Communities in Action: Participatory Assessments as an Initial Stage in Critical Consciousness Raising and Community Capacity Building

Carizma Amila Chapman

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COMMUNITIES IN ACTION: PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENTS AS AN INITIAL STAGE IN CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

by

Carizma Amila Chapman

A project submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor in Marriage and Family Therapy

September 2015
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this dissertation in his/her opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

______________________________, Chairperson
Dr. Colwick Wilson, Professor of Counseling and Family Sciences

______________________________
Dr. Brian Distelberg, Assistant Professor of Counseling and Family Sciences

______________________________
Dr. Stephen Dunbar, Associate Professor of Earth and Biological Sciences

______________________________
Dr. Douglas Huenergardt, Associate Chair of the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

God

Por medio de ti he nacido, me quede dormida, y luego desperté. Ha sido una jornada muy difícil, la cual he experimentado como una muerte. Ahora se, que estoy en una evolución. Estoy dejando de ser una mujer en la cual fui, y mientras desenvolviéndome en la mujer que ahora debo de ser. Ahora he entendido y he aceptado que estoy en el lugar exacto donde debo de estar y eso es por su sabiduría divina, fidelidad, y una presencia que siempre me gobierna y esta guiándome adonde debo ir. Humildemente ofreciéndome a ti, un símbolo de mi compromiso para cultivar la comunidad y para iluminar tu amor. Gracias por tu gracia y compasión, en ellas he sido dada unos nuevos ojos para ver, un corazón sanado el cual ahora puede sentir, y una consciencia mayor para entender, lo cual todo lo necesito, para servirte.

Committee

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dreams and for that I am incredibly thankful. Thank you for helping me to expand upon my visions, for supporting my professional development with your curiosity and wisdom, and for inspiring me. Dr. Huenergardt you have also been instrumental in helping me take my budding dreams and turn them into reality. Your passion, wisdom, and encouragement have been critical in helping me to trust my own passion and curiosities, and act on them. Thank you for providing the space and opportunities for me to explore my interests and skills, and for assisting my in honing those skills to promote healing.

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Conrad Eubanks             David Roberts            Francesqua Chapman
Nadia Chapman              Ariel Howard            Lurrie Este
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Center for Disease Control</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>ProTECTOR</td>
<td>Protective Turtle Ecology Center for Training, Outreach and Research</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agriculture Development</td>
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<td>CBPR</td>
<td>Community Based Participatory Action Research</td>
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ABSTRACT

Communities in Action: Participatory Assessments as an Initial Stage in Critical Consciousness Raising and Community Capacity Building

by

Carizma Amila Chapman

Doctor of Marriage and Family Therapy
Loma Linda University, June 2015
Dr. Colwick Wilson, Chairperson

This paper presents the findings of two participatory community assessments conducted in Punta Raton and El Venado, two small coastal towns in Southern Honduras. The community assessments were designed and implemented to establish a baseline of community awareness and action, an important step in community development and environmental sustainability. The aim was to: build community partnerships, identify key stakeholders, facilitate dialogues about concerns, identify local and external resources required for progress, and construct actions plans targeting key communal concerns. The assessments were found to be successful in engaging community members and identifying local needs and resources. However, challenges in intervention development and implementation were also encountered. A number of cultural factors were also found to be important in shaping community organization and wellness. This paper details the findings of the two assessments, recommendations for future community development efforts are identified, and implications for Marriage and Family Therapists doing community based work in international contexts are explored.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Community development initiatives have increasingly placed a strong value on interventions that are context specific, strategic, and sustainable. Shifts in community intervention protocols have been influenced by rising concerns of economic constraints (Doherty & Mendenhall, 2006), development of contextualized and holistic understandings of human organisms (Neuliep, 2009; Almedia & Durkin, 1999; Brofenbrenner, 1994), and increased respect and value of local community knowledge and assets (Landau, 2007; Doherty et al., 2002; Laverack & Thangphet, 2009). A number of cultural factors were also found to be important in shaping community organization and wellness. This paper details the findings of the two assessments, recommendations for future community development efforts are identified, and implications for Marriage and Family Therapists doing community based work in international contexts are explored.

New priorities have meant the slow but progressive termination of ineffective program development and implementation policies and procedures. Instead, community interventions are increasingly being evaluated based on their cultural sensitivity, effectiveness, efficiency, and goodness of fit (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2008). These changes, which have challenged “business as normal,” have been wide spread and manifested on multiple system levels including local, state, and federal platforms (Kettner, et al., 2008).

The development of efficient, effective, and context-specific interventions necessitates awareness about people and community (Rajan, 2004). The acquisition of pertinent local information often requires entry into a community and an effective means of data collection. One valued mechanism of collecting local information is community
assessments. The benefits of completing community assessments are abundant, as they provide pertinent insights into the needs, resources, and attitudes within communities (Cristancho, Garces, Peters, & Mueller, 2008). The information acquired can be used to pragmatically inform program development and implementation strategy, which can have significant implications on program quality and cost. In fact, the development of focused, appropriate, and cost effective interventions becomes highly probable when needs assessments are conducted as a precursor to community development efforts. Consequently, assessments are a powerful intervention as they provide information to make informed decisions, which can lead to meaningful strategies that allow communal actualization of important goals and outcomes (van Aalst, Cannon, & Burton, 2008; Viswanathan et al., 2004).

Marital and Family Therapists are well positioned to develop effective community assessments to address complex issues. Those operating from the theoretical construct, Systems Theory, are accustomed to studying and treating interacting variables that create and perpetuate complex health and relational issues (McDaniel, Lusterman, & Philpot, 2001; Imber-Black, 1988; McDaniel, Hepworth, & Doherty, 1992; Rojano, 2004). Increasingly, Marriage and Family Therapists are moving beyond the traditional fifty-minute session, in an office, and have been active in a wide variety of spaces. More specifically, Family Therapists are increasingly mobilized within client homes, hospitals, and different community agencies. In these spaces, Family Therapists have taken on roles such as educator, community agent, and or collaborator, as they participate within teams mobilized to facilitate change (Rojano, 2004; Berg, Mendenhall, & Doherty, 2009; Anderson & Doherty, 2005; Doherty & Carroll, 2004, Morris 2000; Johnson & Wright, 2002). Family Therapists’ participation in
communities in this way permits the creation of focused and holistic strategies that are well equipped to attend to the complex issues faced by low-income and middle class families, interventions adequately designed to address limited resource access, family underdevelopment, chronic stress and trauma, and isolation related issues. For example, Rojano (2004) outlines community family therapy as occurring on three separate levels. During the first level, interventions that aid individuals and families by improving self-worth, mental health, and promoting connection to personal history and identity, are facilitated to promote healing. In contrast, level two engagement, is focused on helping individuals and families to connect or reconnect with local resources, and to build their support system. The point is to help people to acquire basic needs required to develop appropriately and build a social network who can provide ongoing support. Third level community engagement, is the process in which both clients and therapist become mobilized in the community to address large social, political, or ecosystemic factors shaping community wellness. In being active in the aforementioned ways, Family Therapists are able to address the range of physical, emotional, behavioral, and socio-traumatic factors that occur at community (i.e. street violence, discrimination), family (poverty, underemployment, violence, disorganization), and individual levels (i.e. self-esteem, hopelessness, mistrust, isolation) (Rojano, 2004).

