

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

This case study is based on one of over 60 participatory assessments carried out with communities in 22 countries through the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI).

Enhlet communities' sustainable practices under threat from large-scale cattle ranching in Paraguay

Support needed to protect indigenous land rights, traditional knowledge and agroecological practices in the face of corruption and private-sector abuses

Organisations and individuals involved

HEÑÓI, Centro de Estudios y Promoción de la Democracia, los Derechos Humanos, y la Sostenibilidad Socioambiental

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Location

Community of La Esperanza, Lower Chaco region, western Paraguay.



INES FRANCESCHELLI FOR GFC/CCRI

THE ISOLATED ENHLET indigenous community of La Esperanza in the Chaco region of western Paraguay is made up of 200 families that occupy 11,200ha of land, in a landscape of grasslands, bush forest and palm-covered savannah. The strength of the Enhlet people is their capacity to produce food in a sustainable way, and to maintain of their culture, health and spiritual traditions in harmony with their environment.

The community is actively engaged in restoring habitats and reversing environmental damage. This is primarily done by planting pioneer trees and other plant species to facilitate the spontaneous growth of native vegetation through natural succession. They also play an important role in managing water availability which is ever more important in the face of increasingly frequent water shortages, and their traditional agricultural practices have minimal impact since they involve less tillage and no agrochemicals.

The main threat to the community has been large-scale, export-oriented cattle ranching, which has resulted in native veg-

etation including forests disappearing at an alarming rate and watercourses being deliberately blocked. Communities face a combination of corruption, minimal law enforcement and illegal and often violent land seizures that are condoned by the government. Paraguay already has a broad policy framework in place that is supposed to protect biodiversity, guarantee access to land and restrict the abuses associated with ranching. However, the corruption that prevails across all sectors means that abuses and irregularities continue to be committed with impunity.

The community is already engaged in successful initiatives to practice agroecology, save seeds and restore degraded soils and habitats, which could be expanded and replicated with the right kind of support. Such support needs to include backing for communities' land rights claims and a focus on protecting traditional knowledge. There is also a need for more effective compliance with existing policies, and to strengthen legal support networks that defend communities against human rights violations by large industrial producers.

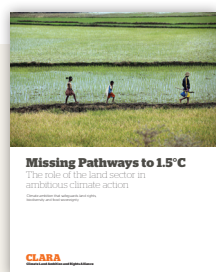
Testimony

Rebecca Cruzabie

"I'm a school teacher in La Esperanza. There is no shop closer than 50km away on a road in poor condition, and to get there you have to cross a guard gate that the ranchers put in. They charge each passing vehicle, and so we cannot pass. There is a ranch shop closer by but they sell everything at twice the price. That is why, out of necessity, the Indigenous People rent their land to the ranchers, and why sometimes there is conflict. We ask the Ministry of Education for resources, but the officials do not come. We need our problems to be heard, as a way of fighting against so much injustice."

'Missing Pathways' to climate action

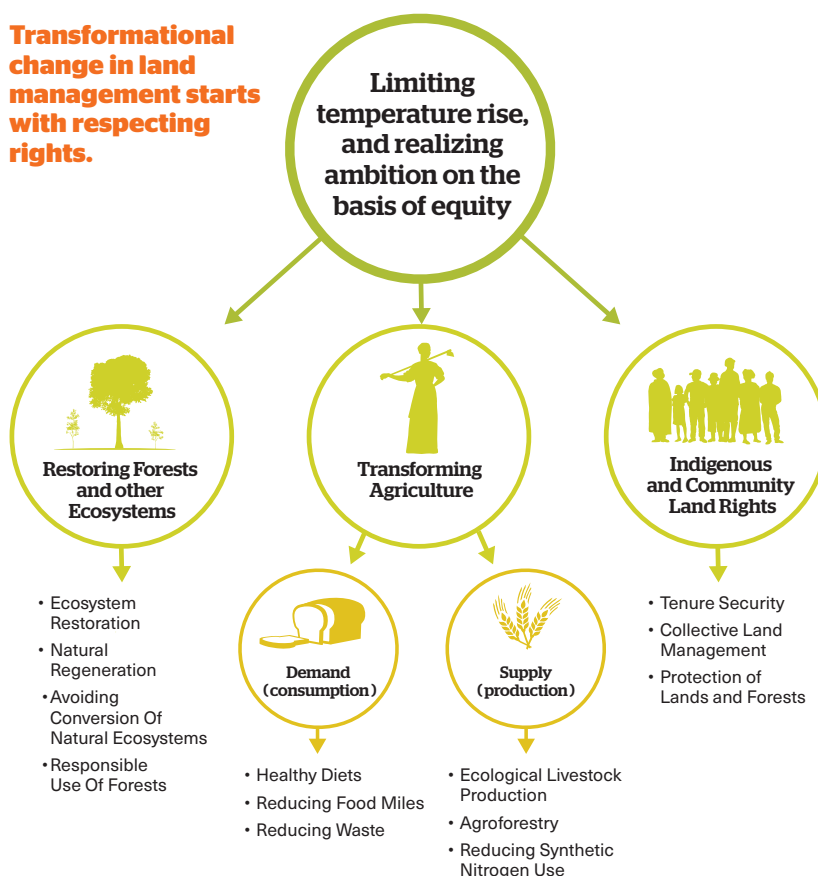
Last year, CLARA published the report 'Missing Pathways', identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



The climate actions that are needed to support the efforts of this community are...

An absolute ban on deforestation in the Chaco—several bills have been presented to the Paraguayan parliament, but none have been approved; effective mechanisms to secure the legal recognition and protection of indigenous land; ensuring access to food; and guaranteeing access to drinking water, healthcare and education. These measures are urgently needed. The important role played by Indigenous Peoples in protecting biodiversity through community-driven initiatives must also be recognised, with support extended to rights-based ecosystem conservation and restoration and the traditional knowledge and practices that underpins them, as concluded in the Missing Pathways report.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



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