participants in a local NGO perceive participation, what factors that contribute to the participation of women, and to find if there are any observable relations between the organisation of people and spin-off effects that are perceived as positive for those living in a rural area in Honduras.

What do participants themselves think is important about participation and groups? And how does a local NGO that actually emerges from the area where it is working, relate to both the participants and the external agents, i.e. the donors.

This study might contribute to the knowledge about the role of national NGO's in Honduras. COCEPRADIL's characteristics as a local NGO that emerged in the area where it is working, with employees from Honduras only, makes it especially interesting to study in a developing country context. As a starting point for the fieldwork and study, the research questions that are presented in the following section were developed.

1.2 Research questions

- What are the incentives for people to participate in the water and sanitation project and environmental projects of Cocepradil?
- What is the process before new projects are started?
- What external factors influence on whether the organisation of people is successful or not, i.e. what is the role of economy and networks for the organisation and its work?
- What decides whether individuals are participating or not in the groups? Are some people excluded through mechanisms of the work of the organisation? Are the poorest in the targeted area included? Have any households in the targeted area chosen not to participate and why?
- How do people look upon participation in water committees and environmental groups? What are their incentives to do this work? Are all the committee and group members that are supposed to do this work actually doing it?
- Who are the users of the new tools that have been introduced through the project?
- What does the water committees mean when it comes to access to water and protection of the sources and the water quality?
- To what extent were women present on meetings and in the decision- making process?

The data that forms the basis for this study were collected during my fieldwork.

1.3 Organisation of the text

Chapter two gives an overview of the region's historical and economical background. The economic and political context COCEPRADIL is working in influences the activities of the

organisation on the local level, and are therefore important to understand the operations of the organisation. The presentation includes the economical and political context of Honduras, NGOs and the civil society, and Lempira. Then the history of COCEPRADIL is outlined and the projects that are essential in this study, the water and sanitation project and the project of Panacon, are presented.

In chapter three the methodology of the study, the sampling process and the methods used in the field are discussed and presented.

Chapter four gives a review of the literature in the field with focus on participation, gender and NGO's and civil society. It also presents the analytical framework for the analysis of the data.

Chapter five starts with an the presentation and comparison of projects with the use of a Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and then uses the analytical framework to analyse the data and present findings.

Finally chapter six presents main findings related to the questions presented in this chapter, and discusses the role of local NGOs in relation to the government and the work poor people do in marginalized areas in order to satisfy basic needs, compared to what people in the western European countries, have to do satisfy the same basic needs.

2 Background, Context and NGO activities

2.1 Central America & Honduras

Honduras is a republic in Central- America and has 6.3 million inhabitants. Central America also includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama (Britannica Student Encyclopedia 2004). As illustrated in figure 1 Honduras borders Guatemala and El Salvador, the former in the northwest, the latter in the southwest.

Figure 1: Map of Honduras



The population of Honduras is mostly mestizo, or people of mixed Spanish and Indian origin. The estimates over the number of indigenous people in Honduras vary. The Honduran Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper says:

According to a study by the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Honduras (CONPAH), in April 1999, there are nine ethnic groups in the country: Garifuna, Islanders (Blacks from the Bay Islands), Lenca, Miskito, Tolupan, Chortí, Pech, Tawahka and Nahoá. [These] groups together total approximately half a million people (...), equivalent to a little more than 8 % of the national population (Government of Honduras 2001).

The Lencas, that for the most live in the department of Lempira, La Paz and Intibucá, and the Garifuna, living along the Atlantic coast and at the Bay Islands are the largest indigenous groups in Honduras.

Political Economy

Around the year 1900, coffee production and banana plantations were established, and dominated the exports of all the Central American countries (Britannica Student Encyclopedia 2004). The countries were known as banana- and coffee republics and are also popularly called the “backyard” of the United States. This illustrates the dependency most of the Central American countries have had in relation to foreign countries and a few commodities. The presence of foreign companies has been massive; as early as in 1929 two fruit companies both from the United States (the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company) controlled all banana exports and most banana production in Central America. Generally, “the countries of Central America developed stronger links with the foreign nations providing markets for their export commodities, particularly the United States, than with their neighbours” (Encyclopædia Britannica 2004).

The disparities between the incomes of the poor and the relatively rich are typical for Central America (Encyclopædia Britannica 2004). Still there are important internal differences between the countries belonging to Central America, both historically and today. Honduras did not become an important exporter of coffee, and did not develop what we call a coffee oligarchy, as El Salvador and Guatemala did (Boussard 2003). The oligarchy was then smaller and poorer than in those countries, and the inequalities not as outstanding as in other Central American countries (Norsworthy and Barry 1993). But then, the lack of a economic elite did also mean that the country was more dominated by foreign fruit and mining companies (Norsworthy and Barry 1993).

In the 1980s the global economic crisis and a decrease in the per capita production affected the poor hardest (Encyclopædia Britannica 2004; Meyer 1999). The economies in Latin

America had grown rapidly from 1970 to 1980 and “this growth was financed by heavy borrowing from commercial banks” (Meyer 1999:18), but then the economic crisis affected Latin America. In 1982 Mexico declared that the country could not meet foreign debt obligations. The crisis led to lower commodity prices on exports and at the same time, because of economic policies of big economies as the United Kingdom and the U.S. the interest rates rose. That led to increased debt obligations. The economic crisis led to real wages falling, and prices on basic items rising (Meyer 1999).

The crisis did not weaken the influence from non-neighbouring countries and external institutions, on the contrary:

The important roles foreign institutions and overseas markets have played in steering Central American economies in the past has meant that the growing influence assumed by the government of the United States and the various international financial agencies (notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) over the direction of these nations’ policies in the aftermath of the 1980s crisis was more readily accommodated than perhaps elsewhere in Latin America (Encyclopædia Britannica 2004).

In other words, it was easier for these countries to adjust to imposed policies, compared to other Latin American countries (Encyclopædia Britannica 2004). This is, in my opinion, not necessarily as positive as put in the text, as it also means that it was more difficult for the Central American countries not to adjust, and it further underlines that limited autonomy is one of the characteristics of Central America.

The economic crisis starting in the 1980s made it difficult to pay back loans given by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 1999, the World Bank apparently marked out a shift in their policies and poverty reduction became a main goal:

At the Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF (...), it was agreed that nationally-owned participatory poverty reduction strategies should provide the basis for all World Bank and IMF concessional lending and for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This approach, building on principles of the Comprehensive Development Framework, will be reflected in the development of Poverty reduction Strategy papers (PRSPs) by country authorities (The World Bank Group 2003).

Today Costa Rica, Panama and Belize can be grouped in one better off group. In the Human Development Report of 2003, those three countries have better economies measured in Gross Domestic Product per capita, the people have higher life expectancy at birth, fewer adults are illiterate (% age 15 and above) and they have a higher combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio than El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua (UNDP 2003). Honduras is ranked as country number 115 out of 175 countries in the same human development index and is classified as one out of 86 countries that have 'medium human development' versus 55 countries in the category 'high human development', and 34 countries in the category 'low human development' (HDR, 2003). The adult literacy rate was approximately 76% in 2001 and the net primary enrolment ratio was 88% in 2000/2001 (HDR, 2003).

Honduras is part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Programme (HIPC), and developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy paper in 2001. Nicaragua is the other Central American country taking part in this programme.

Production and labour

Agriculture is the main employment sector in Honduras, and the agricultural labour force was 31% of the total labour force in 2001 (FAO 2003). Maize, beans, rice and sorghum are principal crops for national consumption in Honduras (TCOR, 1999 in Haugen 2001). Maize is the main annual crop cultivated on the land of the poor (Haugen, 2001), and is the major item for food consumption in the country (FAO 2003). The main export crops are coffee and bananas and to some extent oil of palm (FAO 2003). The income from these products fell a lot after the Hurricane Mitch that affected the country in 1998, because of destroyed harvests. Other major employment and export areas are the textile factories in the north of the country, near the major city, San Pedro Sula, with Asian and American owned factories. There are some 120 000 people employed in this sector (El Heraldo 2003). The government have given free zones to the foreign owned factories in exchange for the clothes being made in Honduras.

Political parties

Two parties have dominated Honduran politics from the beginning of the 20th century, the Liberal Party and the National Party. Both parties have had their splits and fractions. There are minority parties like the Christian Democrat Party of Honduras, but they have never become more than minorities. For the moment the National Party is having simple majority in

the Congress and has the President, Ricardo Maduro, beginning his presidency in January 2002.

Political background

Honduras had non-democratic rule more or less from 1932- 1981, with a period of civilian rule from 1957- 1963. The first military intervention into politics came in 1956 by a military junta led by General Rodriguez (Boussard 2003). The political situation in the country was unstable; Nationalists won the elections in 1954 more or less through a civilian coup. In spite of that the Communist party had become legal in 1954, people belonging to the Liberal party where in exile, accused of being communists. Then the military junta intervened and General Rodriguez said that constitutional rule would be reintroduced. Elections were held in 1957, and won by the Liberal party and president Morales. But: “before leaving office, the military assured institutional autonomy through new laws that stated that the president could not choose or remove the chief of the armed forces” (Boussard 2003:135). This meant that military power had been extended on the expense of civil authority and paved the way for military power. The “1956 coup thus resulted in a loss of civilian authority over the military” (Ruhl 1996 in Boussard 2003:135).

The period from 1981 – 1997 is termed the transition period (see e.g. Boussard 2003, N&B 1993). At the end of the 70s the work toward changes in the ruling of the country started. A Constituent Assembly was elected in 1980, and in 1981 elections for president were held and Roberto Suazo Córdova from the Liberal party was elected.

Common interests and agendas in security policies for Honduras and U.S. explain the paradox of increased repression during the transition period to democracy in the 1980s (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Central America was an arena of conflicts, and with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the FMLN in opposition in El Salvador, the U.S. needed a buffer against communism. They needed to cooperate with a regime in Central America with a constitutional and civilian rule and put pressure on the military rulers for a constitutional change. But the transition to civil and democratic rule, demonstrated through the elections in 1981, gave more power to the military as U.S. military aid increased during this transition period (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993). President Suazo Córdova shared view with the U.S. on the importance of anti-communism (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993). The U.S. sent John Negroponte as an ambassador and upgraded the importance of

Honduras as an ally. He cooperated closely with the chief of the armed forces from 1982, general Alvarez Martínez, who has been “described as a hard-line anti-communist who had been chief of the security forces” (Boussard 2003:162). A new constitution was drafted that came into effect in 1982. “The essential elements of military autonomy from civilian authority were maintained in the 1982 constitution” (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:40). Not until 1997 did the armed forces come under control of the civilian authorities. President Reina from the Liberal party that was elected in 1993 started to decrease the size of the military budget, replaced mandatory military service with voluntary services and transferred the police to civilian authority (Boussard 2003). Carlos Flores, also from the Liberal party, and elected in 1997, “reached an agreement with the chief of the armed forces, Hung Pacheco, on a constitutional reform, which placed the armed forces under civilian control for the first time since 1957” (Boussard 2003:171)⁵.

2. 2 NGO’s and civil society

Latin America was in the 1950s and 1960s characterised by visible inequalities between rich and poor, between oligarchies and peasants, of lack of land for poor peasants and of undemocratic regimes and by the emergence of peasants associations and labour organisations. Those characteristics are also to some extent accurate for Honduras. NGOs in Latin America have had an important role since the 1960’s. In the 1950’s farmer’s movements that claimed redistribution of land emerged and gained strength in Latin America (Bebbington and Thiele 1993). Paulo Freire from Brazil developed the pedagogic for the poor, and his thinking was an influential factor on the development of the NGOs in Latin America (Bebbington and Thiele 1993). The development of NGOs was also influenced by the Catholic Church’s commitment to the poor that was stated in the Second Vatican Council in 1965, and thereafter at the Congress of Medellín in 1968, that “provided the basis for what has become known as Liberation theology” (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:37). The Catholic Church involved itself in social concerns based on this theology, especially in the 60s. Nicaragua is an example of the church’s influence on the establishment of organised work: “The modern NGO story in Nicaragua starts with the establishment of Caritas-Nicaragua, (...) which began to operate in the mid- 1950s” (Tvedt 1998:66). The word of God, basis groups led by delegates of the word, laywomen or laymen, emerged across the whole continent in the 1970s, as well as in Honduras and Lempira. The poor’s perspective and interpretation of the Gospel became in some areas an incentive for change. But the liberation theology became

⁵ Some people in Honduras refer to the elections in 1997 as the year when the country became democratic.

unpopular in the Vatican, especially under John Paul 2. Fear of the church becoming too political or even influenced by communism lead to the church changing its involvement and pulling out of organisational work at the end of the 70s.

In Honduras, the development of the country saw a marked shift from the 1950's and onwards:

Prior to the 1950s, Honduran society was perceived as the least organized in Central America. This lack of social organization paralleled the country's historic lack of political, economic, and even geographical unity. Only after World War II did Honduras gel as a national state with a professional army, Central Bank, transportation network and diversified economy (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:83).

But in 1954 a major strike paved the way for the organisation of workers. It is called the banana strike, and started among workers that were working for United Fruit Company. The Honduran Labor Federation "associated with the Honduras Communist Party", had organised banana and mine workers since the 1920s, but they had been more or less operating undercover (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:83). The strike spread to other plantations and companies, and workers in other sectors also joined the strike (cf. Boussard 2003:133). The strike led to negotiations between the government and the strikers (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Boussard (2003) sees this as a consequence of president Galvés', elected in 1948, different attitude and leadership style from the former dictator Carías, while Norsworthy and Barry explain the negotiation as a consequence of American interests urging the government to negotiate, as the "U.S. labor hierarchy, working closely with the State Department, was concerned about the leading role of the Communist Party organizers in the strike" (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:84). The negotiation and following settlement between the strikers and the government was a breakthrough for popular organisation as it led to the legitimisation of Honduran trade unions, peasants associations and labour organisations (Boussard 2003; Norsworthy and Barry 1993).

Indigenous organisations have emerged in the 1990s (Boussard 2003). There is one active organisation working in Lempira and the neighbouring department Intibuca, called COPINH (Civic Council for Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras). COPINH was started

in 1993 to fight for the rights of the indigenous people, for their land, and for the protection of the environment and the culture of the Lenca (COPINH).

There are several other organisations working on indigenous peoples rights but the literature and information on this is somewhat unclear and disperse, maybe as a result of the organisations being small since they often represent only one or two of the indigenous groups, or that some of them have been short-lived.

Boussard (2003) divides the organisational life of Honduras in the period before and after the 80's: Before 1980 there was a dominance of peasants organisations in Honduras, and during the transition period defined as lasting until 1997, there was a boom of (private) development organisations. Norsworthy and Barry states that the number of NGOs in Honduras tripled between 1980 and 1990, and that this was due to the influence of U.S. foreign policy (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:119).

Why this boom in the number of private development organisations or NGOs? One reason can be the use of NGO's for political aims. Bebbington and Thiele (1993) write that after "the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua in 1979, NGO efforts in Central America, both national and international, expanded greatly" (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:182). And they were part of politics:

Activists on the Left, including many donor agencies from the western Europe and Canada saw support for the NGOs as an opportunity to create institutional structures, independent from and critical of national governments (...) [while the] Right, often associated with USAID, saw the NGOs as private mechanisms for carrying out development activities more efficiently than the public sector (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:182).

Their differences in development politics is most likely reflecting the differences in domestic welfare politics as well; the U.S. has a policy where the role of the public sector for the welfare of their inhabitants is limited compared to western European countries, where the state and the public sector is seen as much more responsible for social welfare. Boussard (2003) and Norsworthy and Barry (1993) explains part of the rise of NGOs in the 80s with the increased rise in human rights violations which caused the emergence of organisations working to protect human rights.

Reagan was elected in 1981, and one of the development policies he had was to strengthen “institutional development, which involved reducing the central power of the state and encouraging NGOs to step in” (Meyer 1999:32). Free market reforms, which were introduced in parallel with the increasing focus on NGOs, were part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes prescribed by the International Monetary Fund as a result of the economic crisis. The free market reforms:

... have dramatically changed the relationship in the public and private sectors in Latin America. The private sector and market forces have been unleashed to pursue economic growth, while the public sector has downsized and pursued macroeconomic stability. Other government functions have been passed back to the market or in some cases to NGOs (Meyer 1999:19).

Honduras was the hardest hit country of those affected by the hurricane Mitch in 1998. The rebuilding of the country has been important for the development of the Honduran NGOs and the civil society in the period after the hurricane. In 1999 the governments of Central America and the international donor community gathered in Stockholm for a Consultative Group (CG) meeting (Boussard 2003:1). The topic was rebuilding, and good governance; active participation of civil society and democracy were core issues in the rebuilding. (Boussard 2003:1)

According to Boussard, the period after Mitch was a period where civil society, and organisations, gained power, not because new organisations emerged, but because they formed *foros*- umbrella groups as e.g. Interforo, a network for democratisation, where COCEPRADIL is part (Boussard 2003). But the government, led by president Flores, and the civil society or organisations, did not agree on the changes. The organisations asked for structural changes, while the government did not want to include the suggestions from the *foros* in the decision making bodies and plans for reconstruction (Boussard 2003).

Even if the growth in the amount of organisations was not the most important factor for increased power to the civil society, it was a quickly changing and growing sector increasingly difficult to monitor. Both the number of employees in organisations and the number of associations grew. In 2003 a new office was created to control civil associations in Honduras. La Prensa, one of the three largest newspapers in Honduras, did in August 2003

print an article that they called the “NGO’s in image crisis”. The article claims that the government under the presidency of Maduro, is working on a new law for the NGO’s, associations, churches, water boards, ethnic organisation etc. This is, according to general secretary of The Secretary of Government who is interviewed, to do something with the lack of democracy within the organisations, and to check if the funds they receive are used as they were aimed to (Murillo 2003). According to La Tribuna, another newspaper that wrote about the new registration office, there are more than 5000 associations and organisations in Honduras. Guillén says that in this case all institutions that are not part of the government will be treated the same way; churches, foundations etc. The article in La Tribuna says that after Mitch “the civil associations increased in an exaggerated way due to the funding that came to the country, but today it is not known how many of them that still remain⁶” (La Tribuna 2003).

