



**INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION IN
AGRICULTURE (IICA)**

**CENTER FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND
HORIZONTAL COOPERATION**

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*Successful experiences in horizontal
cooperation*

SYSTEMATIZATION OF EXPERIENCES IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AT THE SANTA ISABEL MICRO-BASIN IN NAMASIGÜE, CHOLUTECA, HONDURAS

Guaranteeing the water supply for domestic use by the
communities in the area of influence



CHALLENGE ADDRESSED

At the Santa Isabel micro-basin, the situation of landholding and the disorganized use of natural resources have brought about environmental problems (contamination) that threaten the sustainability of socioeconomic activities and the conservation of biodiversity and primary ecological processes, resulting in a limited supply of water resources in terms of both quantity and quality (Tulio, 2019).

Meanwhile, accelerated deforestation in favor of traditional crops (corn and beans), illegal logging, poaching and a decrease in the flow of the water sources that supply the communities of the micro-basin have forced the population and local organizations to form strategic alliances with the Municipality of Namasigüe and other local, national and regional institutions to solve these problems.

Consequently, a pilot project was created aimed at improving the management, conservation and use of water resources (Tulio, 2019).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project name:

Systematization of experiences in natural resource conservation and payment for ecosystem services at the Santa Isabel micro-basin in Namasigüe, Choluteca, Honduras

Countries involved:

Honduras

Supported by: Sustainable Rural Development Program and the IICA Delegation in Honduras

Executing entities:

Sustainable Rural Development Program for the Southern Region (EMPRENDESUR) and the IICA Delegation in Honduras

Status: Complete

Period: 2014-2018

IICA PROGRAMS



Climate Change, Natural Resources and Management of Production Risks

TOWARDS A SOLUTION

The purpose of the initiative was to ensure the availability of water at the Santa Isabel micro-basin through natural resource conservation activities in the surrounding communities and guaranteeing the availability to meet both current and future demand.

A transfer of practices and knowledge was carried out through a cooperation agreement between the Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock, EMPRENDESUR and IICA. Next, the communities were encouraged to organize Water Boards (WB) and the Santa Isabel Rural Savings and Environmental Credit Bank (CRACA) was created.

Moreover, with the support of EMPRENDESUR, the Green Fund was set up to support conservation and protection activities at the micro-basin, whose resources are managed and capitalized by CRACA, the institution responsible for administering the payments for ecosystem services (water) of the various Water Boards. The fund provides loans for operating and maintaining drinking water systems and supports producers in carrying out sustainable activities.

To focus the initiative, a micro-basin selection process was conducted based on predefined criteria: state of the natural resources, level of involvement of the resident population, water potential, vegetation cover, flora and fauna and the number of communities and users of the water.

Afterward, a committee was formed to define a surveillance strategy for illegal natural resource extraction (timber and fauna) in coordination with each community's Water Board. Additionally, a general awareness campaign was launched on proper solid waste management and agricultural production through the application of agroecological principles, reforestation and the protection of the micro-basins that supply water for human consumption.

The participatory and organizational processes established resulted in the recovery of the micro-basin, increased flow and the elimination of illegal logging, poaching and the contamination of water sources.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Goals: 6.1, 6.3 and 6.4 (6b)



Goals: 12.2 and 12.5



Goal: 13.1



Goals: 15.1, 15.3, 15.4 and 15.7

As a result of these actions, the flow of several water sources increased (from 60 to 72 gal/min, from 28 to 36 gal/min and from 42 to 44 gal/min) and four kilometers of corridors were established. Moreover, the Micro-Basic Protection Plan was developed and 15 hectares were reforested with timber and fruit trees. The new water volumes are able to serve eight communities that now pay for ecosystem services. 400 eco-stoves and 80 latrines were built and over 250 elementary school students were educated on these issues.

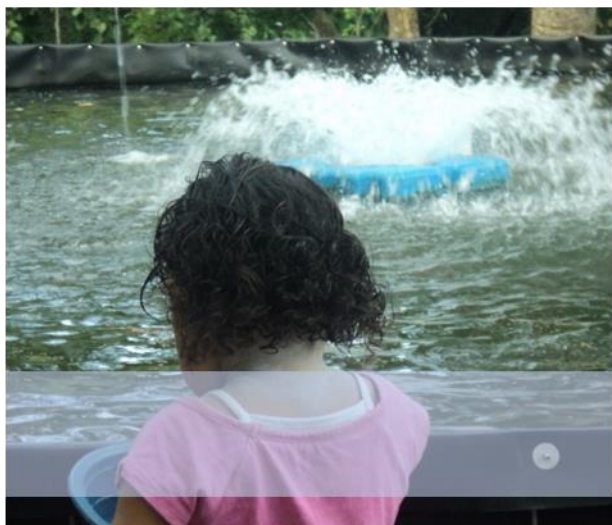
For its part, in 2018, CRACA increased its membership from 24 to 156 members and the Green Fund awarded over HNL 675,000 (USD 27,000) in loans for activities related to conservation and environmentally friendly production in areas like apiculture, tilapia tanks, water capture and ecological farming.

The goals proposed by the community to reduce the environmental impact were achieved after a long process triggered by natural phenomena (intense rains and landslides) that posed a risk to the population and resulted in changes to the local landscape and damage to the potable water supply. However, these phenomena contributed to the collective awareness of natural resource conservation and protection.

In that sense, the commitment and responsibility demonstrated by the members of CRACA regarding the “preservation and conservation of natural resources have resulted in national, regional and international recognition, serving as a guarantee for other collaborators to support the efforts made to date” (Tulio, 2019, p. 38). Likewise, it is fundamental that the local governments become involved and commit to implementing the Micro-Basin Management Plan.

Finally, the success of experiences similar to the Santa Isabel micro-basin would require “political will transformed into direct institutional support, dedicated and committed specialists, municipal participation and, above all, the interest and motivation of the communities residing in the micro-basins” (Tulio, 2019, p. 41).

MATERIAL PRODUCED



RELATED RESOURCES

Resource	Title	Year	URL
Publication	Experience in natural resource conservation and payment for ecosystem services at the Santa Isabel Micro-Basin in Namasigüe, Choluteca, Honduras	2019	Link

REFERENCES

Tulio, M. (2019). Experiencia en Conservación de Recursos Naturales y Pago por Servicios Ambientales en la Microcuenca Santa Isabel, Namasigüe, Choluteca, Honduras [Experience in natural resource conservation and payment for ecosystem services at the Santa Isabel Micro-Basin in Namasigüe, Choluteca, Honduras] (p. 48). Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

<https://repositorio.iica.int/bitstream/handle/11324/7869/BVE19040179e.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>