**Project Background**

This project emerged out of the environmental research and community development vision generated by Dr. Stepehn G. Dunbar. Dunbar (2015) is an Associate Professor of Biology at Loma Linda University and the founder of the Protective Turtle Ecology Center for Training, Outreach, and Research, Inc. (ProTECTOR). This is an organization committed
to using scientific research, educational outreach, and training to increase understanding of sea turtle biology and ecology in Honduras. The organization uses the aforementioned strategies to increase the value and care of turtles and all marine life in Honduras. ProTECTOR implements a number of research and community outreach programs in the region to promote respect and value of biodiversity. The interventions increase local awareness of sea turtles and promote good marine management decision-making (Dunbar, Salinas, & Castellanos, 2010; Duran, Dunbar, Escobar, & Standish, 2015).

While conducting research along the Southern coast of Honduras, Dr. Dunbar became aware of environmental issues in the region, in addition to a variety of health, economic, and relational concerns that seemed to shape the overall health and well-being of the community. To acquire information to understand and attend to the range of contextual issues in the region, Dr. Dunbar began the process of developing an interdisciplinary team. Having connection with both ProTECTOR and Loma Linda University, Dr. Dunbar facilitated the collaboration of both organizations, and has been active in building international partnerships and interdisciplinary teams. His work has been focused on creating community interventions that attend to both human and natural environment concerns (Dunbar et al., 2010).

In March 2009, Dr. Dunbar led an interdisciplinary team of professionals from the fields of marriage and family therapy, biology, public health, social work, and nursing to a small coastal community in Southern Honduras. The team traveled to connect and collaborate with key informants, community members, and community stakeholders in the identification of concerns in Punta Raton, Honduras. Preliminary assessment findings illuminated health, natural environment, economic, and relational concerns. The identified issues were found to have a negative impact on both human quality of life and the stability of
the natural environment. Following the completion of the preliminary assessment, a number of critical community development questions arose. The team questioned the degree to which the assessment findings adequately captured larger community discourses about local concerns, needs, and priorities. While a number of strategies were employed to garner information about community member lived experiences, it was recognized that power dynamics might have shaped discussions and consequently assessment outcomes. The degree to which participant responses were filtered due to interpersonal power dynamics was hard to gauge, however, it was believed that data collection and analysis were influenced by contextual and relational factors. For example, the assessment did include both male and female participants, but there were significantly fewer female participants than males. Also, though women were engaged in the assessment processes they were often less vocal than male participants, and their responses tended to be shorter and not as specific. These observations coupled with the frequent admission that women in the community were marginalized, raised questions about the degree to which the voices of the women in the community were fully heard and their needs understood. Also, there appeared to be variance in disclosure levels among male participants as well. For example, some men appeared to be hesitant to voice concerns and seemed to not respond or provide brief responses. These concerns raised questions about the assessment’s comprehensiveness, which in turn influenced the interpretation and application of the data. Taken together these issues illuminated the need for a more comprehensive assessment that not only acquired additional information on the community’s functioning and needs, but that also took into consideration structural, power, and cultural factors shaping assessment processes and local organization. Consequently, a subsequent community assessment was
created, an intervention designed specifically to attend to socio-contextual factors, while engaging, connecting, and mobilizing locals to identify and address community issues.

**Problem Statement**

Punta Raton and El Venado are two small coastal communities in Southern Honduras with a number of disparities challenging environmental stability and human quality of life. The issues, which are broad in range, include: relationship, general health, natural environment, and economic concerns. More specifically, there were issues more specifically manifested as infidelity, single parenthood, marginalization of women, domestic violence, child and adult malnutrition, poor education resources, limited employment opportunities, insufficient health care resources, and environmental erosion and degradation. These numerous issues are complicated by low resource availability and limited communal engagement around community concerns. They are also believed to be negatively impacting family connectedness and cohesion, as they inform living circumstances. For example, the issue of whether or not family members needed to relocate to acquire basic needs was salient. Combined, the issues significantly impact the quality of life of families and environmental sustainability.

It is believed that community members are conscious of the many challenges that exist within the communities, yet struggle to mobilize in purposeful and effective ways to target collective issues to reduce environmental distress and lifestyle discomfort. Systemic and meaningful interventions are needed within the communities to begin to understand and dismantle the web of interfacing challenges that impede family and environmental health. This study is designed to initiate processes that attended to the aforementioned issues by engaging community members in participatory community assessment processes that
facilitate community engagement, collaboration, and action around pertinent concerns. The results of this study have the potential to not only generate community awareness and change, but also to contribute to the literature on the effectiveness of participatory assessment in building community capacity.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW
Community Based Participatory Action Research

Needs assessments can provide critical insight into the unique and complex issues faced by families and communities. In particular, they can provide community members, researchers, and stakeholders key information on the disparities that exist in a particular area. Such information is often important in understanding the specific and systemic nature of disparities, especially when multiple, persistent challenges exist within a community (Williams, Bray, Shapiro-Mendoza, Reisz, & Peranteau, 2009; Viswanathan, et al., 2004). Awareness of interacting disparities and communal resources is often key to the construction of culturally sensitive and holistic interventions that address the needs of communities efficiently and effectively. Yet often, awareness is needed to facilitate long-term sustainable change. In situations where immediate change is imperative to improve the health, functioning, and quality of life of peoples, research processes in and of themselves can function as a catalyst for community mobilization, prompting local engagement and action around important issues (Isreal, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2013). Participatory community assessments are an awareness generating research intervention that can create such change.

The assessments are a form of community based participatory action research (CBPR). CBPR is a collaborative and equitable research approach that increases awareness of local issues and uses that knowledge to engage community stakeholders to improve the complex concerns of families and communities (Isreal, Schulz, Parker, Becker, Allen, Guzman, 2008; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Isreal et al., 2013). It is often used as an instrument to advance the health of communities nationally and internationally (Naylor, Whar-Higgins,
Blair, Green, O’Conner, 2002; Schmid, Kanenda, Ahluwalia, Kouletio, 2001; Roba & Oba, 2009; Baird et al, 2015). The method has been found to be effective at both raising awareness of disparities and in eradicating those issues. For example, the approach has been successful in addressing health disparities (O’Fallon & Dearry, 2002; Schulz, Parker, Isreal, Allen, Decarlo, & Lockett, 2002; Wilson et al., 2014) and environmental sustainability concerns (Minkler, Vasquez, Tajik, & Petersen, 2006; Blomley et al., 2008; Miller et al., 2013).