As one of the countries of Central America that is called a “banana republic” in the “backyard of the U.S.”, the dependency on the U.S. can be seen also in development aid. This dependency have consequences for local NGOs that are dependent on foreign aid.

The dependency on external institutions is part of the reality of NGOs in developing countries, as it is for COCEPRADIL. This makes them vulnerable to policy changes in both the donor community and to internal changes in foreign (donor) countries, especially to changes in the U.S., as they are major contributors to NGO’s in Honduras through USAID⁷, and in the case of COCEPRADIL through private funding to CRS.

Two examples of how this dependency influences COCEPRADIL can be mentioned: After the hurricane, foreign aid through amongst others CRS to Honduras increased, with direct consequences for the donor organisations. CRS could increase their number of Honduran employees in their main office in Tegucigalpa, and their work was directed towards the areas in the north and south of the country, San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, the areas where the damages of the hurricane were most severe. On the one hand as will be shown later, this delayed some of the water- projects that were planned in Lempira by COCEPRADIL at that time, but in general it led to an increased activity by development NGO’s in the country, and new networks were created as e.g. Interforo (Boussard 2003).

⁶ My translation from Spanish

⁷ U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The 11th of September 2001 resulted in CRS losing a lot of their income in the U.S. as people who used to give money to CRS gave the money to work in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and bi- and multilateral donors concentrated on the same countries. This had direct consequences for the organisations, and CRS and COCEPRADIL had to downsize the organisations because of the loss in incomes.

The majority of the population in Honduras is Catholic, the remaining part belong to different Protestant churches or Evangelical movements. The Catholic Church has since the 1960s been concerned with social and development issues but they withdrew from popular social movements in the 1980s, due to fear of being associated with secular, political movements (Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Still there is a developmentalist trend within the Church, working on social issues (Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Caritas International and CRS have a tradition for being concerned with social issues (Meyer 1999; Norsworthy and Barry 1993).

Latin American NGOs then emerged as organisations that were generally concerned about social issues and the poor, and have taken social responsibility where the state or public sector has not. Now that most of the countries in the region are democratic, the relation between the NGOs and the state is changing. The division of tasks between the public sector and the NGOs is not yet clear (Bebbington and Thiele 1993).

Gender relations in Honduras

Although the majority of the people in Honduras belong to the Roman Catholic Church, where marriage is important and live-in relations are not accepted, formal marriage is not common, especially not in rural areas (ref). Most couples, due to the paperwork and the costs of marriage, live with their partner⁸ in a common law marriage, the partnership is formal in the sense that they are seen as a formal couple by the community they live in. Common law marriages are legally accepted, but few of the couples legalize their status through formal authorities (Galán 2000:81), which is important when it comes to land tenure issues for women. Sometimes a couple have more or less moved together, or either the man or woman lives in the others house, but it is an informal liaison as they do not call each other partners. I observed and was told that households can be female headed for an unknown period of time while her partner is seeking income as an (usually illegal) immigrant in the U.S.

⁸ I use the english word partner for the spanish word *compañero/a*

Approximately 20 % of the households were female headed in 1994 (FAO, 1994). Partly, the informal liaisons and households with the absent income-seeking partner are, or often become, matrifocal. This means that the fundamental unit of household is a woman and her children (Schwimmer 2003).

In the Human Development Report there is a Gender Development Indicator, which indicate that Honduran women are better off than women in many other development countries. Statistics over the literacy rates as well as statistics over school enrolment show a growing equality among men and women (HDR, 2003). Still, as it will be described later, the women are generally more invisible than men in the groups and committees I have studied. They are shy, and less used to talking with other people. Also, the decision maker in the households that are not female-headed is traditionally the man. An illustrative example from my fieldwork is when we came to respondents houses that were not female-headed and met a woman, my assistants would ask if the boss was at home, and none of the women would take it as a joke.

2.3 Lempira

COCEPRADIL is doing its work in Lempira, which is classified as one of the poorest regions of the country. There are 250 000 inhabitants in the department. Here the Lencas have lived for several hundred years, and according to the local history, the Indian leader Lempira that led the resistance against the Spanish conquest, was killed here in Congolón in the 16th century.

The author of *Los Hijos del Copal y la Candela*, Anne Chapman (1992), did field work among the Lencas in 1965, 1981 and 1982. She writes that it is difficult to know what a typical Lenca is, as their language has been extinguished since the 19th century. There are characteristics of how to do things that are typical lenca, but that are not exclusively used by them, and the Lenca culture and traditions are hispoamericanised. Therefore it is not possible to estimate the accurate number of campesinos⁹ that are lencas, but “the major part of Honduran people of this tradition live in the departments of La Paz, Lempira and Intibucá”¹⁰ (Chapman 1992:15). She describes old cultural practices, like cultivating maize, beans and pumpkin in the same field. When I did fieldwork the educators in COCEPRADIL promoted

⁹ Campesino is a small-scale farmer

¹⁰ My translation from Spanish.

this way of cultivating beans and maize, because as I understood some campesinos had left the cultivation of several sorts in one field. She describes how they used a wooden stick to sow, which was one of the things that they learned in the environmental groups of COCEPRADIL. The cultivation practices are the same now as they were during Chapman's fieldwork and in older times: the use of the machete, of hoes, the axe, and spade... These tools were also introduced in the environmental groups I studied, as many only use the machete, because of lack of money to buy or the habit of using the other tools.

In Lempira today, according to my observations, men have the main responsibility for working in the fields if there is a man in the household. If not a son, an uncle or the woman goes to the field. He or she takes a machete and leaves early in the morning to cultivate maize. Women are responsible for the children, cooking, washing of clothes and bringing food to their men in the field. When the field is close to the house, women often work in the field together with the man.

Chapman (1992) describes *el metate*, a flat stone that is used to crunch the maize, and that still was in use in some of the houses we went to. Further Chapman (1992) writes about *la tortilla*, the bread of maize which is the most important part of the meal in Honduras, the poorer the area, the more it dominates the daily meals, and *el tamal*, which is a boiled dish, and *chicha*, a drink, all of which I tasted during my fieldwork. This is some of the ways the people I interviewed live. Now, there are not so many houses that are typically Indian anymore, rounded and made of wood stick with a roof of straw, but there were some in the Congolón area. Most houses are of sun-dried bricks, with a roof of tile, some with roofs of straw, and most houses have a floor of levelled earth. In centres like Candelaría and San Andrés most houses have floors of painted cement and roofs of tile.

With regard to education few of the respondents at the time of my fieldwork had completed primary school (six years). When visiting schools in this area it seems that the drop-out rate from school in rural areas is high. The number of children at each level is steadily decreasing towards the sixth grade. According to the PRSP, Lempira is one out of three departments with the least access to primary education in Honduras (Government of Honduras 2001:13). Some of the families I interviewed did not send their children to school – one mother said it was because they would have to walk for two hours to get there. And most of the kids, unless they live in a bigger community like Candelaría, do have to walk at least half an hour one way. In

addition there are few teachers and school buildings are too small, so some schools do not offer more than four grades.

2.4 COCEPRADIL

The history and mission of COCEPRADIL

The history of COCEPRADIL starts in 1983¹¹. During a meeting of the celebration of the word in Piraera in southern Lempira, the problems of the community were discussed. The priest in the area decided to search for external help to get projects to the community. Two projects were organised in communities in Piraera and after a while the need and wish for a water project emerged. Then CRS and Caritas Norway became involved and water projects for eleven communities were started under the leadership of the Honduran the deputy director in CRS in 1988. CRS demanded that the manual work had to be done by the people in the project communities and that they had to participate in capacitating seminars. More municipalities wanted water projects, and some people decided to organise so that they could send a formal request to CRS. CRS then came with the team of technicians that worked in Piraera, and they established the same type of system. During this project the organisation COCEPRA was formed, together with regional committees and a central committee, later the central management board. The water projects expanded and other types of projects were requested. In 1994 COCEPRADIL was constituted as a consequence of the need for a comprehensive development in southern Lempira. The regional committees were called COREPRADIL (Comité Regional Pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira). The project for comprehensive management of watersheds was started, and in connection to that project, COCEPRADIL applied for funding for the building of offices. CRS funded the building of a capacitating centre. Today there are water projects in 14 municipalities; there are 9 regional committees and 159 local, administrative water committees and boards of water. In addition COCEPRADIL has run or are running projects like the management and rehabilitation of the national park (Panacon), and an education programme.

¹¹ This part is based on the *Informe Técnico de Sistematización* by Cocepradil (2003)

COCEPRADIL describes its mission as to:

Increase the actions of comprehensive development in the communities to improve the living conditions for its inhabitants through capacitating, technical assistance, finances, with broad civil participation in the protection of natural resources, systems of water and health, and non-formal education, the development of enterprise development and improvement of houses, in coordination with public and private, national and international institutions¹² (COCEPRADIL 2003:5).

COCEPRADIL also has a policy statement on gender: “The character of Cocepradil as a non-profit organisation and without differentiation based on race, sex and religion, strengthen it’s profile”¹³ (COCEPRADIL 2003:50).

The structure of the organisation is democratic, and is built on the local, administrative water committees in the water and sanitation project. The majority of the water committees have a board, where the leader of the group, the secretary, the treasurer, and eventually the fiscal is sitting. Every second year a general assembly is held, which is the highest authority in the organisation, with one delegate from each of the water committees/boards of water. The delegate has been selected and accredited by the local board of water and by each water committee. This means that only communities with water projects are represented. Also delegates from the regional committees and the central management board are present. The general assembly has the responsibility to elect the central management board’s five members for four years. In addition they discuss the statutes, work plans, and the reports from the central management board, etc. They also elect a board of vigilantes.

The management board consists of the leader of the organisation, a secretary, a treasurer, a fiscal, a chairperson and five substitute representatives. To be elected they have to be beneficiaries in the water project and Honduran, and they have to have had a managing post in the local or regional committees. One of the tasks of the management board is to make sure that there is a basis of hired, specialised employees to carry out the projects. They employ the executive management, which is the executive director. The operative part of the organisation is then divided into four parts: the management of natural resources that includes a responsible for the breeding ground (*viverista*), the management of health and water, the

¹² My translation from Spanish

¹³ My translation from Spanish

management of education, each with educators and technicians, and finally the administrative management that includes the board of vigilantes (COCEPRADIL 2003).

The members in the groups and committees pay a quota to the organisation, one part is for the local group, one part for the regional body, COREPRADIL, and the last part is for the organisation centrally.

Cocepradil and gender

In the water projects run by COCEPRADIL, it is mandatory for both men and women in a couple to participate in the initial seminars arranged on hygiene issues and cleansing of water. The leader (presidente) of COCEPRADIL, the secretary in the management board and the administrator of the administrative management were women in 2003, but only around seven out of thirty educators in the field were women. The policy of COCEPRADIL is to have women in leading positions; they have managed to do that in management and administrative positions at different levels in the organisation. On the ground level in some of the groups and committees I have studied, and amongst the educators and technicians, the men are in majority.

Cocepradil in the civil society and cooperation with other organisations and networks.

The donors of COCEPRADIL in the beginning were Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and Caritas Norway, and they are still important donors for the organisation. The cooperation between COCEPRADIL and CRS consists also of technical support and they recruit staff from each other's organisations, e.g. the executive director in Cocepradil, Wilfredo Ramos, earlier worked for CRS. CRS can function as an arena for exchange of experiences for the organisations it supports, through arranging seminars and meetings where the organisations that they are supporting are invited, like the seminar of political incidence¹⁴ that I attended at the end of my fieldwork

Other donors and partners have been Fundación Vida, a Honduran foundation for development and environment funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and USAID, ASONOG (The National Association for Non Governmental Organizations), the Government's development agency FHIS (the social investment fund in Honduras), established in 1990 to compensate for the structural adjustment programme

¹⁴ *Incidencia Política*: political influence, lobbying

implemented the same year (Boussard 2003). The American Water Partners has also been an important source for financing several of the water systems. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) has funded agricultural projects through COHASA II, the Honduran-German Cooperation for Food Security.

In the area there are organisations working in addition to COCEPRADIL: COPINH (the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations), Lempira Sur, a project with focus on agriculture conducted by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and Care, who in this area had work-for-food projects, e.g. improvement of the road. ASONOG has an office in the area, where an earlier employee from COCEPRADIL works. They work within the structure of CODECOS, Councils for community development. It has several affiliated organisations; COCEPRADIL is deliberately not one of them, as it was not seen as utile enough for the organisation.

COCEPRADIL seems to have a good cooperation with the mayors, and that is also an aim in their project descriptions. The cooperation also means that COCEPRADIL is present at political meetings as e.g. in a meeting I attended between politicians in three municipalities that were to become one municipality. The employee from ASONOG that led the meeting had earlier worked in COCEPRADIL.

The cooperation with local organisations and institutions seemed poorer. It was confusing to read the other organisations presentations of their work in the area, e.g. of FAO's project Lempira Sur, as their description of their projects seem to describe the work that COCEPRADIL is doing in the environmental groups. There was no relation between COCEPRADIL and Lempira Sur, and there is no funding from FAO to COCEPRADIL, even though they work on the same areas. It is not clear whether FAO is presenting COCEPRADIL's work as if it was theirs or if COCEPRADIL started to do the same type of work as FAO after them. But Lempira Sur had used COCEPRADIL's groups organised by Lempira Sur to do some of their work. COCEPRADIL also worked to recruit groups that had been started in other organisations to become organised with COCEPRADIL if the first organisation had ended their project.

It seemed that the church did not have organised activities. Few of the respondents that went to church were organised in groups. One exception was in Yelegal, were a young male

respondent was in the administration board of the local church. The church did not have e.g. women's groups. This is a paradox when comparing with the initiatives that people in the church had taken to start the predecessors of COCEPRADIL. It is possible that the weakened position of the liberation theology in Latin America in general (Løland 2004) have consequences for the social engagement of the Catholic Church in some areas in Honduras.

2.5 The water and sanitation project and the project of Panacon

The Water and Sanitation Project

COCEPRADIL has been responsible for the installation of water in over a 100 villages the last 10 years. The villages have a population that varies from 10 families to over 90 families. COCEPRADIL has been the practical implementer with the help of external funding. The donors, especially CRS, send technically skilled persons to the project area, in this case Lempira, but COCEPRADIL now have their own technicians and engineers employed too. This means that the employees in the organisation have higher education, which is quite unusual in Lempira.

In a regular water- project a sink, i.e. a concrete water basin with a water tap and a latrine, is built. The full names of the water projects are *Drinking water, latrine and education in health/ sanitation projects*. They include the building of improved sanitary solutions. The guidelines for the building of latrines are that digging should not be used to make them, and if digging is needed, it should be shallow¹⁵. Still, the current way to build latrines in development countries is by digging into the ground. Some of the projects observed consisted mainly of dry pit-latrines projects, and some projects were actually called "latrinisation-projects". It seemed like newer projects avoided digging into the ground, as a compartment was built underneath the latrine. In some villages pour-flush latrines were installed. These are latrines where water is poured into the bowl. In parts of the district where people could pay more, as in Candelaria where COCEPRADIL had its capacitating centre, a water toilet with an individual septic tank was installed. There is a close connection between access to water and the latter solutions; when water projects were planned sanitation systems with water were also planned, depending on the location of the area and the economy of the people in the village. Water

¹⁵ One lecturer pointed this out at the summer course *Sanitation for Development Countries* in 2003, when latrines are build "do not dig, and if you dig, dig shallow". This is because of the danger for contamination of people living in the area. Usually the latrines are built such as that the effluences are naturally lead away from drinking water sources, but this is not seen as a sufficient precaution anymore.

solutions are seen as more hygienic than dry latrines so when there is a possibility it is the chosen solution. The reason these solutions are chosen is probably that trends are followed and new knowledge is used. The trends and new knowledge is not necessarily following research for the most ecologically sound solutions. One rationale for this was indirectly given by one of the employees at a meeting in a village; he said that to have a latrine, there is a need for water because people do not have the education needed to operate a dry latrine.

The projects follow a pre-set pattern, but are initiated in different ways. In some cases people in villages make a request or apply for help from COCEPRADIL. They might have been looking for organisations to help them to get access to drinking water, and they turn to COCEPRADIL as they have heard about their work.

An example: The rainwater system

I visited a village in Lempira that was localised so high up in the mountain that they could not get water the regular way (by piping from the water source) because of the gravity as the systems they build did not include pumping systems. The solution was a rainwater system that included a dry pit latrine. Still digging was used but since the water could be scarce in summertime when it does not rain, the latrine was dry. Some latrines were elevated; others had the whole latrine above ground level. This reduces the danger of contamination of the ground. The system, illustrated in figure 2, consisted of a gutter that collected the rainwater and an outlet through a pipe and into a tank with a filter. From this tank there was another pipe that was led to two or three storing tanks/wells in the ground in the yard. From those tanks it was possible to pump out water directly and in to a basin or it was pumped into a pipeline that led to another filtration tank. From this filtration tank there was a pipe into a sink in the kitchen and eventually to a shower (figure 1).

One important consideration to make is the amount of money that people are able to pay. In this village the houses we visited were in almost all categories, from houses of wood with roofs of straw, to houses with floors of painted cement, walls of whitened adobe and roofs of tile. People could also choose different solutions depending on their economy; e.g. one family had two tanks in the yard while others had three. The latter solution meant that the family could gather more water during wintertime for storing, but it was more expensive. The family with three storing tanks told that they had water almost through the whole dry season. They had to rationalise the water during some months, but still their access was very improved.

Through COCEPRADIL a system like this could not be installed without the participation of those who wanted to have water. When a system like this is installed there is a need for planning, coordination and maintenance. The following part explains how the organisation secured the maintenance and operation of the system after the installation of it.

