

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**.

Indigenous Peoples and Natural Forests Thrive Together On Secure Land Rights

In Central America, indigenous peoples have long been protecting and managing the forest, and this role must be further strengthened through legal and practical means

Organisations and individuals involved

MOPAWI: Mosquitia Pawisa (La Mosquitia Development Agency)

MASTA: Mosquitia Asla Takanka (Unity of the Mosquitia) – Represents the Miskitu peoples

FETRIXY: La federación de Tribus Xicaques de Yoro (Federation of the Indigenous Xicaque Tribes of Yoro) – Represents the Tolupan/Xicaque peoples

Forests of the World

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Location

In two regions of Honduras: 1. In two Miskitu territories in the department Gracias a Dios in La Mosquitia 2. In three Tolupan territories in the department of Yoro



AREAS OF INTACT FOREST overlap with the territories of indigenous peoples territories in many parts of Central America. Strengthening indigenous management may therefore be the best strategy to ensure long-term conservation of those natural resources. Forests of the World and MOPAWI are working with two indigenous peoples in Honduras, the Miskitu and Tolupan peoples, to conserve forest ecosystems through a combined focus on land rights, institutional strengthening and sustainable management of natural resources.

Indigenous peoples are under constant pressure from illegal settlers, private landowners and extractive industries that seek to invade their territories and exploit their resources. The authorities are neglecting to intervene, and sometimes even support the land invaders. Therefore it's important to grant indigenous peoples titles to their territories, settle existing conflicts, and recognize their right to self-determination and self-governance. In addition, the strengthening of indigenous peoples' organizations enables them to fulfil their strategic mission, to extend the resources received to new beneficiaries,

and to ensure long-term progress and stability.

Sustainable management of natural resources serves a multitude of purposes. Reforestation, particularly in water catchment areas and biodiversity-rich areas, increases carbon capture and raises awareness of nature. Meanwhile the conversion of agricultural lands to agroforestry systems increases carbon uptake through the introduction of trees into food-producing landscapes. Agroforestry also acts as a social safety net and a climate adaptation strategy for rural families, by employing climate-resilient and pest-resistant varieties, improving food security, and providing a local income. Overall improvements to the management of existing forests and community woodlots ensures an income that also serves to strengthen local organisations. Forest monitoring using open source satellite images and GIS-software enables combat of fires and pest outbreaks as well as curtailment of illegal logging and poaching.

Additional funding is still needed, in order to reach as many communities as possible.

Testimony

Norvin Goff, MASTA President

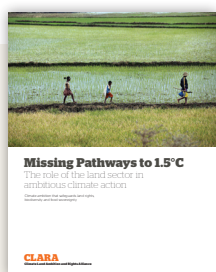
“The rights to self-determination as a People, to our ancestral territory and to our natural resources is non-negotiable. Through our territorial rights and culture we protect 60% of the national forests. Friends who share the idea of conserving natural resources in the territories of the Miskitu People are welcome to work with us.”

Noé Adalberto Rodríguez, FETRIXY President

“The Tolupan Indigenous people have fought for their right to existence since the Spaniards arrived in 1502. Today, the Tolupan are again threatened by outsiders invading our lands. The support provided by Forests of the World will ensure the conservation of life for future generations”.

‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

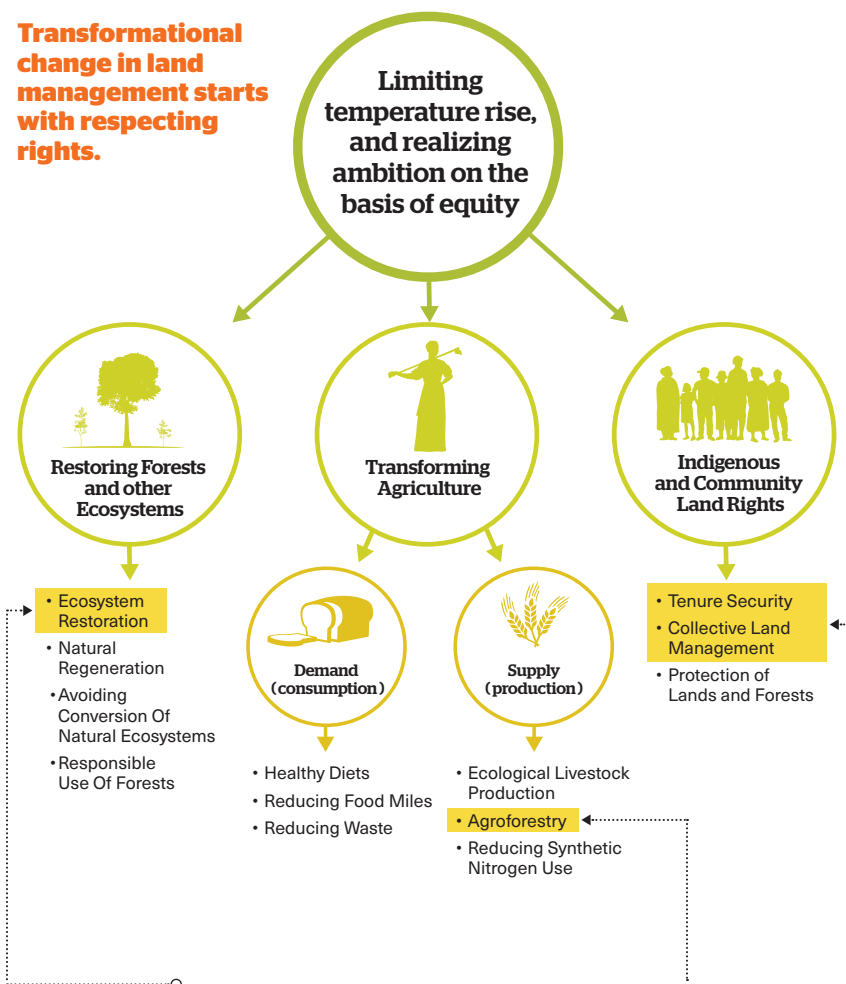
Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



This example follows ‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action by...

...empowering indigenous peoples to continue defending forest resources. The sustainable management of natural resources and the reforestation of degraded lands is rights-based, as it generates local jobs that would normally be undertaken by outside contractors, and enables rural families to better adapt to climate change. The capacity building of rural families and the institutional strengthening of representative authorities and local organizations provide important pathways to improve livelihoods and ensure the rights of the indigenous peoples, while at the same time providing an incentive to keep on protecting the forest.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



Conservation based on land rights and tenure security enables collective land management, agroforestry, and ecosystem restoration, to create a holistic and sustainable system.

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