Berg et al. (2009) identified several key components that underlie the CBPR approach. Six central tenants to CBPR that define and inform the theory and process are: (1) community is identified as an entity in which local participants have memberships, (2) democratic partnerships are created amongst all members of the project, (3) an investment in change is central, reflected in a commitment to improving the lives of participants by addressing social inequalities, (4) utilization of a cyclic process of problem identification and intervention development, evaluation of outcomes, and integration of evaluation findings into project processes, (5) flexibility among partners as they engage in processes of “co-learning” and “capacity building,” (6) long term investment in project development and a commitment to the projects sustainability.

It is important to note, CBPR considers individuals, families, and other invested entities all as research investigators (Kindon et al., 2007; Herr et a., 2005; Wallerstein et al., 2008). The researchers engage in investigative processes that often include a range of actions; which include survey development and administration, asset inventories, focus groups, community forums, community mapping, and community program development and implementation. Each medium of engagement or data collection is used as a mechanism to inform subsequent conceptualizations and actions. Community members are very involved in
the selection and implementation of appropriate research methodologies. While the interests and prioritizes of the various stakeholders involved in CBPR processes can vary, action among community member participants is often reflected in their commitment to increase their knowledge and work toward acquiring desired outcomes (Bradbury & Reason, 2003). As inquiry processes are often reflective and emancipatory in nature, community members can become empowered as they begin to engage in new ways of thinking and being (Bradbury et al., 2003; Ledwith, 2005). Such shifts occur as a consequence of the increasingly informative and action oriented nature of CBPR processes which challenges structure and usher in new ways of being (Ledwith, 2005).

Given Hispanic communities traditionally place significant value on familial and communal resources in problem resolution, the collaborative and resource-based nature of CBPR was perceived as being potentially effective in working with this population (Bean & Perry, 2007). Conducting participatory assessments in Punta Raton and El Venado consequently appeared to be a meaningful and informative intervention that could serve as the building blocks for important family and community development. Yet, while systemic assessments in and of themselves can provide critical insights into the inner workings of families and communities, it is still important to draw upon additional sources of information when available in order to permit successful entry into and engagement with families. The preliminary assessment findings from Punta Raton informed this study. Areas of concern illuminated during the assessment included: poverty, environmental degradation, education, malnutrition, health, marginalization of women and single parenthood; and structure, culture, and power dynamics. As the preliminary assessment uncovered socio-political-cultural factors shaping Punta Raton, the literature below also explores the interface of culture,
identities, and intersecting phenomena; wholeness, interdependence, and power; and context, development, and resilience. The preliminary needs assessment and literature review will further shape the participatory approach to community development in Punta Raton and El Venado, and aid in the tailoring of the assessment to fit the needs of the community.

Poverty

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere (United States (U.S.) Embassy Honduras, 2012; International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), 2011; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2014). The economic condition of the country as of recent has moderately improved, bouncing back from financial setbacks shaped by both the global economic crisis and Honduras’ recent political challenges (UNICEF, 2010). Honduras is a middle to low income country with the majority of its population living in poverty, and about 50% of its poor living in extreme poverty. Forty percent of the Honduran labor force is unemployed or underemployed. Poverty in the country exists in both the rural and urban areas, but it is most prevalent in rural communities. In rural areas, more than half six out of ten households live in severe poverty. The conditions have not changed much within the last decade as the largest concentration of the poor and extreme poor have consistently been found to be living in rural areas of Honduras (World Health Organization, 2006; World Bank, 2014; U.S. Embassy Honduras, 2012; IFAD, 2011; Pavon, 2008; World Bank, 2006; UNICEF, 2010). Poor rural communities are often comprised of farmers and laborers, landless people, women, and ethnic and indigenous groups (World Bank, 2006; Carter, Little, Mogues, & Negatu, 2007; IFAD, 2011). Poverty and limited employment opportunities in rural communities are a leading cause of Honduras’ high migration rate (IFAD, 2011; United Nation Development Plan (UNDP, 2009). The hope of improving
finances and the quality of life is often what prompts men and women to relocate within Honduras or internationally. Yet the change, while well-intentioned, can lead to family instability or disintegration (Bernard, 2003).

Poverty in Honduras is a reflection of both a stagnant gross domestic product (GDP) growth per year and external shocks to the economy, such as increased oil prices and natural disasters. Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Mitch (1998) and the droughts of 2001 and 2002, have impacted community consumption, which has had an impact on poverty (World Bank, 2006; IFAD, 2011). Such disasters have been found to have the most negative impact on the poor, who tend to experience the negative effects of such crisis much longer and more acutely (Carter et al., 2007; IFAD, 2011). Additional challenges in the rural community perpetuating poverty include unequal distribution of assets, low factory productivity, and inadequate public policies. Absence of economic and social support within rural communities impairs many community members’ ability to transcend their poverty status (Jansen et al., 2005).

In Honduras, 60% of the unemployed are women. Although the prevalence of unemployment is high for the country, employment rates for women have increased significantly as a consequence of the social equality movements that have occurred around the world (Buvinic, 1998; World Bank, 2006). When women are able to acquire employment, they often find themselves limited to working in low income and low status positions (IWRAW, 1998; IFAD, 2011). Employment opportunities for women in Honduras vary depending on community residency; for example rural versus city housing. Employment availability is related to community needs, resources, and labor markets. The living conditions of women often impact the resources available to them. For example, living in a
rural area may increase or decrease the types of employment options available to women (Buvinic et al., 1997; CAWN, 2006). Women in rural communities are often isolated; and they are limited to domestic tasks in their homes and working in small gardens behind their homes. Limited opportunities to connect with others can have a negative impact on the mental and physical health of women (CAWN, 2006).

Many women obtain employment working in factories or plants processing or packaging items that are exported. Although women are uncomfortable with the conditions and terms under which they may work, they often are thankful for the opportunity to work and obtain an income (IWRAW, 1998). Traditionally, the work of women has not been counted statistically. Lovel and Feuerstein (2009) noted that women’s housework is not included in national gross estimates of wages. Increasingly, this exclusion is receiving attention, illuminating the insensitivity and gender bias in economic reporting (CAWN, 2006).

For women in Honduras, poverty and limited resources complicate their ability to find employment in an already complicated, quickly evolving market (CAWN, 2006). Employment opportunities that have permitted women in developing countries to obtain financial resources, independence, and status, include poultry keeping and craft production (Lovel et al., 2009). Women become self-employed by making crafts or baked goods in their homes and selling them in the streets. These employment opportunities are typical for women in developing countries. It has been recommended that women need training in office management, book keeping, accounting, leadership, and technological skills to improve their financial stability (Lovel et al., 2009). However, it has also been hypothesized that it is not a
woman’s actual access to work, but her perceived access to employment opportunities and her perceived success that matters (Buvinic et al., 1997).