Figure 2: An illustration of the rainwater system

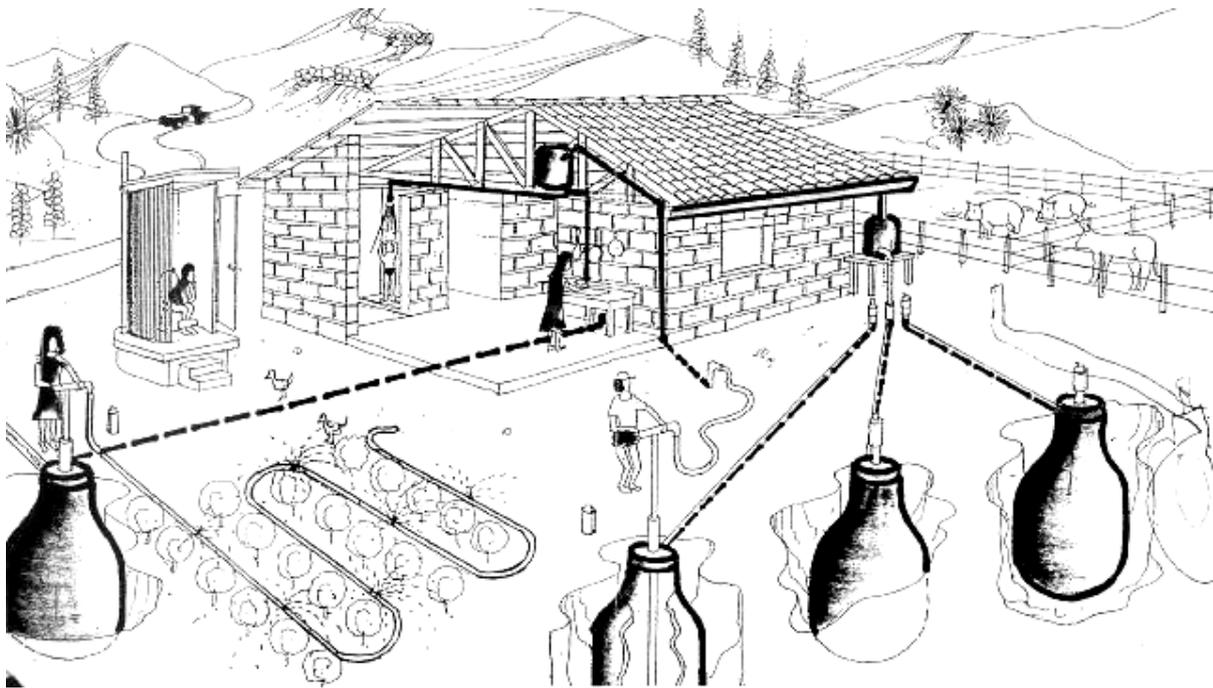


Illustration made by COCEPRADIL

Maintenance & Operation

To maintain a water and sanitation system in a development country like Honduras requires other planning and maintenance lines than in Europe. The maintenance has several parts: education of the users to secure correct use of the solution chosen, education in hygiene and technical education for the maintenance on the system as a whole (pipelines, tanks, etc.). To manage this maintenance COCEPRADIL has chosen to organise the users. In Norway it is not necessary to do that, as the responsibility of maintenance is clearly defined to be a municipal task. In addition to the lack of resources from the state in Honduras, the educational level is low, which means that also the technical educational level is low. That does not mean that people are not used to handle technical work; farmers are known to be innovators and

technical explorers with the resources they have at hand (Pretty 1995). In COCEPRADIL the education consists of two parts; the first part consists of seminars and are held in the beginning of a project. The seminars last for 3 days and participation of both men and women in the family is mandatory. The second part of the education is that the families that are taking part in the project have to continue to be organised in groups also when the water has been installed. They have regular meetings and as described above they pay a quota. From time to time employees in COCEPRADIL give technical instruction or education on hygiene. The group is also responsible for sending people to clean and maintain the pipelines and the tanks that the village get their water from and through.

The organisation of local groups in a larger permanent organisation secure a long-term maintenance, and the education and instructions of the "costumers" secure competence so that if something goes wrong the users themselves can repair it. The alternative would be to contact and wait for a central unit/ technicians. That has several disadvantages; the first is the infrastructure, the second the cost of getting externals to the area, and the third is the time that the village would have to wait while the damage expanded. It was requested that the local groups maintained their own system, and at each inauguration of water, the leader of COCEPRADIL, Blanca Peres, reminded them that they had to check the system carefully and repair defaults, because if they waited the damage would only grow larger. She used to explain this through a parable, which made it easy and amusing to listen to.

Inaugurations of water are conducted two years after the projects are finished, so the villages then are sure that the system works, and eventual dysfunctions have been repaired. The whole village gather and make nice food with money from the budget of the group. The leader and director of COCEPRADIL and usually the mayor of the municipality is present.

Protection of the National Park of Congolón – Panacon and environmental groups.

After 1996 the Congolón area was confirmed as an area for protection of the forest and called a National Park. An agreement between The Honduran Corporation on Forestry Development (COHDEFOR), CRS and COCEPRADIL gave COCEPRADIL the responsibility for managing the park in cooperation with municipalities, communities and participants (COCEPRADIL 2000). The project followed after a similar project called the watershed project, but includes more families, also families that are living in communities without a water and sanitation project and where COCEPRADIL had not necessarily worked before.

That had implications for how the area is used. The protection of the water sources was in the beginning an integrated part of the water projects. Watersheds, that can be defined as “the area that drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland” (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2004), are crucial to protect as they are the water sources. The drain of water can be under land or at surface level.

Slash-and-burn techniques are prohibited in the area by law, and alternative agricultural practices are part of the capacitating given in the project. The activities in the project of Panacon also include small activities like making pipes for better ventilation in the kitchens; the members can buy tools with long-term repayment and the members in the groups got a popular kitchen plate/griddle “la plancha” to put in an improved fireplace in the kitchen so that the cooking was improved; less wood was needed and they could put food directly on the griddle in order to fry it. Also they plant fast-growing trees together, and after a while they bring one or two to their house where they plant them in their yard. The environmental groups work with problems in agriculture, e.g. they buy natural pesticides instead of the regular ones.

The groups were organized differently from village to village. In the villages that had a water project through COCEPRADIL, and therefore water committees, the water groups had been working on protection of watersheds and environmental issues as part of the water project. In some of the villages water groups were combined with the Panacon project and constituted the same groups. In two out of the eleven villages in my sample a group had started and was earlier led by another organization, but as that stopped working in the area, the group continued working with COCEPRADIL as part of Panacon. In other villages the only organized groups present were the Panacon groups of COCEPRADIL.

3 Methodology

3.1 Selection of study area and institutional affiliation

My choice of Honduras as study area was the first step in my selection. I had visited the country in 1997, and visited organised groups in villages in the parish of San Gaspar, and it was in that context that I started to speculate on the criterias for good, fruitful organisation and participation in rural areas.

During my study at the Norwegian Agricultural University I have had courses in Environmental Technology and therefore it was relevant to make a study on water, sanitation and environmental issues. Therefore, to explore how environmental and water projects works in practice and to find out more about the effects of organisation, groups and participation, I searched for an NGO in Honduras working on environmental and water issues. I asked Caritas Norway for help, and they suggested COCEPRADIL, and asked them on my behalf if they were interested in having a student, which they were.

3.2 Theory

The relationship between the social research strategy and the theory I used is mainly deductive. The deductive process is a process where the researcher:

on the basis of what is known about in a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman 2001:8).

I had a hypothesis, based on the questions presented in the introduction, I collected data and will now present my findings and revise my hypothesis and the theories. But the study also has an inductive relation between strategy and theory; the data are used to define what is relevant theory and to build theory.

Originally I tended to base my research on an objectivist epistemology, as I saw COCEPRADIL as a tangible object and a social phenomenon that is independent of exactly whom is member of the organization. Epistemology is “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology” (Crotty 1998:3). Objectivism can be defined as:

the epistemological view that things exist as meaningful entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects ('objective' truth and meaning, therefore), and that (...) research can attain that objective truth and meaning (Crotty 1998:5-6).

In *Social Research Methods* objectivism is described as an “ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors”(Bryman 2001:17)¹⁶. I hoped that I would be able to measure some differences between groups in the organization. At the same time it is difficult to argue this position when it is probable that the relations in an organization can be dramatically changed on the basis of internal shifts in ideology or management policies or by shifting political trends, management policies or funding patterns of external institutions and organisations. And, the organization is not a natural entity in that it will uphold itself; it is of course totally dependent on the interaction between the different actors, members, employees and donors around it. Therefore my epistemological position is ambivalent. There are two levels in the study, one at group level and their functionality as a tool, how the groups have different general patterns and work differently, and the second on the individual level, why individuals choose to be part of a group, and how they perceive the process of participation. My way of looking at groups was influenced by objectivism, while the questions related to the individual level were influenced by constructionism. Constructionism claim that there is “no meaning without a mind”, and that there is “no objective truth waiting for us to discover it” (Crotty 1998). Bryman (2001:18) defines constructionism as an:

ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision.

My research methods were basically to try to combine qualitative research and quasi-experimental research. The characteristic of the quasi-experimental method is that it is applied to find the causal relationship between variables, and where the participants in research are pre-assigned to groups based on some pre-determined characteristics (Salkind 2003). The groups and committees in my research are already divided in members and non-members of

¹⁶ Crotty and Bryman are not agreeing on whether constructionism and objectivism is an ontological position or an epistemological view, but I think their explanations on objectivism and constructionism are not conflicting.

groups/committees in COCEPRADIL. The quasi- experimental methodology can be seen as derived from a positivist theoretical perspective as it relies on gathering of facts and testing of theories (Bryman 2001; Crotty 1998). Approaching the fieldwork and in the first weeks in Lempira I understood that it is not accurate nor possible to make variables that can be tested out in a study on the work in an organisation, the effects of this work and participation. This was also contributing to a more constructionist position of the study.

To cross-check information I used triangulation: “Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomena” (Bryman 2001:274). Methods used in fieldwork were interviewing groups and individuals using structured questionnaires with open-ended questions. The qualitative research methods used were direct observation in meetings in environmental groups and water committees, defined as “when the researcher is actually in (...) the environment being studied but is not actually a participant in the environment itself” (Salkind 2003:209). The researcher allows the normal activity to proceed without interruption, and questions are asked when the normal flow of events is not interrupted (Salkind 2003:209). Other methods were unstructured interviews with employees and grass-root members on the history of the projects and organisation. Documents on the organisation were collected for information and analysis use.

3.3 Sampling Process

On the first working day after my arrival I started to make a definition and then a selection of area with the project coordinator and two educators in the “Protection of the national park of Congolón”- project (Panacon) at the offices in the capacitating centre of COCEPRADIL.

Geographical limitation:

We started by making a geographical limitation: We picked the municipalities where the national park of Congolón is located, namely Erandique, Gualcince and San Andrés, and where the Panacon project is located. These municipalities are, in the project, divided into a nuclear zone (1800 m above sea level and upwards) and a downhill zone. The villages in the project are localised in both areas. There are also villages outside the park in these municipalities, and the project divides between the direct participants in the project and indirect participants, people who live in villages outside the park but that are connected to it. I limited the study to the villages inside the park. The watersheds are, as we have seen, usually

located in the nuclear zone. There were also water groups in some of the villages, which mean that they have a water project.

To find the persons that I wanted to interview I did selection at two levels, starting at village level, and thereafter at family/ household level. We started by selecting villages, thus we used cluster sampling, which means that units of individuals were selected rather than individuals themselves (Salkind 2003), as the projects are organized at village level.

Selection of villages:

The following criteria's based on sampling strategies described in Salkind (2003) were important for the selection of villages:

1. All the three municipalities should be represented.
2. Villages from both the nuclear zone and the downhill zone in each municipality should be present in the sample, as Cocepradil's policy has been different in the different zones.
3. Only villages with Panacon groups would be targeted for sampling.
4. I did nonprobability sampling; the villages did not have the same chance to be selected as the number of villages varied from municipality to municipality and I thought criteria 1 and 2 to be more important than probability sampling, which would have meant that every village had the same chance to be selected.
5. The selection of villages should not be biased; therefore I picked them randomly within the limits of one municipality at the time.
6. We estimated the time I would use in each village if I interviewed 3- 4 members and 2- 3 non- members of groups and that gave us a number of villages that I would be able to visit during four weeks, namely 11 all together.

We then went through a list of villages with Panacon groups. The list gave an overview of the villages that were part of the project and was divided into villages in the nuclear and downhill zones. The number of families participating in each village was also on the list. When using this list I felt I had to concentrate on either water groups or Panacon groups to be able to make comparisons at the same level. I thought that if I concentrated on groups belonging to the same project, it would be easier to compare them and find factors for good and bad organisation. In other words, I thought it would be easier to collect facts and measurable data and test variables. I had to reconsider this later in the fieldwork as I found out that some of the

Panacon groups were combined with water committees, they were in some cases not really functioning as structured regularly meeting groups, and there were some interesting differences between the environmental groups and the water committees. Therefore I started to focus more on water committees after the first week of interviewing.

We started with the first municipality on the list, Gualcince. In Gualcince there were four villages with a Panacon project in the nuclear zone and eight in the downhill zone. Together with two trainers I numbered the villages and wrote down the numbers on different pieces of papers. We folded the pieces and put them into a sombrero. One village was selected from the nuclear zone, Corta Cabeza, and two from the downhill zone, Valle Nuevo and Yelegal. In Erandique the selection was done in the same manner, here two villages from the nuclear zone were selected, Azacualpa Montaña and Jurtao, and one village from the descendent zone, Guatincara. In San Andrés two villages from the nuclear zone, Coquim and La Chorrera, and two from the descendent zone, Copante and Liquidambar, were picked from the sombrero. Although not random, which would have meant that every village would have equal chance to be selected, and there would have been most groups from the municipality with the most groups, Erandique, this method secured that I did not choose villages/ groups on basis of how successful their group was or on how accessible they were. When I had picked three villages from Gualcince, three villages from Erandique and four from San Andrés the trainers pointed out the ones where there also were water groups. Amongst the eleven they were four: Corta Cabeza, Jurtao, Copante and Liquidambar.

Selection of people/respondents:

For the selection of people to interview, we used lists of family/ household membership in each of the selected villages. The trainers collected lists of members both from archives in the offices of Cocepradil and from educators coming in from the field.

When deciding membership structure in the water and sanitation project Cocepradil has defined members as families/households, and a household is in their definition parents and their children. This was important because members had to pay for their sink. If there were two or three generations in one house, in the project elder parents would be one family, and their adult son and daughter in law with children would be defined as another family, each generation would count separately as well as adult brothers and sisters would count

separately. If there were no man in the family, the name of the woman would stand on the list, as she then was the head of her family. This was also the case in the project of Panacon.

We made a random non-probability purposive sampling of families. We numbered all the families in the list, put all the numbers on pieces of papers and folded them. Then we pulled 3 or 4 family names. I used random non-probability sampling because I considered it more important to have people from the different villages represented, which also meant from the different groups, than to have a probability random sample of all known members in all the villages. A probability random sample would have meant that every household member had the same chance of being selected, which again would have meant that there would have been selected many respondents in villages with many members, and few in the villages with few members. The size of the villages and the number of members in each village varied considerably. I considered that how the groups functioned and were started would vary from village to village, and that these variations would tell me something valuable, more valuable than if I had the same percentage of people from each village.

I decided to preferably interview the respondents from the selected households that were standing on the list we used for the selection, but if it was difficult to get hold of the person on the list I would interview his or her partner, as they were members as well as part of the family/household.

This way of sampling helped me avoid the biases that Robert Chambers in *Rural Development* has pointed out as the main erroneous factors when doing research: I avoided people bias, as respondents were randomly selected. I avoided spatial bias, as the villages were selected without considering how far they were from the capacitating centre and I avoided showcase bias, as we did not give priority to well functioning groups or committees. I did not really avoid time bias, as my fieldwork lasted for 5 weeks, and I would most likely have profited of a longer period. On the other hand I avoided time bias as I did field work in the rainy season, although in Honduras that is not a disadvantage for a European that is working better when the weather is fresh, and some of the villages are not accessible with a car whether it is raining or not, but they are usually accessible by walking (Chambers 1983 in Pretty 1995:166).

I told the trainers/assistants that in addition to carrying out interviews I would like to join any kind of meeting (regional, central or in the villages) as an observer, also outside the three municipalities of the national park of Congolón. I told them that if the meetings in the selected villages did not coincide with my stay in Honduras, I could join meetings in other villages. I did not want them to arrange extra meetings in the groups because of my stay, as I wanted to observe regular meetings and I wanted to avoid people to think that I was an external expert coming to educate them, instead of being educated myself.

Within the selected communities I used direct observation in meetings in Valle Nuevo, Corta Cabesa, Yelegual and Copantes. I participated in the practical work of the environmental groups in and La Chorrera/ La Cidra and Guatincara. Outside the selected villages I attended one meeting in a municipality, Mapulaca; I visited a rain water system in Valla Dolid; attended one meeting in COREPRADIL in Piruera; attended two inaugurations of water; I listened to one interview conducted by an American student of the management board (leader, secretary, accounter and fiscal) in the water committee in Gualcea, and I attended one seminar on political incidence by CRS in the capital.

The questionnaire was developed on site, in Cocepradil's offices (see appendix). The meeting in COREPRADIL was a coordination meeting where two delegates from each village in a region are meeting every month or every second month. Here I conducted a test interview with three of the participants from the meeting, two women and a man.

The persons I interviewed were told that they would be anonymous in the thesis and in the report that I would write. I felt this was especially important when I interviewed non-members in the villages. It was important to try to make them aware that they could answer anything they liked without thinking to give correct answers, and without thinking to please COCEPRADIL or me. I thought that some respondents might think that it would be difficult to be frank about what they thought about an organisation that worked locally, as most people know each other.

3.4 Data analysis

The data are analysed as qualitative data in the study. Qualitative analysis can be defined as “methods for examining social research data without converting them to a numerical format”

and qualitative research methods is interplay between data collection and theory (Babbie 2001:359).

