

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Case Study Name:	'Life here is just scraping by': livelihood strategies and social networks among peasant households in Honduras		
Authors:	Anja Nygren and Outi Myatt-Hirvonen		
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Region:	Latin / Central America		
Country:	Northern Honduras		
Ecosystem Type:	Agriculture, forestry		
Social Characteristics:	Rural community		
Scale of Study:	Peasant households		
Resource Type:	Agriculture,		
Type of Initiative:	Rural development, business development		
Community Based Work:	Development planning, resource management, infrastructure (structural conditions)		

Keywords:	Central America, conflict and cooperation, livelihoods, poverty, power relations, rural development, social networks
Summary:	<p>This paper analyses the diverse ways in which peasant households struggle to earn their living and cope with distress amid the processes of globalisation, the decreasing role of agriculture, and market-based models of rural development, by drawing on research conducted among peasant households in northern Honduras. Special attention is paid to the socio-political processes that shape the opportunities and constraints of local households in diversifying their livelihoods and to social networks, cultural norms, political power relations, and institutional mechanisms that mediate people's access to different livelihood options. The results of our study show that although peasant households engage in an array of livelihood practices, their sources of income are sporadic and their strategies of living are vulnerable. An overemphasis on the capacity of the poor to reshape their lives and reformulate their livelihood strategies easily underestimates the ways in which the inequitable socio-economic structures and political power relations constrain the livelihood options of the poor.</p>