It is evident that poverty is a significant issue impacting Honduran women, children, and men. The concern has translated into resources access concerns and crime issues. Crime is on the rise in the region partially due to poverty. Unemployment and underemployment, among a host of other issues, including drug trafficking and gangs, has contributed to a rise in crime in Honduras. Increasingly, Honduran youth are becoming involved in crime and gangs, as they are not working or studying due to resource limitations (UNDP, 2009). Honduras received international attention in 2010 as the country ranked highest worldwide in murders (U.S. Embassy, 2012; UNICEF, 2010). Increasing violence levels mean many families in Honduras are adversely impacted. At particular risk are women and children. In the first quarter of the year in Honduras, children accounted for 12% of the homicide victims in the country (UNICEF, 2013). Gender based violence is a reality for Honduran women as many encounter violence at work and/or in their homes (CAWN, 2006). In Honduras, and especially in rural areas of the country, economic disparities have a direct impact on a number of quality-of-life related issues including environmental degradation. Often these concerns are interrelated as deteriorating environmental conditions impact family resources (CAWN, 2006).

**Environmental Degradation**

The conditions of the natural environment can serve as a mirror that reflects back with clarity human priorities, behaviors, and values (Bass & Dalal-Clayton, 1995). Environmental degradation and natural resource exploitation is not simply a local phenomenon, but is also the product of international agendas and politics (Barton, 2006;
Stonich, 1992). International agendas that target the consumption of natural capital, land, air, water, soil, and forestry contribute to local environmental degradation and deprivation. Unequal exchange patterns between developed and less developed countries coupled with population growth, economic development, and capital intensity are thought to fuel the problem (Jorgenson, 2006). Yet, local cultural perceptions, socioeconomic status, and politics also shape environmental perceptions and interactive practices (Barton & Grant, 2006). Local environmental and natural resource degradation is heightened by illegal logging, population growth, and poor supervision of protected regions (European Commission, 2013). In Central America, the rate of depletion of forests, soils, fisheries, and other resources have been found to be increasing faster than rates of replenishment. The regions dependence on income generation from such resources makes the decline of natural resources a significant issue (Stonich, 1989; Stonich, 1991).

While Honduras is not economically advantaged, the country is rich in natural resources. The country has diverse ecosystems with tropical rain forests and mangrove swamps. However, though the Honduran government has increasingly developed initiatives to protect the environment; these efforts have been undermined by corruption, resource limitations, lack of enforcement, and limited support (CIA, 2014; Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), 2005. Consequently, the country has experienced marked declines and erosion of natural resources. The exploitation of the environment is evidenced by soil degradation, desertification, water pollution, and deforestation. These issues are causing a decline in the countries biodiversity, a condition that is not only creating significant ecological concerns, but also economic and lifestyle related concerns for families (CIA, 2014; Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), 2005).
In the last two decades the country has experienced significant deforestation as a consequence of land clearing and logging for agriculture. The environmental issues are compounded by mining practices and land development. Many of Honduras’ ecological issues are rooted in poverty. For example, deforestation happens as a means to generate money through agriculture, and illegal logging makes up a majority of the countries timber trade (Mongabay, 2006; EIA, 2005). A majority of people living in rural areas earn income through agriculture. Thus, the deterioration of the environment has direct impacts on family economic stability and quality of life. For example, declining environmental conditions are resulting in crops losses and poor food productivity, a concern that is taking a toll not only on the environment, but also on the economic conditions of rural farmers and families. The negative effects are huge, not only impacting the living conditions of families in rural communities, but also impacting diet and general health. Often families live in homes made of mud and sugarcane stalks with poor sanitation. These families also suffer from malnutrition as a consequence of food shortages which limit their access to fruits, vegetables, and meats; a situation that leads to malnutrition and poor health (Merrill, 1995).

**Limited Food Accessibility and Malnutrition**

Malnutrition in Honduras is a significant issue (World Food Programme, 2014). In fact, in the last two decades the malnutrition rate in Honduras was among the highest in the Western hemisphere (World Bank, 2015). The issue is shaped by three critical factors: poverty, extreme weather, and recurrent natural disasters (World Food Programme, 2014). Malnutrition is an issue country wide, with just over a million people faced with food insecurity. The malnutrition rate does vary across the country and is often most prevalent in
rural areas, reaching as much as 48% (World Food Programme, 2014). In 2006, the rate of chronic child malnutrition in Honduras was estimated at 27.4 percent and in 2010, one in three children suffered from chronic malnutrition (UNICEF, 2011; UNICEF, 2010). The country has made significant progress in reducing child malnutrition rates, however chronic malnutrition is still a significant concern for many children (UNICEF, 2010). For many children, malnutrition is a prevalent issue they encounter within months of birth, with fifty-three percent of children receiving insufficient combinations of breast milk and semi-solid foods (UNICEF, 2011).

The economic deprivation experienced by communities, such as Punta Raton and El Venado, can have a significant effect on food access and intake. It is often the case, in small isolated communities such as these, that food insecurity is an issue (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014; Care, 2014). This is important to note because food availability and accessibility can significantly influence families, adversely impacting their diet and consequently nutritional intake and family health (Gray, Cossman, & Powers, 2006). Limited food accessibility has been found to increase child and parental malnutrition (Tremethick, Smit, Retzloff, & Krol, 2011; UNICEF, 2010). Also, poor nutrition intake has been found to have significant adverse implications on child growth. For example, the development of many Honduran children is adversely impacted by malnutrition, as evidenced by growth stunting and anemia (Gray et al., 2006; UNICEF, 2013). In fact, 38% of youth in Honduras between the ages of 12 and 71 months have been reported to experience growth stunting as a result of malnourishment (Morris, Flores, & Zuniga, 2000). Children who are not obtaining enough nutrition are also at greater risk for other health related issues including immune system impairment, diarrhea, respiratory infections, and malaria (Morris et al.,
Childhood nutritional and health concerns can have a direct effect on later adolescent and adult development (Morris et al., 2000). Home gardening projects within communities have been found to increase nutritional intake (Berti, Krasevec, & FitzGerald, 2003). Effective programs tend to target nutritional education and other public health interventions (Berti, et al., 2003). In addition to its nutritional importance, food is valued as a medium that fosters relationships among people and the natural environment (Rozin, 2005). Thus, the cultural meaning and value afforded to food in communities have significant implications for intervention development.

Another significant concern encountered by many children in Honduras in the early years of their life, is education. Similar to nutrition, education access or the lack thereof, has a significant impact on the life trajectory of youth. Just as children find themselves particularly vulnerable to developmental concerns that arise as a consequence of malnutrition, Honduran youth who do not have access to education find themselves not only at risk of not transcending their poverty conditions as adults; they also are susceptible to gang involvement (UNICEF, 2012; Pallais & Laguna 2007).