The units of analysis in this study are the environmental groups, the water committees, the individual members of those groups and COCEPRADIL as a (private) NGO.

Reliability of the data is when “a test measures the same thing more than once and results in the same outcomes” (Salkind 2003:108). In qualitative research and when doing observations and semi-structured open-ended questionnaires when interviewing, I had to take into consideration the influence I and the methods used had on the respondents and their answers and actions in meetings. I had a very different background from the people I interviewed, they were not used to being interviewed, and I did not really know in advance what questions would make sense to people so that the question would be understood as I thought it would and the answer would be understood as they wanted by me. Therefore the reliability of this kind of data can be discussed, but using triangulation, i.e. several sources of information, and being flexible and open to changes in what I should focus on, helped to increase the reliability of the data. The validity of the data is “the quality of a test doing what it is designed to do” (Salkind 2003:115). The respondents were selected because they were either members of the water groups and the environmental groups or because they were in the target group as they lived in the communities where these projects were run, thus the data can be “understood within the context of the purpose of the research” (Salkind 2003:115). The methods were scientifically sound as observations and interviews of random selected people are suitable to get insight in how the organisation work, and in what people think about participation. The data collected are relevant to further investigate the research questions and for the objectives of the study. The data are valid, when I have taken the limitations of the study into consideration.

3.5 Limitations of the study

Interview situation

One problem that I was aware of before I started interviewing was that in the day the women are at home, while the men are in the field unless both are working in the field. It was also usual that we (me and the person being interviewed) had the presence of other persons, either my helpers from COCEPRADIL or family members or neighbours. In the beginning I needed

help from the assistants from COCEPRADIL, but after a while I explained to them that I should be alone with the person interviewed. The environment in which the interviews were conducted varied. Some were interviewed in the field, others by their house, and some after meetings. I guess this variation could affect my data. I felt the most important thing was to make people feel comfortable, and avoid uneasiness. It is not easy to state where people would feel the most comfortable; I felt that this was more dependent on the contact between the person to be interviewed and me, than the area the interview was done in.

Another factor influencing the situation and maybe the answers of the people I interviewed was how they perceived my role. Was I doing fieldwork for a donor, and then probably doing some evaluation and having some access to funding? I understood that people I interviewed probably perceived me that way, and after a while I realized that COCEPRADIL at central level might think that I was working for Caritas. This was probably due to misunderstandings when they were asked whether I could do my fieldwork in Lempira or not, and I am not sure they got or read my letter where I presented myself as a student. In the field I carefully explained to my assistants what and why I was doing the study, so that they could tell the persons I was going to interview, and during my stay I explained the same to the director and the leader of the organization.

The last factor influencing the interview situation was language problems. I knew that my Spanish was not expansive enough when I left Norway, but I counted on recovering and expanding the language quickly. I partly did, first with people that I met regularly at Cocepradil and my assistants, thereafter it became easier and easier to understand people in the villages. I reasoned that having a translator would not necessarily compensate for the advantages of having direct contact with the people I spoke with. And the first assistant I had, while I was doing my first interviews was helping in translating Spanish to Spanish if people did not understand me, or I did not understand them.

Questions

The questionnaire started with questions on their educational level and civilian status. I realised when asking questions about their civil status, that if I did not use the word that they normally used for a relationship, I would probably not get the correct picture on whether they were having a partner or not. E.g. if I asked if they were married, they would tell me “no”, and not naturally tell me that they had a partner, unless I asked if they had a *compañero/a*.

And as *compañero/a* was seen as a formal relationship, I would not be told if they had a boyfriend or girlfriend even if they lived in their house, unless I specifically asked for that, and not even then. So it took me some time to ask the right questions, and to understand when I should have asked further if I wanted the real household status.

Since the methodological law of replication and objectivism in interviews influenced the study in the beginning, I did build up my questionnaire with the same basic questions through all the interviews so that I would be able to generalise some of my findings. But the nature of the questions do not necessarily give a basis for quantitative, generalisable data, and a better solution could have been a semi structured interview, with an interview guide as a departure for the interviews (Kaarhus 1999).

I realised after a while that I should have put more emphasis on women. When I look at my research questions now I see that they did not address women specifically. To find out more about women's roles and decision- making influence in the projects I had to ask more gendered questions. I had already a question on whether men or women were using the new tools but it did not catch the differences in participation on several levels. I therefore added questions along the way that were more specific about the presence of women, and what the members eventually thought could be done to involve women more in the organisation.

Participation emerged as a word with many meanings when asking people what they meant about it. To analyse people's meanings and feelings about a concept that have various meanings can be challenging, as the meanings they put into it also is a part of the findings. How people define what participation is, says something about how the organisation and groups work.

4 Literature Review

This chapter looks at different perspectives of participation. Thereafter the definitions of civil society and the role of NGO's in civil society are explored. Finally the analytical framework for the analysis of the data is presented.

4.1 Participation

Perspectives on Participation

Participation on the grass-root level is seen as important by most institutions in general, and specifically by non-governmental organisations, involved in development interventions. Participation can be graded in levels after how people are involved in a process. Participation has different forms and meanings depending on what context it is put in, and the meaning also varies according to what people understand with the word participation, e.g. "I participated in the meeting", does it mean that I attended the meeting or that I gave active verbal contributions at the meeting?

The most used data-collection methods within this field are commonly called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The discussion on how this should or could be done is out of the scope of this study, but a definition of PRA is relevant. The Participatory Rural Appraisal is used to gather information in rural areas and to involve the local people in "setting the priorities for projects and policies" (Ellis 2000:193) Ellis distinguishes between an elicitive and an empowering PRA. The elicitive PRA is "where outsiders obtain information which is then analysed and acted on outside its site of origin" (Ellis 2000:193). The empowering PRA is:

...where the entire cycle of information gathering, establishing priorities, deciding on action, and implementing decisions is conducted jointly and interactively with those whose lives are affected by the decisions taken (Ellis, 2000:193).

Ellis argues that in a context where it is necessary to collect data, an elicitive approach is the most accurate (Ellis 2000).

In a study on the contribution of people's participation in rural water supply projects, Narayan-Parker (1993:5) writes that "People's participation in decision making and local

ownership results in effective and sustainable rural water systems” The study addresses amongst others the following questions:

- Does people’s participaton contribute to project effectiveness?
- How important is the contribution, relative to other factors?
- What factors and strategies influence participation in collective action?

Narayan-Parker (1993:7) states that participation “is viewed as a means to defined ends, not as an end in itself; the goal therefore is to optimize participation to achieve the desired project goals, not simply to maximize participation”. Narayan-Parker (1993:9) also argues that “from an agency perspective people’s participation (...) can contribute to the achievement of four main objectives: effectiveness; efficiency; empowerment; and equity”. The participation of beneficiaries is affected amongst other things on the degree to which the beneficiaries are organised (Narayan-Parker 1993). Empowerment means, according the definition Narayan-Parker (1993:10) uses, the redistribution of power and resources, increased access and control over resources and the acquisition of new skills and confidence.

Empowerment is lately criticized for being a “buzzword”, a word that is used in as many contexts as possible within development institutions. Cleaver (1999:38), the author of a critique of participatory approaches to development, writes:

It is often unclear exactly who is to be empowered – the individual, the ‘community’, or categories of people such as ‘women’, ‘the poor’ or the ‘socially excluded’. The question of how such generalized categories of people might exercise agency is generally sidestepped.

Cleaver (1999) further criticises the participatory approach to development and the development discourse for the assumptions that are made on the impact of participation of beneficiaries on development: “Participation of community members is assumed to contribute to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of investment and to promote processes of democratisation and empowerment” (Cleaver 1999:36). It is a paradox that “meaningful participation in public meetings is evidenced by individual verbal contributions” (Cleaver 1999:44). Even if participatory approaches are used for a long time in an area, it does not in itself lead to overall democratic changes.

In an evaluation of the economic, political and institutional context for the participatory development in Honduras after the hurricane Mitch, Meltzer (2001:34) writes in an evaluation:

There are numerous national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) currently working in areas of rural development and NRM [Natural Resource Management] in Honduras. Many of these NGO's have extensive experience with participatory approaches including participatory action research, which has been practiced in Honduras since the early 1980's.

The participatory approaches used did not lead to long-term change in Honduras. Neither did it lead to good governance or overall change for the poor, and participation is not a formula that, as one might believe, hinders oppression. In "the Honduran context, subordination and increased participation are not necessarily diametrically opposed, but shaped by broader social, historical, and economic circumstances" (Meltzer 2001:36). This can be seen in connection with the political history of Honduras; when democratic elections were introduced in 1981 the military oppression increased, and the following years were the worst in the 20th century when it comes to disappearances and sentences without trial (Norsworthy and Barry 1993). Thus, participation is seen as good for the participants, but politics and power are left aside (Cleaver 1999).

Following the definition of empowerment used by Narayan-Parker (1993) in the World Bank report, that includes redistribution of power and resources, the supposed benefits of participation have to become a political issue, as redistribution can hardly be achieved without that political measures are taken.

Gender and participation

The policy approaches to gender in development can be divided into the Women in Development (WID) approaches and Gender and Development (GAD) approaches. WID includes the equity approach, a rights based approach; parallel to this approach there was the anti-poverty approach, where women's poverty was seen as the cause of underdevelopment; and finally in the 1980s the efficiency approach became popular, where women's participation in the economic sphere was associated with equity (Moser 1989). These approaches were perceived as focusing on women in isolation, and this was what the new policy approaches, commonly referred to as GAD approaches, reacted to. GAD are approaches that underline that men and women act in interaction with each other, and

therefore the focus has to be on the interaction and relation between them. The new thoughts also criticised the earlier focus on women's subordination due to the lack of access to resources, as not looking enough into gender roles and how they restrict women's access in the first place (Razavi and Miller 1995). In *Reversed Realities* Kabeer (1994) writes:

The problem relying on 'women' as the analytical category for addressing gender inequalities in development was that it led to a focus on women in isolation from the rest of their lives and from the relationships through which such inequalities were perpetuated. The implication was that the problem – and hence the solution – concerned only women (Kabeer 1994:xii).

Mainstreaming in project planning, that both men and women should be targeted, was supposed to be one of the consequence of approaches within GAD. Still, the gender gap, the inequality between men and women, is persistent and so is the absence of men in gender and development policy (Chant and Gutmann 2000). The reasons for this absence are many; the wish for protecting resources for women; the fear of men 'taking over' projects; the resistance to GAD in development organisations due to fear of cultural intervention and loss of goodwill for the interveners; and the patriarchal culture of development organisations, the organisational structures are male biased and male dominated (Chant and Gutmann 2000). The benefits of women- only projects may be limited if men are not included. How can e.g. women use what they have learned about their rights at home if their partners have not gone through capacitating on the same issues as well? Men's rights have also to be taken care of and alternatives have to be discussed when roles are changed (Chant and Gutmann 2000).

GAD and mainstreaming has also been used to deny the existence of women-specific disadvantage and to abandon measures intended specifically to benefit women (Kabeer 1994). Narayan-Parker (1993:77) addresses this concern when she concludes in her report that: "In most cultures, unless women are specifically targeted and strategies are developed for their empowerment, they will not be reached". If women are not specially targeted they will not benefit from a project as their position is subordinated to men in advance.

In *The Myth of Community*, Guijt and Shah (1998), preceding Cleaver (1999), points out that the participatory development discourse has been hiding complexities in communities, and especially power and gender relations:

Gender was hidden in [in participatory research] in seemingly inclusive terms: ‘the people’, the oppressed’, the campesinos’, or simply ‘the community’. It was only when comparing... projects that it became clear that ‘the community’ was all too often the male community (Maguire 1996 in Guijt and Shah 1998)

When using gender neutral words, and planning a project with those words, it is likely that projects will involve men, their labour and their time framework.

4.2 NGOs and Civil Society

In *Crafting Democracy: Civil Society in Post-transition Honduras*, Boussard (2003) describes civil society as:

...those collectivities, e.g. organizations, associations, and networks that are located between the state and the family sphere, and formed voluntarily by individuals to promote or defend their interests. Organizations that are concerned with recreational rather than public ends, organizations that seek formal political power and organizations that are founded to make a profit are not included in what we refer to as civil society (Boussard 2003:83).

Norsworthy and Barry (1993) claim that the NGOs emerging in the 1980s have an aid receiving and charity approach to their work, and they roughly divide the emerging NGOs in two categories, the first ones characterised on the grounds that it is generally:

...only those NGOs that do not receive AID¹⁷ money that have maintained ties to and work closely with the more progressive and independent peasant, worker and community organizations. These NGOs rely mostly on funding from Europe, Canada or nongovernmental groups in the U.S. and they insist that development work must be done in association with self-organised poor people’s organizations (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:121).

What is described as a shift in influence on NGOs, that they call the AID-funded boom, then occurs:

Instead of pressing for peasant leadership training, cooperative formation, and integral popular education [as in the 1960s and 1970s], during the 1980s most NGOs in Honduras tended to stress such values as profitability, competitiveness, individual enterprise, and marketability (Norsworthy and Barry 1993:121).

¹⁷ U.S. Agency for International Development

The latter types of organisations, stressing profitability, are excluded from Boussard's (2003) definition of civil society. Knowing when this type of organisations increased indicates how the Honduran society was influenced according to who that had the main economic influence in the country. This trend in Honduras adapts well to the development of NGO's in Latin America described in chapter two.

Boussard's (2003) definition of civil society does not include religious organisations. When considering the role of the church in civil society in Latin America and Honduras in general, as described in chapter two, I believe her definition is too narrow. The Catholic Church has taken initiative for organising movements and organisations in Honduras. The Church has, and still is, funding local organisations as e.g. COCEPRADIL. As described in chapter 2, COCEPRADIL emerged because of the dedication of a priest and the Celebrants of the Word that wanted development in their area. A definition of civil society should therefore include religious institutions as well. In *Inside Honduras* (1993) the term civil society is not used. The term became commonly used within development research in the beginning of the 1990s, but there is a chapter in the book that describes 'social forces and institutions' (Norsworthy and Barry 1993).

The increased number of NGOs can be seen as a consequence of the changes in the ideas on how development aid should be given. For example, in Norway there was a shift in how the government financed development aid; in the 1960s aid was bilateral, from government to government, in the 1980s the share of development aid that went through development NGOs increased (Tvedt 1998). Paralleling this, the percentage of the expenditures that NGOs get from the government has increased, in some cases the government funds a 100 % of the projects (Tvedt 1998). This is a general trend in the development sector (Fowler 1997), and leads to a shift from voluntary principles to more focus on business principles. A problem is that the focus in the organisations is turned from the people that they are supposed to benefit, over to the donors (Fowler 1997).

It was an explicit aim of the IMF and the World Bank to reduce the public sector in the 1980's. The new trend in these institutions and the UN millennium development goals is to focus on poverty reduction. According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) of the Government of Honduras (2001) one of the five main guidelines for prioritisation of the Strategy's policies, programs and projects is to 'strengthen civil society participation and

decentralization in the PRS [Poverty Reduction Strategy]'; this strategy advises the reduction of the public sector:

Traditionally the Central Government has been assigned all responsibility for socio-economic development policies. However, the failure of past statist models has led to the development of proposals that eliminate previous barriers to the exercise of private initiative, reduce the role of the State in the direct management of the economy and strengthening its normative and regulatory role.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy, without eliminating the appropriate responsibilities of the Central Government, places a high value on programs and projects that can be carried out by municipalities, communities, NGOs and private initiative (Government of Honduras 2001:56-57).

This indicates that some of the same main policies of the 1980s is upheld in important financial institutions.

4.3 Analytical framework

Bebbington and Thiele (1993) have developed a model based on an earlier work of Bebbington and Farrington (Bebbington and Farrington 1991 in Bebbington and Thiele 1993)¹⁸. The model differentiates between international organisations, based either in the south or in the north, and national organisations. The national organisations are again divided into grassroots/community organisations and grassroots service/support organisations. The first types are “actors meeting their own needs”; the latter type of NGO “act primarily to meet others’ needs” (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:7). This type of organisation can again be divided into non-membership organisations and membership support organisations (MSOs), where the employees are “elected from and by the grassroots organization” (Bebbington and Thiele 1993:7) and are themselves members of the organisation. Non-membership support organisations have (urban) professional employees “who are often socially and ethnically distinct from the grassroots” (Bebbington and Thiele 1993). Further on in the model the non-membership organisations are divided into a category of profit driven and one category of value driven. In their study Bebbington and Thiele (1993) studied value driven organisations. As shown in chapter one, following Tvedt’s and Salamon and Anheiers definition of NGOs in *Angels of Mercy* (1998) there would not be a category of profit driven organisations in a model of NGOs, as they define NGOs as non-profit organisations.

¹⁸ Their model is, according to the authors, influenced by Alan Fowler. Fowler and Bebbington have both studied NGOs in development countries, Bebbington with experience from Latin American countries, including Central America.

The value driven organisations can be analysed on the basis of levels and forms of participation. Here it is helpful to use Pretty's (1995:173) categorisation of seven graded levels of participation, and to identify forms of participation (adapted from Adnan et al 1992 in Pretty 1995:173):

1. **Passive participation:** At this level of participation people are told what is going to happen or what has already happened. Further Pretty explains that it is:

a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.

Form of participation: to listen.

2. **Participation in information giving:**

People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

Forms of participation: answering questions and talking.

3. **Participation by consultation:**

People participate by being consulted and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.

Form of participation: discussion

4. **Participation for material incentives:**

People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives (...) It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

Form of participation: physical work

5. Functional participation:

People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but many become self-dependent.

Forms of participation: group activities.

6. Interactive participation:

People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives, and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.

Forms of participation: dialogue, local decision-making

7. Self-mobilization:

People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power (Pretty 1995:173).

Forms of participation: take initiatives, control the use of resources.

Pretty (1995) sees the first four participation as not really being participation, as reflected in his definition of the fourth category. To “achieve sustainable development, then nothing less than functional participation will suffice”, sustainable development being explained as being “long- term economic and environmental success” (Pretty 1995:172).

The word participation has many meanings, forms and levels, and what the participants of the committees and groups perceived as participation, as well as my observations, can be discussed in the light of the above typology on participation.

The typology is gender neutral, but as already pointed out it is likely that if no special measures are taken to include women in a project, they will be excluded or made invisible because of the imbalance of power, of status, and in access to resources between men and women. Stølen (1994) argues that:

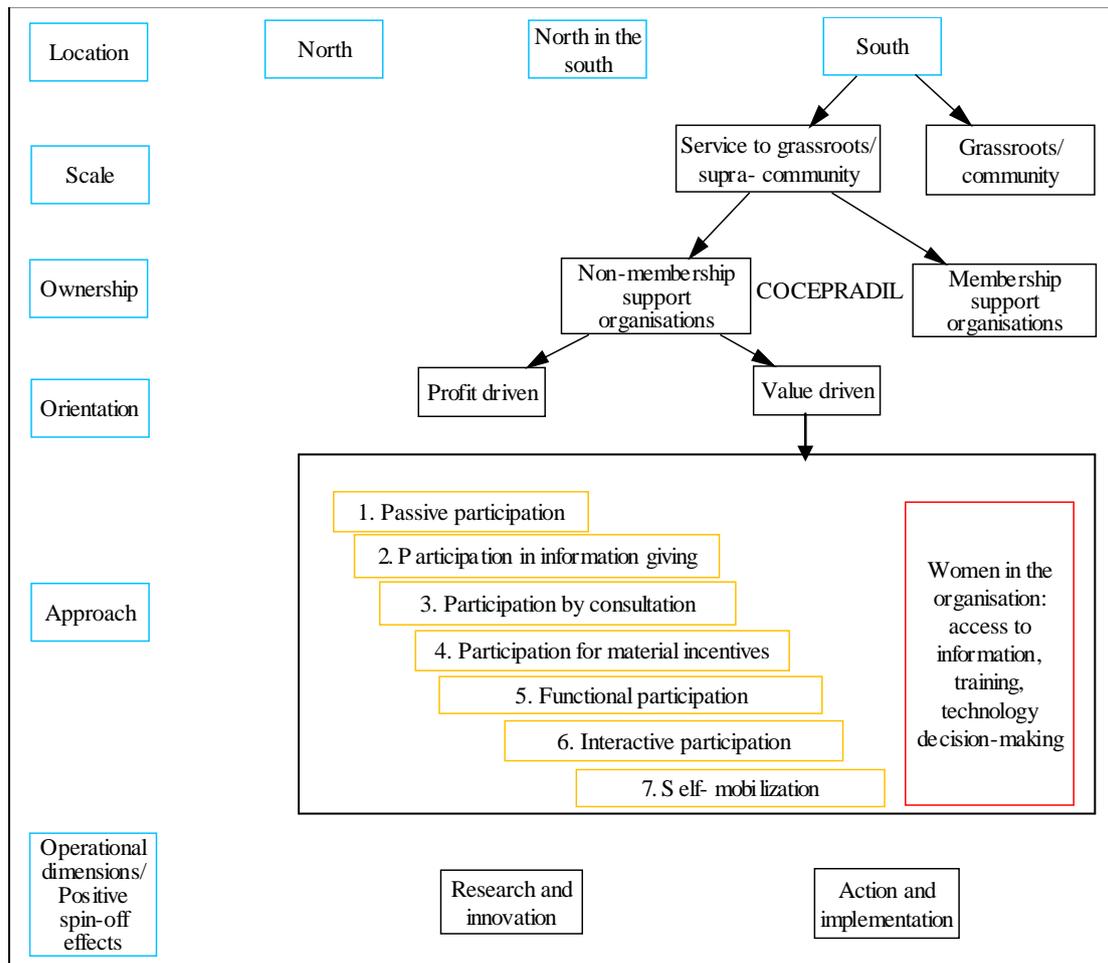
Since societies are gendered the way local actors relate to innovations will be gender specific, even when the innovations as such are conceived as “gender neutral” in the sense that they are not directed particularly towards women or men (Stølen 1994:90).

In *Methods for Development Work and Resources* (1995) Mikkelsen (after Skjønsberg and Lexow/Danida 1992 in Mikkelsen 1995:164) has developed checkpoints or questions to ask in development projects. The following checkpoints are based on those:

1. Are women informed about project activities and potentials?
2. Do women get training as result of the project?
3. Do women get control and access to improved tools or technology?
4. Is women’s work reduced or made easier?
5. Are women organised or women’s groups strengthened or expanded?
6. Do women get new or improved economic opportunities because of the project?
7. Are women’s rights in the public sphere improved?
8. Are women represented in political and other decision-making fora, locally and nationally?
9. How does the project add to or change men and women’s daily workload, both initially and when goals in the project are reached?

These questions provide the basis for the gender dimension which is integrated into the analytical framework presented here, in addition to the scale, ownership, orientation, and operational dimensions drawn from Bebbington and Thiele (1993), and the levels of participation dimension adapted from Pretty (1995). To the operational dimension positive spin-off effects is added. Figure 3 presents an overview of the analytical framework. In order to analyse and understand the dynamics of ‘interactive participation’ and ‘self-mobilisation’, an actor-oriented approach also needs to be included as an additional element.

Figure 3: Analytical framework



Source: (Bebbington and Thiele 1993; Mikkelsen 1995; Pretty 1995)

Long (1992:5) has developed an actor-oriented approach that he defines in *Battlefields of Knowledge*:

The essence of an actor-oriented approach is that its concepts are grounded in the everyday life experiences and understandings of men and women, be they poor, peasants, entrepreneurs government bureaucrats or researchers (...) We argue that an actor-oriented perspective entails recognizing the ‘multiple realities’ and diverse social practices of various actors, and requires working out methodologically how to get grips with these different and often incompatible social worlds.

Long (2001) argues against the linear thinking that we often adapt to projects or ‘planned interventions’ by having step-by-step plans for implementations and a final evaluation of the project at the “end”. People’s perceptions are not linear; “people construct their own memory

of these experiences” and they live on with people also after organisations closing a project “Interventions are linked to previous interventions” and “have consequences for future ones” (Long 2001:32).

The actor-oriented perspective can be linked to the gender dimension in the analysis of data from Lempira. In *Gender, Culture and Social Change in Latin America* (1994) Stølen writes:

Even though there has been a tendency to analyse Latin American gender relations basically in terms of dominance and oppression, most of the empirical studies portray women and men as active shapers of their own lives (Stølen 1994:89).

Stølen (1994) sees this as a consequence of that studies often are conducted within an actor-oriented approach and argues that:

Inherent in the very concept of social actor is the notion of the human being as an active subject with the capacity to process social experience and to invent ways of coping with life even under extreme forms of coercion (Stølen 1994:90).

This is what Long (2001) calls agency and knowledgeability. Still, as shown in chapter two and previously in this chapter, there are structural conditions that restrict people’s choices of how to act, e.g. definitions of gender-roles, and the political and economical environment.

Finally, to represent where the intervention, according to the analytical framework, leads to research and innovation, and organisation and participation at the local level, the model includes a level of operational dimension and positive spin-off effects.

5 Findings & Analysis

This chapter is divided in three parts; the first part describes the water and sanitation and the Panacon project with the use of a Logical Framework Approach (LFA), and compares the objectives of COCEPRADIL with the realities in the villages where they are working. LFA is an objective-oriented approach to development and can be used as a planning tool for projects (NORAD 1999). COCEPRADIL used the LFA to describe and plan the project of Panacon (COCEPRADIL 2000). LFA can be illustrated in a project matrix (NORAD 1999), and the project matrix is used to illustrate the projects.

The second part of this chapter explores the nature of the organisation and participation by its members. The third part discusses why there are people who are not members of the projects.

5.1 The objectives of COCEPRADIL and how the target group perceives the work of the organisation

General objectives and the purpose of the water and sanitation projects

Figure 4 presents the water and sanitation project of COCEPRADIL in a project matrix¹⁹. The general objectives of COCEPRADIL are to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants in the south of Lempira; to consolidate an organisation with a self-sustainable basis, keeping the unity amongst its members, and promote social, economical and cultural development of the families, communities and municipalities of Lempira.

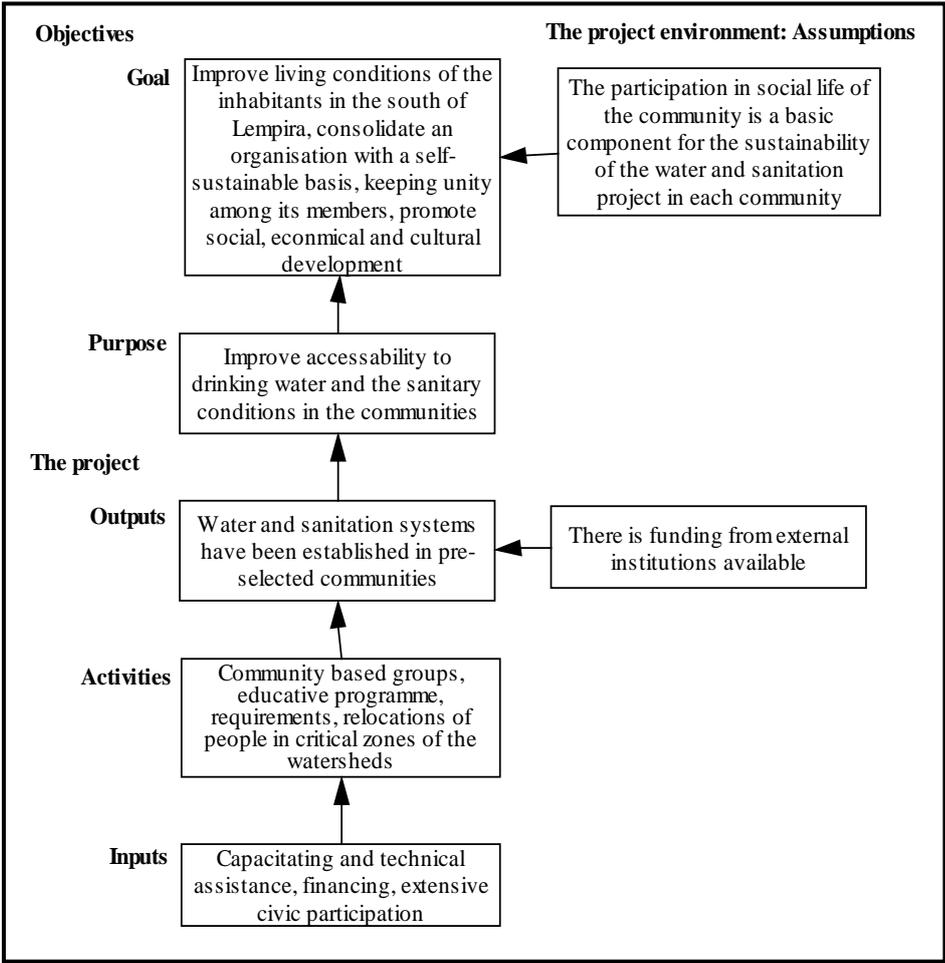
The purpose of the water and health/sanitation programme is to improve the accessibility to drinking water and the sanitary conditions in the communities.

Assumptions are defined as conditions that are outside the project managements control, but that are necessary for the project to sustaining objectives in the long run (NORAD 1999). An important assumption that the organisation makes is that the participation of inhabitants in the targeted area in the social life of the community is a basic component for the sustainability of the water and sanitation project in each community. Participation is not only a mean to defined ends as Narayan-Parker (1993) sees it in her report on rural water supply projects, but also an end in itself as participation is a condition for having an organisation with a self-

¹⁹ The information on projects in the following sections is based on the *Informe Técnico de Sistematización de COCEPRADIL*.

sustainable basis, which is a general goal for the whole organisation. The self- sustainable basis is needed so that the objectives and the maintenance and operation of the projects are upheld when the projects are closed. The participants are therefore organised in community based water committees. COCEPRADIL takes active measures to achieve this and it is not completely outside the project management’s control; but as it is a long-term condition, it is defined as an assumption.

Figure 4: The water and sanitation project



Source: (COCEPRADIL 2003; NORAD 1999)

The inputs and means/activities to achieve the objectives in the Water and Sanitation project

According to COCEPRADIL, to achieve comprehensive development, there should be an increase in development action, which raises the living standard of the inhabitants in Lempira, through capacitating, technical assistance, financing, and extensive civic participation.

An educative programme has been developed with seven main modules. These modules have been designed to strengthen the organisation of the community and to train people in technical aspects of the work in the water and sanitation project. This is done so that they can maintain and operate the water system in a long-term perspective. Examples of the modules are General knowledge of administration; Organisation and building; Gender; Basic sanitation with focus on why they should have a clean house and separate animals from people, how water should be cleaned (by boiling or chlorination) and hygiene (COCEPRADIL 2003).

To have a water system every household had to pay an initial fee of around 50 dollars or 10 % of what the whole system would cost. In some communities the municipality paid those 10 %. In addition a list of requirements regarding the obligations of the participants in the project is part of the agreement that is made between COCEPRADIL and the community. According to these requirements the beneficiaries have to:

- Assist with their unqualified workforce in all the tasks of the project. When building the systems it can imply up til 250 days of labour from each household member.
- To participate in all the seminars, both the man and the woman in a couple, if he/she is single then he/she must participate.
- Sign regulations and the statutes of COCEPRADIL.
- Participate in the planned reunions of the organisation.
- Fulfil the norms of sanitation that the community establishes. In some of the communities they have sanitation committees for women that kept on working on the issues that had been part of the modules in the beginning, and monitored if the norms were followed.
- Obey the different regulations related to the protection of the environment established by the state.
- Finish the carrying out of the project within stipulated time.
- Have papers of possession of the watershed that supplies water to the community.

As one woman, the secretary in a water committee, said: *For a group to have life, it needs to be organised. Because if one does the work and others don't, it will not function.* The requirements underlines that the water system is define as the responsibility of the communities.

These requirements included the maintaining of the water system, and every month a group of beneficiaries were assigned to clean the water tank, maintain the pipeline and check for

defaults. The men usually did this work. The water system and the follow up of the activities require funding. Another assumption in the project is that funding from external institutions is available.

The form of participation in the project is in part work done by the participants. As all the activities in the water committees are conducted through groups that “meet predetermined objectives related to the project” the level of participation is functional participation.

Means that are used to achieve the protection of watersheds is to relocate people that are living in critical zones of the watersheds, if they have their house in the recharging zone of the watershed or if they have agricultural land there. The relocations have decreased the recent years, they were important in a project preceding the Panacon project, called Comprehensive Management of Watersheds of Lempira. COCEPRADIL has been criticised for not including the people living in the watersheds in capacitating around the purpose for the protection and management of the watersheds and therefore creating dissatisfaction among the relocated people (Hernández 1999).

The relocations of people living in critical zones of watersheds

As relocations seem to be a huge interference into people’s lives, I wanted to know what people that were relocated thought about the relocation. Two educators and I visited two families near by San Andrés in order to interview them.

The first house we visited was not far from the road; about 5 minutes’ walk, but isolated in the sense that there was no path or road leading to it. The house had a roof of tile and walls of adobe (sun-dried brick). They had a yard with a fire spot that was used for burning waste and they had some plants, amongst others coffee. Inside the house the floor was of soil.

In the house there was an elderly man, *abuelito*, and a young couple present. They lived in the house of the elderly man, the father of the young man. The young woman was from El Salvador and they had one son aged four. After a while *abuelita* also came in and sat down by her husband.

The family had moved down from their house in Congolón to this house one year earlier. I asked them what they thought about COCEPRADIL’s work with the environment in Congolón, but they had no opinion about that. I asked in different ways if there had been any problems with the moving from their former place to the new house. The oldest man said: *You see, I never had the ambition of having water in the house and a roof of tile.* He told that they could grow coffee

around the new house. This was not possible in Congolón due to the altitude. They had also planted potatoes and other crops by the house. On questions about proximity and localisation, they answered that it was much nearer to the village (San Andrés). Especially the young woman expressed that this was positive. They could not say anything that was negative about moving. The old couple had lived at least 20 years in Congolón before they moved. People in the village (la comunidad) had helped them with the moving and bringing down their belongings.

I asked if they had had any meetings or talk with COCEPRADIL about the relocation and the exchange. They had not. When it comes to the compensation or payment they said they got the same size of land as they used to have.

None in this family were members of any groups, organisations or committees. They had been asked about a project, but when they signed up, there was no use for them. It was unclear what project this was.

Apparently this family was satisfied with their new situation and they thought that the exchange they had made was fine. Their house was of better quality, they had access to water even though they were not members of the water and sanitation project in the area, and they could grow a larger diversity of plants. They have not been through any capacitating process or discussion with local groups or employees of COCEPRADIL and were not integrated into any projects in the area.

The next house was relatively big, clean and with an outdoor hall with a roof. In the house there was a breastfeeding mother. She and her husband had 5 children living in the house. They were six that had moved from Congolón five years earlier. We asked questions to the mother who stood in the doorway to a bedroom. She was shy. Some of her elder daughters aged 10-12 sat and listened. I asked if they went to school, and they said that they did.

On a question on whether they had water she answered that they had water in the house. She did not know whether there had been any meetings or if anybody came to the house to discuss the compensation. Then her husband came home. I asked him some of the questions over again. He said that they were happy to grow their own coffee here and that he had his own field 20 – 25 minutes further above in the hill (actually the coffee field of one of the engineers and project managers employed in COCEPRADIL). He said that one person from CRS came to talk with them about the relocation/moving.

Both families had gotten improved houses after moving. They seemed happy about the relocation and both families had water in the house, the first also even though they were not

part of the water committees. It probably was part of the relocation deal that they would get water in their new house. In these cases relocation was successful.

Capacity giving and participation was not seen as important in the relocation process, and the relocated are not targeted as part of the self-sustainable basis. As described in chapter two, projects were previously run in communities with water systems and therefore in communities that had organised groups. The strict rules for the organising of groups within the water projects, and possibly also the focus on the quality of the drinking water in the communities with a water system, narrowed the organisation's perception of who the potential beneficiaries of the activities in the organisation were. Now that they have projects in communities without water the focus of the organisation has expanded, and means are reconsidered, as we will see in the project of Panacon.