**Educational Resources**

Typically, Honduras spends more on public education than Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. In 2006, 30% of the country’s total expenditures were allocated to education. Even with increased financial commitments at the governmental level, educational outcomes for the country still remain poor (USAID, 2007; Pavon, 2008). Low education outcomes and performance in the country have been linked to limited economic accessibility, poor administration, low technical quality, and poor teacher productivity and
accountability (Pavon, 2008). It is important to note the country has steadily been increasing economic expenditures toward education. However, despite local and international investments, educational outcomes, while improving, remain poor in many areas. Negative issues include grade repetition, poor term completion rates, and limited and or poor secondary education coverage and quality (Seelke, 2007; Pallais et al., 2007). For example, less than 50% of Honduran children can read and write at their appropriate grade level (Pavon, 2008). Some children are more likely to have concerns in the aforementioned areas than others. Children at particular risk for not attending school are poor children, working children, children living in rural areas, children with disabilities, and indigenous children (UNICEF, 2011; World Bank, 2006). For example, over 50% of preschool aged children are not enrolled in school in Honduras, with even higher rates of poor attendance in rural communities. Education access for low-income families is particularly challenging, since rural communities have the highest rates of poverty, as well as exorbitant grade repetition and illiteracy (Pallais, 2007). Also, many adolescents in Honduras are not enrolled in school. In fact, only 6 out of 10 adolescents are in school. In 2008, less than 50% of Hondurans completed the ninth grade (Salvador & Chasson, 2010). By age 14 many Honduran adolescents are already working. This is especially the case in rural areas (UNICEF, 2011). Educational access in Honduras is dramatically impacted by socioeconomic status and place of residency, with lower income and rural families having less access to education (USAID, 2007; Pavon, 2008; LaFleur & Lopez, 2014).

As mentioned above, the Honduran government and international affiliates have consistently been working to improve the educational system in the country (Seelke, 2007). The system has been improving for over two decades. In particular, educational enrollment
and performance have all improved (Salvador & Chasson, 2010; Paven, 2001; Erber, 2012; Moore, 2006; Gropello, 2006). For example, the basic education enrollment increased by 132,576 from 2000 to 2003 (Moore, 2006). Initially, efforts were focused on increasing access to education through the sixth grade. Once primary education (grades 1 through 6th) access had improved, the focus shifted to making secondary education (7th through 9th) available (Moore, 2006). For example, in 2012 an education law was passed in Honduras that extended free and compulsory education until the eighth grade (U.S. Embassy Honduras, 2012). Also, in 2001 it was estimated over 70% of the Honduran population had not completed the seventh grade, with just over a million adults and youth not having completed the sixth grade (Moore, 2006). The country’s education outcomes have since improved, as 88% of Honduran children acquired a sixth grade education in 2008. The country now has a literacy rate of about 82% (U.S. Embassy Honduras, 2012). Also, gender disparities in school attendance are declining as boys and girls have equivalent educational opportunities in primary school (UNICEF, 2011).

Honduran children have better access to primary education today than their parents had. Educational improvements mean more children interested in receiving an education have the opportunity. However, as discussed above, student retention once enrolled can still be a challenge (Chaluda, 2007; Pallais et al., 2007). While the Honduran government needs to continue to address cost-related barriers to education (i.e. school fees, transportation, etc.), some families may need additional support understanding the benefits of education. Interventions that educate on the long-term advantage of education, that link education to immediate job and income possibilities, and that involve parents in their children’s education may help to increase enrollment and retention in school (Chaluda, 2007). Honduran children
and their families desperately require educational resources. As a relationship exists between education, household income, and economic development, it would be in the best interest of the Honduran government and families to invest in education as a means of increasing family security and national development. For many families, investment in education is one of the best options for economic development (Pallais et al., 2007).

For many caregivers for whom insufficient education access had been a reality, limited economic and employment opportunities may not only impact the information access of their children, but also impact their families ability to obtain basic resources, and a particularly critical resource; health care.

Health

The health of many Hondurans is challenged by poverty as well as social and economic inequalities. Women, children under five, and newborn babies are at the highest risk of adverse health conditions. For example, stunting among Honduran children has been found to be between 25% and 29%, but upwards of 50% in rural communities (GHI, 2012; UNICEF, 2009). Common health concerns among Hondurans are cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, vascular and brain disease, intestinal infections, tuberculosis, dengue fever, cancer, and HIV (Kervinen, 2004; WHO, 2006; PAHO-USAID, 2009; WHO, 2014; World Bank, 2012; WHO, 2013). Cardiovascular-related deaths in the country are a reflection of poor diets with low vegetable intake and high salt and fried food consumptions, physical inactivity, tobacco consumption, and poor alcohol consumption choices (MacDonald, Brevard, Lee, & Wagner, 2009; World Bank, 2012). The prevalence of intestinal disease is a reflection of limited availability of clean water and poor hygiene.
Diarrhea is one disease that is very prominent in the country and especially in rural communities with inadequate water storage mechanisms and limited information about proper hygiene (UNICEF, 2011). Infectious disease and parasites are also prevalent in the country due to dense populations, changing temperatures, and humidity which impact the respiratory system (UNICEF, 2011).

Hondurans are especially susceptible to acquiring health related illnesses from environmental concerns. As Honduras is vulnerable to tropical storms and hurricanes, natural disasters frequently create concerns for its citizens. Malnutrition as a consequence of food shortages, and severe hemorrhagic dengue outbreaks, as recently happened, are examples of the types of health related concerns caused by environmental conditions in Honduras (UNICEF, 2010).

Violence and crime are critical issues in Honduras shaping both the health of the country’s people and the health system. Honduras’s homicide rate practically doubled between 2005 and 2010. The surge in violence was especially evident, as Honduras had the highest number of homicides per day in the world in 2010, a reality shaped by unsafe conditions created by organized crime and drug trafficking. These issues have put a strain on service delivery, impacting both workers ability to render treatment and consequently the ability of families to receive care. For example, increased violence has made it particularly challenging for Peace Corp volunteers to provide HIV care to Honduran communities with the most significant rates of infection (UNICEF, 2010; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2011). The country loses millions of dollars in health costs yearly in the areas of medical attention, lost production, and emotional damage due to violence and crime (World Bank, 2011).
About 30% of Honduras do not have access to consistent and quality health care. (GHI, 2012; Secretaria de Salud Honduras, 2010). The inadequate distribution of health care resources throughout the country of Honduras influences the accessibility of health care services. Health facilities and qualified health care providers are concentrated in highly populated regions creating service provision gaps in rural communities. Many rural communities do not have clinics, and those that do often have limited supplies and operate without doctors (Pearson, Stevens, Sanogo, & Bearman, 2012; Price & Asgary, 2011). In addition to geographic barriers to health care, service financial barriers also exist for most of the population. Service provision is limited to persons who have the economic resources to receive care. The high poverty rates and extreme poverty conditions in the country have meant many people do not have the financial resources needed to access health care.