According to the educators and other employees the water committees in COCEPRADIL make the decision of how to protect the watershed. One of the educators said that the water committees decide that persons in the watersheds have to move, thereafter they send a representative from COCEPRADIL or CRS (in these cases it was CRS) to talk to and convince the family that they have to move, and they make an agreement with them. The involvement of CRS in the process indicates that the local groups, here represented by the water committees, are implementing policies that have been decided by the donors. The fact that COCEPRADIL did not execute this part of the project on their own, indicates that CRS is strongly involved in the design of the project.

The objectives of the project for Rehabilitation and Managing of the National Park of Congolón (Panacon)

Figure 5 presents the project within the project matrix of LFA²⁰. The general objective is to rehabilitate and manage the natural resources in the national park in a sustainable way. The purpose of the project is to reduce unsustainable agricultural practices and deforestation through cooperation with people and institutions in the area.

The major part of the population in the area is, as described earlier, subsisting on natural resources. A major problem identified in the project description is that the agricultural

²⁰ The following section is based on the description of the Project of Rehabilitation and Management of the National Park of Congolón.

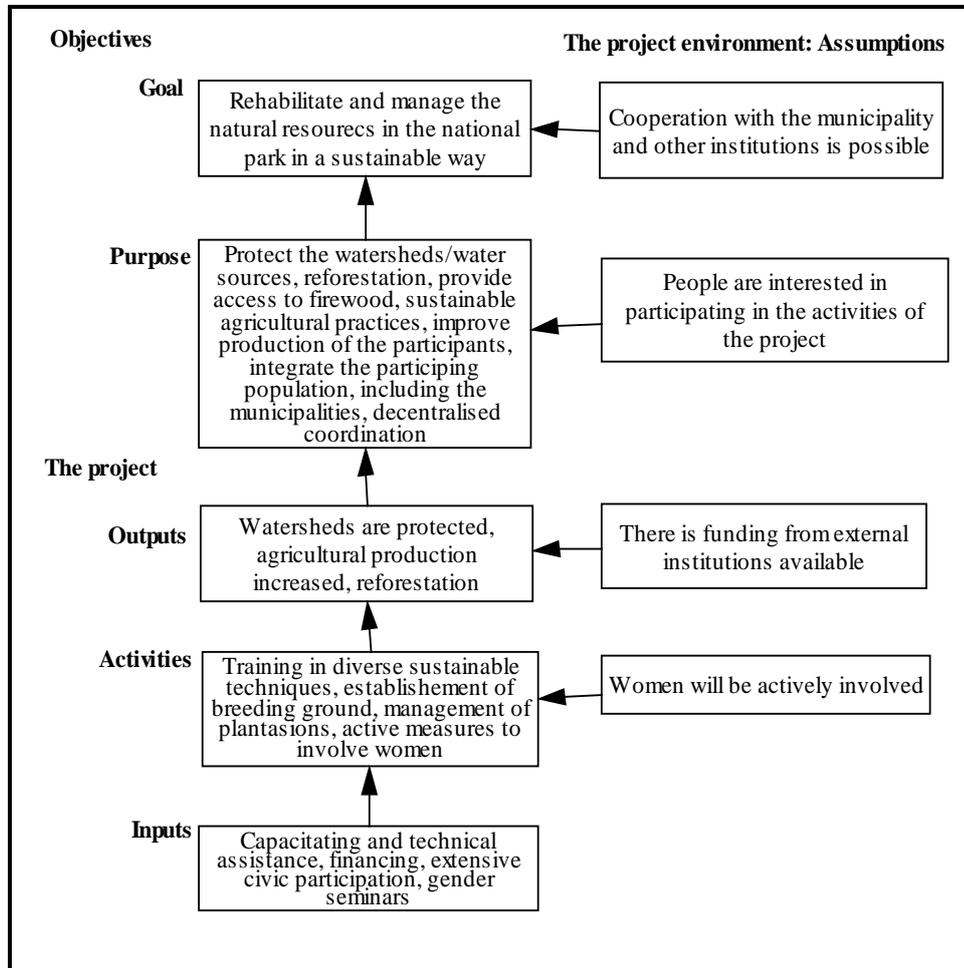
production and productivity in the area is low. The output of maize growing and the diversity of crops are low. In parts of the year there is a shortage of food and people migrate to other areas to seek day labour to get income so that they will subsist until the next harvest of maize (COCEPRADIL 2000:10-11). This was exemplified when one of the male respondents in the environmental group in Valle Nuevo said: *When the Panacon project began I was not here in my place. Here in Honduras we have the habit to emigrate to other places to get money. And when I came back here it was my wife that presented me to the project of Panacon.*

Included in the problem of low production there is the use of chemical fertilizers that contribute to the pollution of the water sources. The project intends to secure people's need for firewood and the need for protection of the forest for environmental reasons. Reforestation is also important for the protection of the watersheds in the area. A purpose of the project is to establish structures for decentralised management of the park, namely cooperation bodies in each of the municipalities that are part of the park (Erandique, Gualcince and San Andrés) called Organised Units of Environmental Management²¹. The decentralised management involves COREPRADIL, the water committees and the participants in the project, both those living within the limits of the park and those living outside the park. Decentralisation is part of a long-term strategy as the project had a limited time frame; it was in its finalising year in 2003, when the fieldwork to this thesis was conducted. The assumptions that are made according to the objectives of the project are first that cooperation with other institutions will work, second that people will be interested in participating in the activities of the project.

An assessed output of the improvement of the production and productivity of the participating people in the agricultural, livestock and forestry areas, through the access to agricultural techniques and sustainable forestry management, is an increase in the income level in the area (COCEPRADIL 2000).

²¹ Unidades de Manejo Ambiental Organizadas

Figure 5: The project of Panacon



Source: (COCEPRADIL 2003; NORAD 1999)

The inputs and means/activities to achieve the objective in the Panacon project:

In the project description COCEPRADIL states that it is not their intention to relocate people (as they did as part of the water and sanitation projects and in the project preceding Panacon called management of watersheds). The organising of people to conduct the project has been different from village to village. Where there are water committees the activities in this project are conducted through the already established structure of the water project. In other communities, especially in the central zone of Congolón the organisation and activities have been less structured than in the water committees. Approximately 40 communities have environmental groups according to the project description; approximately half of them are

part of the water committees' structure. The activities that were conducted in the project were amongst others:

- Establishment of breeding ground and demonstrative plots.
- Training in conservation techniques and management of hillside soils (to prevent erosion).
- Management of crops plague: the use of chemicals is the main contaminator of the water sources; therefore it is necessary to work for a shift to organic fertilizer.
- Production of fodder for livestock and the establishment of energy wood.
- Reforestation with the aim of protection against erosion and to cover the people's need for firewood.
- The development of educational material and capacitating.
- Activities to achieve the participation of women and inclusion of women in the management structures.

COCEPRADIL and CRS are jointly responsible towards legal authorities (for the management of the national park as a protected forest area).

The respondents mentioned these activities when they were asked what they did in the groups and what they liked the most with the work. Examples of answers were: *We learn how to work with the breeding ground, we plant trees; we maintain the woods and grow vegetables; we keep the trees in the field; we sow coffee plants.*



The environmental group in Guatincara planting coffee plants together with a technician from COCEPRADIL

Other activities in the groups were to lend out the capital of the group to its members. COCEPRADIL also sold tools on credit to the members at a lower price than market price. Another concrete activity was the building of chimneys to avoid that the smoke from the fireplace in the kitchen polluted inside. The tool that was often mentioned under the meetings in the environmental groups was the griddle. As already described, when they joined the group every member had the right to one griddle. In Yelegual they were asking when the griddles would be provided them.

According to the group I interviewed in Valle Nuevo, the griddle had been one of the main focus of people that joined the group in the beginning, according to the group I interviewed there. They said that: *people wanted it all to be given* and when they discovered that being in the group meant that they had to work and pay a fee, they left the group. On the one hand this can be used as an example of how give-aways affect participation negatively. Pretty (1995) describes give-aways as having distorting effects on people's perceptions, creating dependencies and giving an impression that local people are supported by externally driven initiatives (Pretty 1995:169). On the other hand it can also function as a concrete incentive for people to be in a group in a project where the objectives are diffuse in the sense that they are protecting collective goods, not as in the water project where the purpose is to have water for each of the families that are participating. Still, to have people stay organised there must be other measures than give-aways. COCEPRADIL uses the commitments not hiding that being organised means work. Other incentives for working in environmental groups were the prospect of getting a water project. This was the case in Azacualpa M. and Jurtao, the latter village located in the height. Only the people living on the lower side of the water tank had water, the others gathered in the environmental group, planning that they would get a rainwater system.

The inputs that were planned for capacitating, extensive civic participation and gender seminars seemed to be less extensively used and achieved than planned. They had not attended gender seminars as the water committees had. The environmental groups were in some villages (like Coquim, that did not have a water project) and Liquidambar (that had an old water project) not really a group at all. Some groups complained about few visits from the educators and technicians. The beneficiaries in some villages had not attended seminars in the context of the environmental group.

This indicates that the activities conducted in the environmental groups worked as incentives for people to participate.

Outputs/Indicators in both projects

What had people learned in the projects, and did that correspond with the inputs and activities that were planned? The group in Valle Nuevo answered that they had learned to stop the slash-and-burn in farming. They had been taught alternatives. When I asked whether those in the group were the only ones who had stopped using this, they answered no, and explained that a new law prohibited it today. These laws are executed at the municipal level, and COCEPRADIL and other organisations in the area, (e.g. FAO through their project Lempira Sur) have been working for laws that prohibit slash-and-burn farming. The respondents connected this to the work of the environmental group, but everybody had to stop doing it, members or not.

One leading question was asked to the environmental groups; *Why is it necessary to protect the environment of Congolón?* Almost all the respondents answered that it was for the future; *we sow trees for the children to come and: because we need it all to survive, both the animals and we. In this way the water is protected so that we have clean water.* Also the problem of deforestation was referred to: *So that it [the environment] can be maintained better, if not all of it would be deforested.* When asked what the most important they have learned the answers were similar to the answers on the above question, e.g. one answer was: *to protect the environment and the forest.* The answers to this question were in overall quite similar from village to village and indicate that capacitating has taken place, and that the goal of the project has been incorporated into the discourse of the participants. The question is whether it was incorporated to the practices of the people as well. Other answer on what they had learned were: *to manage the environment and how to better cultivate the land;* and when asked if they had learned new things in the group one man answered: *how to sow maize. Before we sowed in squares, now we sow in rows.* These answers show that they have learned new agricultural practices, and thus since these practices are more environmentally friendly, there has also been a shift in practice as aimed in the purposes of the project. I observed demonstrative plots, where they learned to make living barriers (e.g. by keeping trees in the field) and dead barriers (by laying dead plants in rows as a fence in the field) against erosion. And I saw fields owned by people living in the area where these techniques were used.

When asked if they thought it was necessary to have groups to do the work one person answered: It is necessary to have groups because sometimes we are not aware and because personally we don't try to deal with the plot or to protect the environment. But through the groups they explain to us and we can little by little go forward. Others said: because there is more strength [in a group]; and: because in the groups the work can be done more quickly; A woman, one of the treasurers, said it is necessary because in groups we get more experience for everything. If we are not organised we have almost none. One young man said that the most important thing he had learned was: the way organisation works, and how to live organised. Thus there is a strong consciousness about the utility of the groups. To be in groups was also what some of the respondents liked about the project. A woman in Guatincara said: I like to be at the meetings because it is a pleasure to be talking to the other companions. This indicates that the work in the groups have a social dimension, as an arena to meet in a different setting than the everyday one.

Comparing the Projects

The water committees and environmental groups seemed to generally differ in how they functioned: the meetings in the water committees were structured, with more 'verbal contributions', the meetings in the environmental groups that were not combined with water committees seemed less structured and the members seemed to be less trained in being organised, which also was the case. The exception was the environmental group in Yelegal, which was taken over by COCEPRADIL when those who originally organised them, COPINH, left the area. The process of getting water is so long that by the time the community has a system, people have been through many meetings, seminars and thus have got indirect and direct training. This gives the impression of more dynamic groups within the water and sanitation projects than in the environmental/Panacon project. The environmental project did not have the same focus on organisation of groups, and structure had been looser in the beginning. People did not sign a list of requirements as it was done in the water committees. In one village, Coquim, the environmental group had never worked at all. Comparing the two types of organised groups makes it visible that participation of beneficiaries depends on the degree to which they are organised.

The environmental group had managed to include women in the management structures, mostly as treasurers, but as it will be discussed later there were generally not many women present in the meetings of the environmental groups, except for the representatives. In the

water committees the women are present, but less outspoken than the men. Here women were elected representatives e.g. as treasurers. As mentioned in chapter two, the organisation managed to include women in management positions, thus women were represented in decision-making for a locally. The organisation is following up their statements in the project descriptions. But this does not necessarily have a 'trickle-down effect' on all the levels of the work of the organisation.

The outputs of the environmental project are less tangible and they are not satisfying basic needs as the water project is. The activities that they are taught and asked to replicate by themselves, as building chimneys and improving agricultural practices, are useful, but not crucial. Some of the respondents were members of the environmental group in addition to being organised within other organisation working in their community. They liked being organised and saw the activities as useful inputs. The environmental groups work with laws that people in the area have to follow anyway, namely the prohibition of slash-and-burn farming. Additionally there are other institutions working on exactly the same topics in the area, competing with COCEPRADIL. That is not the case for the water project. In sum, the activities conducted in the environmental groups and the results of this work is not dependent on COCEPRADIL to the same extent as having a water system that work all-year round is dependent on whether the people have been working with COCEPRADIL or not. This explains why the amount of members in the environmental groups relative to the population in the respective communities was lower than in the water committees. In addition it is possible that where the aims of being organised are more intangible, it is more difficult for people in the villages to see the use of being a member.

In both projects a fine had to be paid if members skipped the practical work. If they did not attend meetings they had to send an excuse. Where they had organised a sanitation committee with women, they made inspections to check that the hygiene requirements were followed, and if not they would give a fine. There was flexibility around the fines; in one environmental group they had a discussion around this, as they suggested that the fines should be dropped for two of the members that had sent an excuse. The leader said: *if we drop the fine for two, we should have the same practice for everybody*, and they ended up dropping the fine for all on the list that had not attended meetings.

5.2 The nature of the organisation and participation

In this part the analytical framework and the figure presented in chapter four will be used to discuss the organisation and different approaches to participation.

Scale

COCEPRADIL has its roots and base in the south and gets funding from the north. COCEPRADIL fits in between some of the categories in the analytical model: at the scale-level COCEPRADIL emerged as a grassroots organisation. The organisation expanded and became a service to grassroots organisation that provides water systems or service and support to grassroots with the help of external funding.

Emerging in the 1980s COCEPRADIL can be seen as one of the “new type” of organisations, the private development NGOs. It is an NGO that relies on funding from Europe, Canada and NGOs in the U.S. and insist that development work must be done in association with self-organised poor people’s organisations.

Ownership

COCEPRADIL organises the provision of the services in membership groups in the villages and have, as described earlier, a democratic structure where delegates from the water committees elect the management board. Membership is a key part of the organisations work and operational method. In the majority of the projects the beneficiaries have to be members of a group, and as mentioned in chapter two, the members are paying a quota that is divided in three parts: one part is used for the maintenance of the water system in the village or, if they have only an environmental group, for materials, the second part is for COREPRADIL, the regional body, and the third part goes to COCEPRADIL centrally. Therefore the organisation could be defined as a membership support organisation. At the same time it has the responsibility for the employment of the executive director, which is a professional, and generally, the educators, specialists and trainers have an educational background that is distinct from the base of the organisation. The organisation can thus be defined as a non-membership support organisation. The executive director is also a member of the organisation, as he lives in a village where COCEPRADIL has been involved in the making of a water system and the village/community has a water committee. COCEPRADIL thus can be defined as an organisation with elements from both non-membership support (grassroots/community) organisations and membership support (service to the grassroots)

organisations. The difference in educational background and the fact that the employees had employment in contracted periods meant that the employees were generally better off economically than the base of the organisation.

Orientation

The organisation is value driven, as its purpose is not to earn a profit. The organisation is dependent on funds for paying salaries. The organisation seeks to have more funding to expand its projects and the number of people they can employ to follow up the projects. The organisation targets the whole population in the communities where it starts a project. When they start to work, only those who have chosen to be members and take part in the activities are beneficiaries. This is the manner in which the organisation secures that everybody takes part in the work that follows with the project.

Approach: How did the respondents perceive participation?

Participation differs not only when judging the level and form of involvement of people in a project, but also in the meaning that we give the word, and the associations to the term. So, what do people in the committees and groups think about participation, how do they explain and understand participation?

I asked the respondents whether all the members of the group participate in what they do. Everybody answered that they did, in all the communities. It was therefore unexpected to discover in one of the practical work sessions of the environmental group in Guatincara that they usually did not. Three or four members were missing. The leader of the group talked with the engineer from COCEPRADIL about it, it was not unusual that not all joined the practical work. It is not unexpected that some members are absent from organised activities in general, but I do not know why people said that everybody attended. It is possible that since everybody in principle should attend every time, and had been told by educators from COCEPRADIL that they should attend, said that all the members of the group attended.

I got a surprising answer when I interviewed a young woman from the group in Yelegal. I reformulated the question about participation several times until I asked what the word participation meant to her. She answered that *we in the group, we don't give participation, only the president does*. A man said: *One asks for the permission to speak to participate*. On

the question *Who decides what you do in the groups/committees?* Other respondents answered by saying that *the leader decides*. Some answered that this was done through discussion.

Participation was interpreted as the verbal contributions during the meetings, and Cleaver's (1999) critique of participation as equal to verbal contribution is then a critique not only of how project managers arrange projects components to include people, but also a critique of how people perceive participation. The form of participation the respondents refer to is talking. In the groups they usually listen to what the leader of the group says. The practical activities e.g. the work in the breeding ground and reforestation is not referred to as participation by the respondents. The level of participation in their own perception is localised somewhere between passive participation and participation in information giving. The members of local boards²² usually told more examples of activities that were done in the groups than "regular" members.

This indicates that meetings where all the families in the project are represented is not necessarily securing that different opinions are heard. People, and especially women and youngsters in this area give, according to my observations, particularly little verbal contributions in meetings. On the other hand, when the leader of the group is elected respondents in all the groups says that they elect by voting. Having democratic elections is not sufficient for having a democratic group, as the path to the election in a democratic structure consists of discussions on e.g. who should run for the leading positions. To make a structure function as intended, in this case as a democratic structure, the activities within the organisation and projects should include education in democracy. The leaders and the secretaries had got training on how to conduct a meeting; the agendas were the same in every committee and group. And as stated above, COCEPRADIL has education seminars on the advantages of being organised to be able to deal with the problems in the communities (COCEPRADIL 2000). The process in itself is a process of learning for those who are involved, for many, being in a group was a new positive experience. Several respondents in different communities answered that they liked to go to the meetings, and argued that they learned new things.

²² Leader, secretary and treasurer

In the pre-testing interview done in Piruera interviewees said that some people felt excluded from the water committees because they could not read or write. In this village there were many members in the water group, and they had elections for an administrative committee. And it was to this committee people complained that they had no access. Asking other respondent if some people felt excluded from the committees or groups, they said that the non-members wanted to work individually, and that they meant working in groups was a waste of time.

Approach: Participation and women's access to resources

What kind of participation is characteristic for COCEPRADIL? One of the questions that became the most interesting to me after a while was: to what extent were women active in the committees and groups?

As already stated, observation of meetings indicate that women are often reluctant to speak. They speak lower than men, and they are often very shy, also in an interview situation. Men seem to generally have more training to speak, although the shyness is very apparent among young boys too. There are often some outspoken women in meetings, and they can roughly be divided into three categories: elderly widowed or single women who are not afraid to speak out (anymore); women who have been active in some kind of work in the community; and women that have more education than is usual in the area (usually immigrants from other areas). There were generally fewer women than men going to the reunions in the environmental groups then in the water committees, and the environmental groups were the groups where women were most absent with some exceptions.

Both men and women interviewed were asked if women participated as much as men. Even if I had observed a meeting and the amount of women was little or none, the men I interviewed from that group would usually say that women have the same possibilities to participate as men. Much of the training of COCEPRADIL included saying that men and women were equal and had equal possibilities to participate. Therefore both men and women knew and said that they had equal right to participate. As observed, the presence of men was much higher than that of women in meetings in the environmental groups. Thus here the discourse of the participants did correspond neither with the presence of women, nor their 'verbal contributions' in the groups. On this background the questionnaire was reviewed and I asked about this absence of women. The new questions were why there were fewer women in the

meetings and what they thought could be done so that women would participate more in the meetings.

In Yelegual, the group had kept the mandatory participation of both men and women from when they were organised in COPINH. A 26-year-old man from the group, answered the following when he was asked if women participated on an equal footing as men in the meetings: *Sometimes they are shy, but yes they do have the same right to participate as men and give their opinion. But yes, sometimes they do not participate in the meeting, I don't know why.* He was then asked if he thought that there was anything that could be done to increase women's participation. *Well, one good thing could be to have a seminar where it could be explained that they have the same right as men to participate. They do feel subordinated in front of the men and it is not that way, we can all participate wherever, and we all have the same intelligence. But they sometimes do not understand this. A seminar would be good for each of them.*

Some explanation for the uneven participation in the environmental group was that the members were discussing and performing work belonging to the male part of the gender-divided labour. This is also the case with the physical work in the water committees, like the building of water systems. In the pre-testing interview in Piruera, one of the women interviewed was a single mother, and she had taken part in the work of making the system, which implies digging, constructing tubes and water sinks. She was one of few women that did this. The single mothers usually sent their sons if they were old enough, i.e. around twelve years and up. This was also the case for the physical work in the environmental groups. Thus the women do not get access to the same training as men.

In the environmental groups the meetings did not have mandatory participation of women, with the exception of the group in Yelegual. This was visible at meetings as there were hardly any meetings with more than two women present. In two communities women had one of the main positions, in both groups as a treasurer. It was, as described earlier, part of the activities in the project description to include women in the structures in the managements groups. The environmental groups were groups with much focus on agricultural practices, which is mainly the man's field, although women are usually also working in the field, especially when households have their own land near by the house. The improvement of agricultural techniques had become the sphere of the man. The group also focus on tools. When question

were asked to the respondents on who were using the new tools the informants answered that it was the men. Thus men got new economic opportunities because of the project, while these were limited for women. Rather, as will be discussed later, the environmental groups were less attractive for women than e.g. food-for-work programmes.

It is easier to explain the presence of women in the water committees than the absence of women in the environmental groups. As written earlier, the water committees usually had requirement that imposed both women and men to participate. It had been an initial demand from COCEPRADIL and the donors, Caritas Norway and CRS, that women participate in the module-based seminars and the planning if they wanted a water- project. On a celebration of a water project (Inauguración de Agua) for three villages, the leader of COCEPRADIL told me that this village had refused the women to participate because they should not leave their house and the villages, etc. Since participation was mandatory to have a water system, the village finally accepted this.

Some villages did not uphold this rule in the groups for long. Liquidambar, a village that got a water-project eight years ago, where they now tried to have an environmental group as well, did not have many women in the water-committee meetings anymore.

A woman interviewed from this village whose husband and mother was participating, did not participate anymore. She had not been part of the group since the seminars in the beginning of the project. What she liked the most about participation was that they left the village in a group to explore the site where the water tank was to be localised. She had really enjoyed this experience. She did not go to the reunions any more because her partner and mother were participating instead of her.

Findings indicate that if the mandatory participation of women in the groups is not kept or introduced, young women are likely to disappear from the water committees and not be part of the environmental groups. This is despite the organisation's special focus on the obstructions for female participation in their project description. It is hard to turn cultural habits, but taking into consideration the many matrifocal households it might have been an idea to have environmental groups for women only, as in the water committees were they had sanitation committees for women only. There should be incentives and requirements so that women could participate in the environmental group as well, and they would get access to

training. If not, both COCEPRADIL and external organisations are actually supporting a project where most of the resources are for the benefit of men only, except for the griddle for the kitchen, and the few women that were present in the groups. Mandatory participation for women means that one has to consider women's need for relief and aim at facilitating their tasks, if not the work in groups will only add up to women's daily workload.

This was exemplified in the meeting in Yelegal; the leader told the group that one of the women were planning to leave the group and asked her to tell why. She said: *Because for me it is a lot to take care of the children.* It is difficult to combine the domestic tasks with the participation in groups. This can also be the reason why elderly women are represented in the environmental groups, they don't have the burden of bringing up small children.

Even though what members of the environmental groups said that the participation of women was not representative for how the presence of women de facto was in some of the groups, they have been taught that men and women are equal, and it is possible that this will in the long run have positive effects on the attitudes among the people in the area.

Approach: Participation and how projects are started

How were the committee established, and how did the work on the water project start? On one hand COCEPRADIL asked and convinced people in communities to join their projects. They arranged community meetings where they invited all the people in the village, and sent the leader, the director and one employee in the project that they wanted to introduce, e.g. an engineer if it is a water project or a professor within agriculture if it is an environmental group. At this meeting they appeal to people and tell why they think that it is a good project for the community. This initial stage of mobilisation can be seen as involving passive participation, as it is a unilateral announcement by an administration. In the water projects COCEPRADIL normally starts their work in a community after the community has requested assistance from the organisation.

Some communities, that now have water, had tried to get assistance from several instances and organisations to get water projects to their villages. They worked actively towards COCEPRADIL so that COCEPRADIL would start a water project in their village. This may take some time. In Gualcea, a village with relatively many inhabitants and 113 families in the water project, the members of the water committee told that the process of getting water

started in 1990/91 with the assistance of the Menonitas (an evangelical church). They organised a committee in Valla Dolid, the centre of the area). The mayor was asked to give a permit for the construction of a system and they got it. They asked every landowner for permission to pass the system. The Menonitas helped with the pipes. In 1995 the Menonitas did not have the capacity to complete the project. The project was passed on to COCEPRADIL. It took many years before the project proceeded. Then the hurricane Mitch came and the external institutions turned to the coastal part of the country. More years passed on and nothing happened in the project. Money had been collected from the families but the committee had to give it back. In 2000 they got guarantees of funding from an external institution and COCEPRADIL and the community formalised their cooperation and began the work on the system, which was finished in 2002.

Some people gave up after years of planning and waiting for a project. When I asked a non-member in Copantes why he was not part of the water project he answered that he had water through his own project *as the project was constantly delayed. I spent 400 Lempiras. We worked for three years in the beginning of the project*, then he left. He also stated that *we will not go back to any groups or institutions after that experience*, the exception was working on the track (the food for work programme of CARE).

Approach: interactive participation and self- mobilisation

Some people organised groups on their own and asked for the support of COCEPRADIL. One elderly woman in Yelegual decided to join the project in a neighbouring community, Corta Cabeza, so that she could have water. Thus we see that people in poor rural are social actors as active shapers of their own life.

How do earlier projects, and external factors influencing the actions and perceptions of people in the villages? Some of the groups were converted – they had earlier been groups within other projects, and when these organisations left, like the indigenous organisation COPINH or CARE, COCEPRADIL took over the group. COCEPRADIL was known as a stable organisation that did not leave the area. This was promoted by COCEPRADIL, and beneficiaries described the organisation as the organisation that was not going to leave the area. This could be the perception because it had been promoted at meetings. Still, COCEPRADIL had worked in the area for a longer time than other organisations. COPINH had worked in the area since the mid-1990s, but it seemed like they had started to pull out

from villages in the area. It was important for COCEPRADIL to have confidence among people in order to convince new communities that they should join one of their projects. It was necessary both for the survival of the organisation and to achieve their development objectives presented in the project matrix for the water project. As Long (2001) shows, no project is implemented in a vacuum and does not follow a linear progression with an evaluation that closes the project and erases people's memory and perceptions of it so that it is possible to start a new, untouched project.

Trust did not only involve how long the history of the organisation was in the area but also how they respond to people in the communities. The example from Gualcea where people's actions to get water can be seen as self-mobilisation is also an example where COCEPRADIL maybe lost or could have lost some of the trust that people had to their ability to help them in their efforts to have a water system. One non-member in Copante expressed how his confidence in institutions was gone after they had to wait so long for progress in their project. It is actually strange that not more people give up in cases like that, but it also underlines how much people are willing to work to get access to drinking water, one of our basic needs.

Confidence in an organisation can also be misused to fool people. After interviewing a non-member he told us that his mother had been fooled for money. Two men came with a car and said that she had to pay in advance for materials that would be used to improve her house. They told her that they were from COCEPRADIL. The non-member said that he knew whom from COCEPRADIL that worked in the area, and he understood that it was not them. COCEPRADIL does not collect money in advance either. The episode was later brought up in a meeting with all the employees of COCEPRADIL, and they discussed having laminated identity cards. The work of COCEPRADIL and NGOs in general is vulnerable for the actions of people who see opportunities to earn money.

5.3 Operational Dimensions and Spin-off Effects

What were the general experiences and learning from the process of establishing and running a water system and project?

Are there any extended positive effects from organising people? The members themselves tell that they have learned to live organised and to work together. A young male treasurer said: *In questions of mathematics in the group, I have learned how to calculate.* As described

respondents said that they learned about meetings and how to work in groups and together. They also learned how they could achieve things through being organised, the chairman in an environmental group said: *it is good to be organised because we have assistance that comes from other countries, and if we were not organised they could not [assist us]. As organised we have received benefit from the institution.* The female treasurer of a water committee said: *We can not only ask. We have to learn to defend ourselves.* Another woman, a member of an environmental group in Azacualpa M., stated that she was learning; *it is for the benefit of oneself.*

In the inaugurations of water systems that I took part in the main subject was not the system itself or the work with the system, but the things they had learned during the process. One of the speakers from Caona in San Andrés said: *To meet every 8-day was seen as a waste of time, but today they see the use/purpose of the meetings and now they gather for any reason to solve problems [of the community]. The project has changed the community a lot.* He then told about how women had to work a lot to get/ fetch water and that they today can use this time in another way. *Look, when we had the workshops in the beginning they [the women] were crying...now they can speak for an assembly.* After his speech a female teacher said that people were very shy and that *we don't care about ourselves only anymore but about the whole community.*

This indicates that working in groups have spin-off effects, effects that are not really part of the purpose or the goals of the project; the participants achieve new skills and they can use more strategies than they did before for 'coping with life'. Working in groups expand their capability to deal with 'multiple realities'.

Non-members

So far the focus has been on forms and levels of participation and the participant's perceptions of the work in COCEPRADIL. How do those who are not part of the project perceive the organisation and why do they not attend? This latter question is especially important when it comes to the water committees, since being a member of these and thereby part of COCEPRADIL's project was the only way to have water system that works all year round in some of the villages. In Guatincara most of the respondents had water through a project. In Corta Cabeza, one of the non-members had a water system built on their own by leading the

water through tubes from the source to their houses. In Azacualpa M. the respondents had water but not all of them had it through the dry season. That was also the case in Yelegual.

Non-members in villages with water committees

In the villages that have water committees and a water project most of the people in the area were part of the project, and thereby members of the groups. The reasons for not having taken part in the water-project were e.g. the absence of the man in the household²³.

In Liquidambar, a village with a relatively old project, introduced eight years earlier, a young woman that had four children was interviewed. The woman had no water and told that her husband *worked a lot in this project*. But as the others continued working, *they moved forward while he left the area to work, and earn*. They had also joined meetings and 1-2 seminars in the beginning. Since there were plans for a new projects in the area, and many people did not belong to the water system, her family was going to be part of the new project.

Another reason for not being in the water project was that the male member of the household was sick during parts of the project.

In Corta Cabeza, where the respondents seemed to be relatively poorer than e.g. in Azacualpa Montaña, an interviewee lived in a small, dark, and poor looking house. She had three children aged 19, 17 and six. None of them, neither parents nor children, had been to school. The woman told that they had assisted the project in the beginning but that her partner had been seriously ill during the project, and he had to leave. To get an income he worked as day labourer where he could get work. Asked why they were not part of the project because of e.g. disease or economy, she said that it was because of economy, because of poverty. They had a latrine that they had built on their own, but they had a long way to walk to fetch water from a pool. Both the house and the child gave the impression of a home where they had little access to water.

In some communities the inhabitants had made their own system, which probably was cheaper than COCEPRADIL's system but less reliable in the dry season. The water in these systems was generally not as clean as in the water systems of the project. As previously

²³ This absence was commonly due to the migration to earn an income, commonly to San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa or the U.S.

mentioned there were villages with water systems provided by other organisations than COCEPRADIL, but some of these systems did not work all year round.

The employees in COCEPRADIL were asked what they did when some groups of people have difficulties in participating. They answered that disabled, old people and single mothers are supposed to be included in the project through the others in the village helping them to build a system. It seems that this was not always the case. The strict rules that are there to make sure that people come to the meetings so that the water system is maintained and so that people get used to being organised, might have hampered the possibilities to find solutions for those who were more obstructed than others in taking part in the meetings and the work. It was said in both the inaugurations of water that I attended that it was difficult in the beginning, that people did not see the point of coming to meetings, and that in some villages they did not want women to take part. The strict division of labour into men's work and women's work probably is making it harder for a single mother to be part of a project. Yet, as we have seen, there were some women that had joined the project even though they were alone, and did what usually are men's tasks. No doubt that this must have been hard for them, and it underlines how high the demand and wish for water and a water project was. The problem of including vulnerable groups indicates that COCEPRADIL should reconsider its policies and means to see if there are more accurate strategies than the above mentioned to include the most vulnerable in the communities.

It is possible that there is a need for special assistance to reach these groups. That leads to a discussion on whose responsibility the assistance should be. Is it COCEPRADIL's responsibility, an organisation based on voluntary membership and participation? The balance between requirements, that are there to make sure that the system will work accurately, and flexibility is complex, but to some extent possible. The female treasurer in Copantes said: *It is a burden to pay for the water. Some cannot pay. We give them time.* In general it could cause problems to loosen either the economical requirements or the requirements on the physical workload, in an area where most of the people targeted are marginalized economically.

Non members in villages with environmental groups

In the villages with environmental groups, there usually was a good half of the community that were not members. The reasons that people did not join were according to members that

they did not see the point of the meetings, and that they wanted or were used to work on their own.

Also in the environmental groups disease was a reason for not becoming a member or for leaving the group. One non-member in Azacualpa Montaña answered to the question why the family was not a member of COCEPRADIL's environmental group: *Yes, we were working. I became sick, and since the institution is quite strict and I had missed three sessions, I could not start [over again]. In the beginning I was member.*

A 37-year-old woman in Valle Nuevo who was working on the road in a food-for-work programme said that she could not participate because she was alone with her children. She had four children that were less than 18 years old. She chose to work in the food for work programme, but not in the environmental group, indicating that the benefits in the environmental group were less attractive, and the membership more time-consuming. Additionally, in a food for work programme you receive a benefit, while in the environmental group it is necessary to pay a fee. When having responsibility for small children the woman had to prioritise, and being part of a project that gives returns in food or cash, thus participate for material incentives, is more rational than being in a group with functional participation, if basic needs are covered more easily. That might also have been the situation for the woman in Yelegal that left the group; when the group was organised by COPINH, they had a food-for-work project on improving the road. The wife of the leader in the group told me in an informal conversation that they did not have many meetings in COPINH. *In COPINH we only received money.* The change in the frequency of meetings and individual outcomes of the work in groups is likely to lead members to reconsider their membership.