One group whose health has been extremely challenged by economic conditions is women. The health of women is impacted by a combination of biological and social factors that shape their development over the course of their lives. When looking at health issues, it is important to assess for confounding variables and their onset, many of which may have developed in early childhood. Experiences, such as sexual abuse and malnutrition, can influence the development of depression and or other health concerns later in life (Tinker, Finn, & Epp, 2000). Biological issues in conjunction with poverty make women more susceptible to health problems (Tinker et al., 2000). Women in developing countries are at a greater risk for developmental issues due to a lack of protein intake. It is estimated that over 450 million adult women's growth are stunted because of malnutrition during childhood. As adults, many of these women continue to be malnourished and underweight (Tinker et al., 2000).
Sexual education is limited within rural communities. Limited information about sex increases the susceptibility of men and women to transmitted infections such as HIV, Hepatitis, and Gonorrhea. Honduras has one of the highest HIV infection rates in Central America (Paz-Bailey et al., 2009). It also impacts pregnancy rates. Unwanted and unplanned pregnancies are a significant health concern for women in Central America (UNICEF, 2007; Guttmacher Institute, 2014). A significant percentage of the pregnancies that occur are unwanted. Honduras has consistently ranked as having some of the highest adolescent pregnancy rates in Central America (United Nations Development Program, 2009; Guttmacher Institute, 2006). The majority of these pregnancies are unplanned and unwanted (Guttmacher Institute, 2006). In fact, 45% of births to women under the age of 20 were unplanned. Teen pregnancy is the highest among youth living in rural, poor areas, who have not completed primary school (Guttmacher, 2006). This issue is particularly important, as a strong link exists between adolescent pregnancy and cycles of poverty and marginalization (Guttmacher Institute, 2006). In addition to high percentages of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, Honduras has some of the highest HIV infection rates in Central America (UNAIDS, 2008). Sex education programs have been found to be effective in decreasing sexually transmitted diseases in developing countries (Tinker et al., 2000). However, contraceptive usage still remains low among sexually active Honduran teens (Guttmacher, 2006).

**Women’s Sense of Belonging, Marginalization, and Single Parenthood**

The lived experience of Honduran women continues to be understudied. A dearth of literature is available that speaks to the day-to-day experiences of women in their
communities and families as caregivers, community agents, and sometimes small business owners (CAWN, 2006). While the experiences of women have increasingly received attention from the Honduran government, both the contributions and needs of women continue to be undervalued and overlooked (CAWN, 2006). As mentioned earlier, this underrepresentation is evident in national statistical reporting which still has not placed economic value on the responsibilities of women in rural communities. It is also apparent that women are marginalized by the limited focus given to gender equality policy development, minimal attention and promotion of women’s issues, scarce resources allocated to fund projects or positions that would promote the health, employment, and resource needs of women, and insufficient representation of women in government positions. Limited government attention to women's issues allows for the perpetuation of gendered and sexists practices that privilege men and discriminate against women. Income inequality is a tangible example of these disparities, as job access and income differentials exist between the genders, with women typically not having equal access to stable employment (CAWN, 2004; Manjoo, 2014). It is important that more attention is directed to understanding and creating interventions that attend to the needs of women, as their social position has significant implications on their economic status and physical health (Tinkler et al., 2000; WHO, 2000; Walters, 2004).

The percentage of single mothers in Honduras is increasing. The rise in female-headed households has meant that women are bearing the responsibility of raising children on their own (Buvinic, 1998; CAWN, 2006). Female-headed households often have lower income levels largely as a consequence of (a) lower ratio of household workers than male-headed homes, (b) lower income because women typically receive lower wages than men,
and (c) less access to employment opportunities (Buvinic & Gupta, 1997). The rise of the number of female-headed household is a consequence of migration, widowhood, domestic violence and political violence (Faune, 1995; CAWN, 2006). Family abandonment is another factor impacting the increasing number of female-headed households. The poverty that women experience in female-headed households significantly impacts their children. It directly impacts the amount of time spent with children and available resources provided to children, such as food, water, and education (Buvinic, 1998; CAWN, 2006). Poor women and their children often become caught in a cycle of poverty. Long workdays and childcare responsibilities often cause single mothers to rely on older children for support. As older daughters become engaged in household responsibilities they often drop out of school and miss educational opportunities. Uneducated Honduran adolescent females are at a particularly high risk of teen pregnancy, as close to 50% of teen girls become pregnant by age 19. Consequently, poverty is transmitted from generation to generation (Buvinic, 1998; UNPD, 2009). Increasing the viability of female-headed households and the termination of the generational transmission of poverty is significantly correlated to their employment opportunities. Interventions targeting women that have facilitated the development of a skill has had a significant impact on women's sense of self, community health, and financial viability (Minkler & Cox, 1980; Tornqvist & Schmitz, 2009). Improvement of the economic conditions of women in communities requires not only increasing the resources available to them, but also attending to the cultural and structural factors which privilege men over women. Resource accessibility is often informed by culture and the rules it espouses about resources acquisition. Consideration of variables, such as culture and identity, need to be explored in relationship to community issues to eradicate identity related disparities.
Culture, Intersecting Identities, and Intersecting Phenomena

The preliminary community assessment conducted in Punta Raton has shed light on the unique culture of the community. It was evident during brief interactions with community members that the community shaped their experience. However, it was also apparent that their development was shaped by more than context. A synchronistic interaction of culture, context, relationships, and identity seemed to exist. These realities together appeared to inform relational connectedness and health. This early community finding is not surprising as it is known that the encounters people have within their environment is influenced by their relationships and the lenses they acquire through socialization, which serve the purpose of filtering experiences, shaping interactions, and consequently impacting behavior (Who, 2010; Reis Collins, & Berscheid, 2009; Tudge, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Culture is an important theoretical construct that speaks to the powerful influences that exist within a particular context and among the groups of people in that space. Culture is conceptualized as being multidimensional (Falicov, 1995), fluid (Laird, 1998), and context specific (McGoldrick & Hardy, 1998). The existence of cultural nuances is a testament to the diversity that is inherent in the human experience. Human development, which is shaped by culture, involves a recursive process of influence in which people are both shaped by the cultures in which they participate, and contribute to the shaping of the cultures that informed their growth.

Pragmatically the construct of culture is utilized by social scientist to understand the unique and dynamic organization of language, beliefs, values, customs, norms, and practices that shape identity and create shared realities in families and communities. Progressively, the field of Marriage and Family Therapy has become aware of and consequently active in addressing diversity, identity, culture, and power in treatment (Bograd, 1999; Almeida &
Durkin, 1999; Keeling & Piercy; 2007; Chavis & Hill, 2014). As the understanding of marriage and family therapists increases on issues of culture, context, and identity, professionals are becoming more adept at identifying how identity shapes day-to-day experiences. Such awareness allows for the design of interventions that attend to issues of space and identity, important variables to consider when collaborating with people. For example, people can concurrently identify as possessing multiple identities. A person can identify as being a woman, daughter, mother, wife, breadwinner, Latina, Catholic, and middle class. The amalgamation of identities shape interactions with others persons who possess similar or extremely different identity makeups. A Hispanic middle class woman might have different values and beliefs than a Hispanic lower class woman; however, the two women might also share several core values and beliefs. The concepts of culture and the intersectionality of identity speak to the diversity that could exist across and within contexts and that could also occur across and within groups (McGoldrick & Harvey, 1998; Almeida, Woods, Messineo, & Font, 1998).

The significance of grasping the implications of the intricate nature of identity and culture in communal assessments is matched by the importance of acknowledging intersecting problems. Syndemic is one construct that speaks to the intersection and interrelationship between two or more diseases or health problems that challenge and impair the wellness and functioning of a community or group of people (Singer, & Clair, 2003). A syndemic takes a systematic look at the interface, locality, and temporality of multiple health disparities, while also assessing biological consequences (Singer et al., 2003; Stall, Friedman, & Catania, 2008). The importance of looking at the relationship of multiple, interrelated health, relationship, and environmental issues in the context of identity and culture was
illuminated by the preliminary assessment conducted in Punta Raton. All of these factors seemed to contribute to a recursive dynamic that both shaped and maintained conditions in the community. Together culture, intersecting identities, and interacting issues create distinct experiences and concerns that can be context specific. These all need to be accurately understood before interventions are employed. This diversity illuminated the need for community assessments in Punta Raton and El Venado to accurately identify the co-occurring and interacting variables shaping family and environmental conditions. Failure to understand the unique diversity that exists within the communities could lead to fragmented interventions that impair the overall effectiveness of future community initiatives. Attention to cultural contextual identity related distinctions would prevent a one-size-fits-all assessment and intervention approach, and would permit sensitive engagement with community members in Punta Raton and El Venado. This would be possible because the uniqueness within and across the communities would be taken into consideration.

Thorough needs assessments are necessary in Punta Raton and El Venado prior to community based intervention implementation in order to permit comprehension of location-specific dynamics that shape the cultural milieus in which individual, familial, and communal concerns are born. This focus would allow for the development and implementation of culturally sensitive and ethical interventions (Bograd, 1999; Almeida et al., 1999).

In addition to understanding how culture, identity, and local concerns interface to shape health in particular contexts, it is equally important to understand how differentials in resource access, health, and family functioning can exist as consequences of attitudes and behaviors in the areas of power and influence.
Wholeness, Interdependence, and Power

To understand the behavior of the community members in Punta Raton and El Venado, it is first important to understand the process of human development, a task that in itself requires comprehension of both the immediate and larger context in which humans are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When working with any community, it is important to understand that numerous levels of systemic organization exist. The interaction of multiple levels of organization is captured in the systems “embedded within systems” concept. This concept can be described as individuals existing and participating within families, families existing within communities, communities existing within states, states existing within nations, all which exist as part of a larger global community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Becvar, and Becvar, 1982; Becvar & Becvar, 2000; Cox & Paley, 2003; Hernandez et al., 2009). Interventions not grounded in a systemic understanding of interactions within and across multiple systems might not be sustainable, practical, or appropriate. An assessment in Punta Raton would facilitate the understanding of the relationships that exist between systems and would illuminate the dynamics that shape human behavior and the natural environment in that community. Two systems theory constructs, wholeness and interdependence, capture the idea that relationships exist between organisms and their context.

The term wholeness describes the idea that a “whole” is greater than the sum of its “parts.” It is in the fluid movement of looking at phenomena, parts and wholes, that issues can be understood with greater breadth and depth (Wilber, 1996). The concept of wholeness captures how two distinct variables can exist simultaneously in a context (Becvar et al., 1982). The idea holds that the unique location and interaction of two variables can create something larger than the two separate parts. What is constructed is a third dynamic that
encompasses, yet, transcends, the other two variables (Becvar et al., 1982). The new dynamic that is constructed in the interactional space between the two variables is unique (Becvar et al., 1982). Within that middle space the construct of interdependence or interrelatedness appears. The construct of interdependence describes how change occurring in one part of a system can have an effect on other parts of the system (Becvar et al., 1982; Becvar, 2000; Gladding, 2007; Bateson, 1972). Such change can spark the transformation or reorganization of a system. Families and communities are two examples of wholes, however, both could be considered a part in context to a smaller or larger system; for example, an individual within family or family within community.

It is important for Marriage and Family Therapists working in international communities to be aware of the influence and interdependence that exits among systems, as such insight would sensitize them to the importance of conducting assessments prior to interventions in places like Punta Raton and El Venado, because the intervention would provide needed information about community organization and relating patterns. The following summary is an example of one of the interdependent system issues within the Punta Raton community found during the preliminary assessment.

Families migrating to Punta Raton face limited employment opportunities and low wages, which in turn perpetuates a system of massive poverty and a low standard of living in the community. Financial challenges restrict the abilities of these families to acquire critical resources such as food, water, clothing, and medical care. In their efforts to acquire funds to obtain food and other resources many families begin to sell and consume migrating turtles. Increases in turtle consumption and sales have been causing sharp declines in the number of turtles in the region, consequently endangering the turtle population.
The above community description captures how the challenges experienced in one system could have a direct effect on another. Specific interventions targeting the turtle population could have a direct effect on family resources in the community, even if the intervention itself did not focus on that issue. For example, interventions to save turtle hatchlings might have a direct negative effect on family mealtime and finances. In contrast, a job creation intervention could improve household economic status and potentially decrease the need to sell turtles. However, employment and increased economic status might not be enough to shift familial and communal practices with the turtles. The intersecting issues around finances and food created a problem larger than the two concerns and constructed a third issue. Over time, the eating and selling of turtle eggs became a cultural staple, symbolic of fun, sex, money, and pleasure. The relationship between humans and turtles has transcended the level of survival and now includes recreation and pleasure.

Failure to accurately assess the multiple interrelated dynamics co-constructing communal issues could perpetuate distorted beliefs, behaviors, and injustices, negatively reinforcing ineffective family actions. Limited insight would also affect the level of change achieved. Though change in one part of a system can affect shifts in other areas, the degree of change could vary (Bevar, 1982; Bateson, 1972). In essence, certain changes can be more influential than others in producing desired outcomes. Thus, a community assessment is needed to identify key dynamics interfacing positively and negatively in the community, and to understand the interrelated dynamics and imbalances that maintain the status quo (Bateson, 1987; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fish, 1974).

The construct of power is an important one that sheds light on the variation of influence that can occur within and between systems. In essence, though people are
influenced by one another in interactions, the level of contact or influence can fluctuate (Mahoney & Knudson-Martin &., 2009). People exercise and experience power in interactions daily. Power dynamics are apparent within cultural values and perceptions around race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, and nationality. Cultural definitions of status shape who holds power, when and where they exercise their power, and the manner in which it is exerted (Gladding, 2007; Almeida et al., 1999). The different intersecting identities that a person or family hold can create situations where some groups have more power than others groups. Conducting an assessment prior to an intervention in Punta Raton and El Venado would give the investigator valuable information about power dynamics that are oppressive within the community.

Premature program development not grounded in an understanding of the interdependent nature of relationships and the inherent power dynamics governing those relationships could lead to ineffective interventions and low community engagement. Information on the manifestation of power within communities and families help research investigators to avoid perpetuating oppressive dynamics when possible and allow for adherence of cultural standards of engagement (McGoldrick, 1999). Purposeful and attentive interactions that are respectful to cultural practices can create space for later dialogues that address power and oppressive dynamics.