It does not seem as material living standard was decisive for whether there were projects in the communities or not, as both villages where people had access to their own land as e.g. Azacualpa M., and villages where the respondents worked for others, where the housing standard generally was much lower, as e.g. Corta Cabeza, had projects.

At individual level the number of years at school was not decisive for whether people were in a project or not.

To sum up, the most common reason for not being member of a group seems to be that the male adult in the family at some point in the project became ill, and therefore absent from the mandatory work and meetings. It is likely that when the male member of the family is sick, the income of the family will be critically reduced, as he cannot work as a day labourer. Therefore the families will be disadvantaged compared to the other families, even though the access to own land is the same. The other common given reason for not being in a group was, that women could not attend meetings or work sessions because they had small children and/or they were single. In the environmental groups a reason for not participating according to the members, was that some people preferred to work on their own, and that they don't like the strong commitment that working in COCEPRADIL's groups implied.

6 Concluding Discussion

The reasons why people in Lempira become members in the environmental groups and the water committees generally differ between the two types of projects. In the environmental groups the beneficiaries join the group because they like the experience of being in groups, and they learn new useful agricultural practices. Some are also members because they have started the process towards getting a water project.

People in the communities with water systems, usually started to organise themselves before they asked for assistance, as required by COCEPRADIL. People initially choose to be members in the water committees to cover a basic need for their families, the need for water. The membership in the water committees means intensive physical work over a period for at least one year in addition to the introductory fee that they have to pay, and the maintenance of the system in the years to come. The water system built through COCEPRADIL is perceived as reliable all year round.

The non-members in communities with environmental groups were sometimes not interested in working in groups, others took part in many other organised activities in the community, and just did not prioritise the environmental group of COCEPRADIL. Others had been members, but had to leave because of their absence from the group caused by different reasons like disease and migration to get an income.

In communities with water committees, reasons for not being members were often disease and temporarily migration.

The requirements of the beneficiaries were higher in the water project than in the project of Panacon. This was reflected in a higher attendance at meetings, and more dynamic meetings. The requirements for organising and following educational modules secured that the practices of people were accurate so that the drinking water was boiled or chlorinated and stored in the correct manner. The requirements ensured maintenance and operation and thus the long-term sustainability of the water system.

The decision on whether to participate or not in organised activities is to a large extent based on incentives. On one hand, how this incentive is followed up – the degree to which the

beneficiaries are organised, expressed through what is required of them – determines the degree to which the process of being organised lead to positive spin-off effects. The members express that the committees and groups give them new experiences, and new knowledge. Other positive effects were the involvement of women, dynamic meetings and the use of organising for problem solving in the communities. On the other hand, the lack of flexibility when it comes to the fulfilment of the eventual requirements makes it harder for vulnerable groups to become or stay member, unless they manage to mobilise relatives to work for them.

The dependency on external funding

The dependency on external funding influences how NGOs in the south have to prioritise. This was exemplified in chapter three and five showing the consequences of the priorities done after the hurricane Mitch and the 11th of September 2001. Still hundreds of communities are without water systems. But the funding does not allow the organisation to work as fast as they want. Caritas is dependent on priorities in NORAD, CRS on priorities by private people in the U.S. and COCEPRADIL on funding from both and from Fundacion Vida and other institutions. When e.g. Fundacion Vida²⁴ stop working in the area, COCEPRADIL has to find a new way to get funding, and new partners. For example they may apply for funding from the Honduran cooperation for the development of the forest (COHDEFOR), start the project of Panacon and that way go on with reforestation and sustainable agricultural practices as they already did in the anterior project: protection of watersheds.

The positive aspects of making new projects are that the projects that are running towards an end are evaluated, and new perspectives are taken into new, similar but extended project. In the description of the Panacon project they state that the organisation do not intend to relocate the people in critical zones. This is due to a learning process. Employees told that they used to concentrate on people in the descendent zone, thus people living in the zone downhill of Congolón, below 1800 m. but that they now also look at the situation for those in the nuclear zone, people located in and around the watersheds. The external influence and their dependency on the funding is thus pressuring for constant improvement. The employees and leader of COCEPRADIL also appreciated the cooperation with external organisations as Caritas Norway, as it gave them useful inputs and suggestions.

²⁴ Briefly described in chapter two.

Outputs for overall development at regional/ country level

COCEPRADIL's involvement in providing basic needs and support for the campesinos and people in the area can partly be seen as a result of the shrinking public sector prescribed by the financial institutions in the 1980's.

The new politics that are expressed in the PRSP by the Government of Honduras, aim, as shown in chapter four at shrinking the public sector and at giving municipalities and NGOs more responsibility for the 'socio-economic development policies' while the state has a strengthened normative and regulatory role. According to the PRSP, programs and projects that can be carried out by amongst others NGOs are highly valued. But who is then responsible for e.g. assisting vulnerable groups? On one hand, if the NGOs are based on membership it is, as shown in the previous chapter, difficult to have divergence in the requirements to the members. On the other hand, if the NGOs are non-membership organisations they will not be accountable to local people, as they would not be dependent on the confidence of the beneficiaries in the area where they are working.

Decentralisation is not negative in itself; decentralisation to municipal levels was an advantage for COCEPRADIL. They cooperated with the local mayors, and in some municipalities the mayor took the decision to pay the community share of the initial fee in the water and sanitation project. Still, a discussion is needed on whether the financial politics implemented through the PRSP lead to a change or strengthen the responsibility of the poor and organisations like COCEPRADIL to provide basic needs.

The PRSP and the UN Millennium Development Goals both stress increased access to drinking water as an important goal. There is a general agreement that water is a basic need for all people, at the same time as there are strong institutions that want to define water as a commodity. This can also be seen as part of a general commodification trend (Bond 2003). Commodification will also support the claims of the international finance institutions to reduce the public sector. In Lempira COCEPRADIL has managed to establish water systems in villages through constant work to get funding, through capacitating and by telling their beneficiaries that they will get water through hard work. There are not many examples in the north of such efforts to achieve a basic need. The work the poor people have to do is a consequence of the lack of responsibility and ability of the government. COCEPRADIL interferes, not as an interest organisation for people living in the area, like it would have been

in a western European country but as an organisation that has to organise the work with the water system if there is to be any water system at all.

The focus on the positive effects of participation of people can distract the focus from this discussion on which institutions that are responsible for satisfying basic needs of people in rural Honduras. To reduce poverty, and to create more equal living conditions in the country, it is necessary to place the responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants. People are working so hard to get access to basic needs that people in rich countries take for granted that the public sector provides, or has the responsibility to provide.

In Honduras there is little pressure from local organisations as COCEPRADIL on the government to provide water. Participation of the poorest in development projects or interventions does, as previously described, not change structural disabilities, governmental incompetence and corruption, especially the latter being accepted as a major problem in Honduras. Now good governance is in focus, which implies rational use of money, the elimination of corruption and the participation of 'civil society' (Government of Honduras 2001). Thus, as being a democratic regime, cooperation between NGO's and governments is seen as necessary. As a response to that, coordination of aid and civil society has been debated, and the new registration office opened in Honduras is an example of a way to get an overview and maybe also some coordination. There are networks for NGOs in the country, but as described in chapter two, so far the Government does not have a tradition for including the actors in civil society in decision-making bodies. A new trend in the International donor society, as also of CRS and COCEPRADIL, is therefore to focus on political incidence, i.e. political influence or lobbying.

To achieve COCEPRADIL's goal of comprehensive development, a structural change is necessary, so that basic service delivery in the country is not dependent on whether people are poor or wealthier, nor on which department they live in.

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Annexes

Interviews

**Entrevistas de miembros de los comités de rehabilitación y manejo del área
protegida de Congolón.
Por comunidades sin juntas de agua
Versión 4, 20.7.03**

No: _____ Nombre de comunidad: _____ Tiempo de viaje de
Candelaria: Fecha: _____

1. Quiero empezar con preguntas generales sobre tu y su familia:

1. F/ M - Nombre
2. Cuantos anos tienes?
3. Eres 1. Con compañero/ a? 2. Casada/ o 3. Previamente casada/ o 4. Otro:
4. Cuantas personas viven en tu familia/ hogar?
5. Cuantas tienen menos que 18 anos?
6. Cuantos anos fue a la escuela?
7. Y su esposa/ o?
8. Como hacen para tener un ingreso en su familia?

2. Cocepradil

1. Porque tu familia participe en el grupo de medioambiente de Cocepradil en (comunidad)?
2. Como fue miembro/ llego a el grupo de medioambiente?
3. Como empiezo el grupo de medioambiente?
4. Cual es la cuota mensual que pagan a el grupo?
5. Que van a hacer con el capital del grupo?

3. Participación – comités de medioambiente

1. Quien en la familia normalmente participe en las reuniones del grupo de medioambiente?
2. Cuantas reuniones he atendido en el grupo de medioambiente desde el 1. de enero?
3. Quien de la familia atendió en la ultima reunión?
4. Pienses que es importante atender los reuniones en los grupos de medioambiente? Porque?
5. Hay un presidente/ coordinador en el grupo? Si/ No
 - a. Si: Como fue elegido?
6. Quien decide que hacen en los grupos?
7. Que hacen en los grupos de medioambiente?
8. La mujeres tienen la misma posibilidad que los hombres para participar en reuniones en los grupos de medioambiente?
9. Hay mas hombres que mujeres en las reuniones?
10. Que se puede hacer para que las mujeres participan mas?
11. Aprendiste nueva cosas en el grupo? Por ejemplo?

12. Aprendiste a utilizar nuevas herramientas? Las cuales?
13. Quiénes utilizan las nuevas herramientas? Los hombres? Mujeres? Niños? Tú?
14. Por qué necesitan cuidar el medio ambiente de Congolón?
15. Piensas que es necesario tener grupos para hacer este trabajo?
16. Hacen todos los miembros del grupo el trabajo?
17. Sientes que tienes influencia sobre las decisiones que se toman en el grupo de medio ambiente?
18. ¿Qué te gusta más con el trabajo en el grupo de medio ambiente de Cocepradil?
19. ¿Qué es lo más importante que has aprendido?
20. ¿Qué te gusta menos con el grupo de medio ambiente?

4. Participación – común

1. ¿Qué entiendes con la palabra participación? ¿A qué piensas?
2. Sientes que ves los resultados de tus esfuerzos y trabajo que haces en el grupo?
3. ¿Usted también tienen trabajo en la casa o fuera de la casa, sientes que tienen tiempo por las dos cosas?

5. Común:

1. Crees que hay gente en la comunidad que se sienten excluido o apartado del grupo?
 - a. Si: ¿Por qué?

6. Otras organizaciones:

1. ¿Este es el primer grupo a donde participas la familia o alguien de la familia?/ ¿Están miembros de otros grupos/ juntas/ comités?
 - a. Si: ¿Cuáles y con cuáles organizaciones?
2. ¿Usted han asistido a reuniones o talleres sobre otra cosa? ¿Cuáles?
3. ¿Cuáles otras cosas o actividades piensan que puede ser útil para usted o por su familia de hacer en un taller o un grupo?

**Entrevistas de no- miembros en comunidades con comités de medioambiente
o juntas de agua**
Versión 3, 10.7.03

No: Nombre de comunidad: Tiempo de viaje de Candelaria: Fecha:

1. Quiero empezar con preguntas generales sobre tu y su familia:

9. F/ M - Nombre
10. Cuantos anos tienes?
11. Eres 1. Soltera/ o 2. Casada/ o 3. Previamente casada/ o 4. Otro:
12. Cuantas personas viven en tu familia/ hogar?
13. Cuantas tienen menos que 18 anos?
14. Cual es su nivel escolar completado?
15. Y de su esposa/ o?
16. Como hacen para tener un ingreso por su familia?

2. Cocepradil

6. Porque su familia no participe en la junta de agua/ el grupo de medioambiente de Cocepradil en (comunidad)?
7. He tenido la posibilidad a participar en un comité o grupo de Cocepradil?
8. Participio alguien de la familia en las reuniones en el empiezo del proyecto?
9. Cuales fue las razones los mas fuerte para no participar; fue la economía de la familia, el trabajo en el grupo, enfermedad o otra causa?
10. Tienen agua en su casa o en su patio?
11. Tienen una letrina?
12. Sabes algo sobre el trabajo que hacen las juntas de agua y los grupos de medioambiente de Cocepradil?

3. Organización, generalmente

1. Están miembros de otro grupos/ juntas/ comités? Por ejemplo en la iglesia?
 - a. Si: Cuales y con cual organizaciones?
2. Usted han asistido a reuniones o talleres sobre algunas cosas?
 - a. Si: Cuales?
3. Cuales cosas o actividades piensen que puede ser útil para usted o por su familia de hacer en un taller o un grupo/ comité?

Work plan in the field

	PLAN DE ENTREVISTAS Y REUNIONES, ERIKA							
					Juntas de agua	Familias participando	Familias participando 2	Zona
1.7	Kjoretur til Congolón							
2.7	Reunion en el municipio de Mapulaca							
3.7	Valladolid	Chancoyote	Proyecto de agua lluvia					
4.7	San Andrés		Reubicados					
6.7	Piruera		Corepradil	Reunion				
7.7	Gualcince	Valle Nuevo	Entrevistas			9	7	Amotiguamente
8.7		Caona	Inugaracion de agua	Reunion				
9.7		Yelegual	Entrevistas			25	28	Amotiguamente
10.7		Corta Cabeza	Entrevistas	Reunion	Si	10	9	Nuclea
11.7	Erandique	Azacualpa M.	Entrevistas			10	11	Nuclea
12.7	Gualcince	Yelegual		Reunion				
13.7	Gualcea		Junta de agua	Reunion				
14.7	Erandique	Jurtao	Entrevistas	Reunion	Si	17	28??	Nuclea
15.7		Yelegual	Entr. No- m.	R. Cocepr				
16.6		Congol.+Gua.	Tur+lokalisering					Amotiguamente
17.7		Guatincara	Entrevistas			8	12	
18.7		4 comunidades	Inoguracion de agua					
19.7-20.7	Gracias							
21.7	San Andrés	Copante	Entrevistas	Reunion	Si	96		Amotiguamente
22.7		Copante	Entrevistas					
23.7		La Chorrera	Entrevistas			12		Nuclea
24.7	Guatincara	Coquim	Entrevistas	Trabajo practico	8	5	Nuclea	
25.7		Liquidambar	Entrevistas		Si	14		Amotiguamente
26.7								
27.7	Tegucigalpa			Taller/				
28.7				Reuniones				
29.7				Taller/				
30.7				Reuniones				

Poems

Poems read in the inauguration of the water project in the four communities Guacal, Cholunquez, Aguila, Cacahual

Poema proyecto pro agua

Hoy es la fiesta de fama al proyecto
Grande sorpresa a los beneficiarios
Este 18 fue un día esperado
Nadie se sienta desconsolado

Este proyecto que ya es entregado
Inicio en lo alto del fresco horizonte
De un pueblo pobre una buena intención
De los donantes una misión

Todo comienzo es muy difícil
A ver atrás se desespera
Con cara triste como cualquiera
Fue el primer día allá por la arenera

Esta es la suerte de las comunidades
Que el proyecto pro agua les halla llegado
Comprar un punto le sale muy caro
Aquel ciudadano que ha trabajado

Al terminar de hacer la faena
Con hambre y cansado esperando la hora
Después de rifarse unas carambolos
Y durmiendo en el monte por noches asolas

El tema de este grande proyecto
Es la bendita agua del cerro Congolón
La flora que amó, el indomable Lempira
Aunque lo dudan no es una mentira

Sugiero cuidar este proyecto
Porque a renovar lo no van a venir
A Dios las gracias hay que rendir
Y también un saludo a los de Cocepradil

Tengo presente que este sacrificio
Es de valientes pero con amor
No era factible pero recordar
Que el que el ultimo ríe, ríe mejor.

Vino de lejos para aquí posarse
El material que ahora se ve
Con el lomo pelado y bien serios sin querer
Fue el momento de cargar H. G.

Ahora se queda entre 4 un proyecto
de Cacahual hasta llegar a Guacual
solo les pido para estar completo
que solucionen algún desperfecto

Nadie he perdí en este inversión
Y en el aporte a la institución
Es para que no sufran al crecer la nueva población
Cuando alguno de nosotros estaremos serios en el Panteón

Historia del proyecto

Voy a contarles señores la historia de este proyecto
En el año 2001 por cierto en el mes de Agosto
Las 4 comunidades se trabajo por derecho.

De Cocepradil llegaron con un mensaje importante
y algunos desanimados mas bien no les parecía
pensando en las fuentes de agua que iban hacer como antes

Luego los educadores ellos se comprometieron
Fue para capacitaciones en el uso y manejo
De todos los accesorios con sus nombres bien correctos

Se comenzó a trabajar en línea de conducción
Con gente de Cacahual, Cholunquez, Aguila y Guacual
A veces avían poble mos allá en mezo Congolón

Un proyecto es clausurado aquí en el sur de Gaulcince
Ho cada beneficiario se siente muy complacido
Lo que han anhelaba la gente por fin lle go a cumplirse

Después de la captación el trabajo continua
Los técnicos preocupadas para seguir adelante
Y en medio de los pinales las cuadrillos madrugaba

Se unió el tuvo de hierro pasando por San José
Porque son de resistencia no se pueden explotar
al fondo de las hondonadas se ven al amanecer

La gente se lamentaba cuando el agua se escaseaba
La vida era imposible muchos pensaban emigrar
Tal ves las cosas cambiaban estando en otro lugar

Para un mejor desarrollo hay que estar organizados
Por eso nos educaron a que en las comunidades
Cumplir con el reglamento aconsejan los donantes

En las faldas de los cerros están situados los lanques
Los que dan mantenimiento a todas las pilas de agua
Las mujeres se felicitan porque antes ni descansaban

Aquí en mi comunidad las pilas se ven de cerca
Al que se las construyeron es porque le ha hecha penca
Sudando haciendo tareas le quitaron la pereza

Ya con esta me despido con mucho agradecimiento
A los que nos financiaron los bienes de este proyecto
Era una necesidad y ahora ya está resuelto