As power dynamics can vary by space, it is often important to look at how it appears and is used within and across systems, and especially among different groups of people. It was evident in Punta Raton during the preliminary assessment that power varied among different groups of people within the community, for example men and women. However,
there also appeared to be some variance in power among the peoples in the different regions of the community.

**Context and Development**

As discussed briefly above, context is a construct that illuminates the uniqueness of human existence within a particular space. The term speaks to variations of human encounters that can fluctuate by time and location. Increasingly, theorists in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy are prone to perceive human values and experiences as being socially constructed based on the social dimensions of context (Bograd, 1999; Thompson, 1995). An understanding of the interactive relationship that humans have with their environment prevents a typological error in which all humans and locations are identified as being the same (Keeney, 1983). Marriage and Family Therapist who possess an awareness of how environments shape human functioning may be able to avoid developing misconceptions about human behavior and identity (Watlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 1967; Walsh, 2002; Rojano, 2004). For example, for the purpose of this project, it was believed that community assessments were needed in Punta Raton and El Venado to raise awareness of the specific issues faced by the two communities. The assumption was that the assessments would provide critical insight on both the historical development of the communities and the current concerns faced by families (Walsh, 2002). Time and space were held to be important factors in need of considerations when engaging with the families within the communities. This is important to note, as identity is not static but fluid, progressing through stages of maturation over time (Alemida et al., 2008). For example, it would be important to distinguish if differences existed in the challenges encountered by families in Punta Raton
and El Venado in 2012. More specifically, assessing for variance in poverty levels, turtle population numbers, and migration differences between 2008 and 2012 would be important given political changes, environmental/weather vulnerabilities, and global economic market shifts.

A developmental contextual perspective captures the importance of time in understanding familial and communal growth. Understanding the developmental position of communities, families, and individuals helps researchers to determine the best type of intervention and the optimal timing of change-promoting strategies. For example, consideration of developmental contextual factors prior to a needs assessment would inform researchers and community members of meaningful steps that need to be implemented over time to allow families to progressively shed unproductive behaviors and beliefs. Premature, poorly timed changes might sabotage community development efforts. Consideration of time and context during assessment processes could prompt community members and investigators to construct pre-change measures that could potentially buffer against discomfort and change resistance. The strengthening of interpersonal ties within families and communities could act as a key medium of support (Hernandez et al., 2009).

Consequently, contextual spaces possess structures that either constrain development or promote growth over time (Thompson, 1995). Looking at how family growth is negatively or positively shaped by the cultural values, beliefs, and practices found in particular context at particular points in time can provide insight into both the health and strength of families and communities (Almeida et al., 1998). This is an important consideration as it can shed light on how families adapt to being confronted with social contextual issues. In fact, it sheds light on the resilience of families, speaking directly to inherent individual, or relational
developed mechanisms of resilience (Walsh, 1996; Hawley & Dehaan, 2004; Hegney, Ross, Baker, Rogers-Clark, King, & Buikstra, 2008).

**Resilience**

The construct of resilience describes the ability of individuals, families, or communities to overcome and rebound after significant challenges (Walsh, 2002; Bell-Tolliver, Burgess, & Brock, 2009; Hegney, 2008). It speaks to the inherent strengths that families and communities have that permit them to cope with chronic, systemic, and oppressive challenges. Often, multiple sources of protection are possessed, and strengths are drawn upon to cope with adversity (Patterson, 2002; Beitin & Allen, 2005). These strengths, or sources of wisdom, are inherent in the cultural values and practices of families and cultural groups (Bell-Tolliver et al., 2009). Increasingly, professionals are becoming conscious of the strengths held by families that permit them to bounce back after consecutive difficulties or painful challenges (Walsh, 1996; Hawley & Dehaan, 2004; Hegney et al., 2008).

Consequently, the active utilization of familial and communal resources within problem resolution strategies is becoming more common (O’Dougherty et al. 2010; Hegney et al., 2008). Increasingly, values of respect, compassion, and collaboration are held and operated from by providers in an effort to honor and draw upon the strength of families. Taking time to learn about the strengths possessed by families and communities could have significant implications on the types of interventions developed and how community members and stakeholders collaborate in addressing local concerns. Conducting community assessments prior to intervention development could serve as a means to both identify and organize intrinsic resources in a practical manner (Rojana, 2004). That process might make it easier to
identify and acquire needed external resources, and could possibly even inform how best to use those assets once acquired.

It is important that an awareness of the types of resilience that exist within Punta Raton and El Venado are understood before community development interventions are employed. It is critical, as this would permit the appropriate utilization of those resources. In addition to improving resource efficiency, such awareness could potentially increase family agency and optimism. This might happen as appropriate boundaries are developed between families, researchers, and other stakeholders, which would allow community members to perform in roles they understand and in which they are skilled. This could potentially reinforce the skills and competencies held by community members, and empower them to not only use those strengths but other resources they developed through community development efforts to achieve desired goals.
CHAPTER 3  
PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

This study seeks to acquire a comprehensive understanding of community concerns and to mobilize locals to attend to disparities in Punta Raton and El Venado. As mentioned previously, a preliminary community assessment was conducted in Punta Raton; consequently, this assessment is a follow-up intervention to acquire more information. The second assessment will be conducted in El Venado, a small town identified by Dr. Dunbar as potentially experiencing similar conditions as those found in Punta Raton.

This investigation is being completed as an important step in a larger community development project underway in the communities, an intervention including international stakeholders. The purpose of this study is to utilize participatory assessments as a means to generate local awareness, engagement, and collaboration around community concerns. The assessments will be participatory in nature, allowing for the evolution of community engagement and development processes on site during collaboration with community members. In addition, processes will attend to larger power, structure, and culture dynamics shaping community organization. The assessments are designed specifically to: (1) build partnerships; (2) assess local resources and needs; (3) and develop an understanding of the socio-cultural-political factors organizing and maintaining communal issues.

Objectives

The assessments in both communities will be organized to meet four specific objectives. The objectives will guide assessment processes and facilitate the actualization of
the project’s aim. The objectives of this study are: community initiation, community engagement and concern identification, resource inventory, and action plan development.

**Objective I: Community Initiation**

1. Develop awareness of cultural practices, traditions, learning styles, and communal norms that shape relationships and interactions within the community.
2. Assess community interest and motivation in facilitating collaborative processes targeting communal issues to promote development.
3. Develop relationships and collaborative partnerships with community members and key community powerbrokers that could be utilized to facilitate the assessment process and future programming activities by ProTECTOR and Loma Linda University Global Health Institute (GHI).

**Objective II: Community Engagement & Concern Identification:**

1. Develop a clear understanding of the disparities and resources that exist in the communities of Punta Raton and El Venado.
2. Initiate community meetings on community organization and problem resolution. Engage community members and key stakeholders in dialogues about health, economic, and environmental issues.
3. Collect quantitative and qualitative data that document communal health status and attitudes. Specifically, complete individual interviews, focus groups, and community forums, and administer pre-surveys that would provide inform about communal issues and experiences.
4. Assess community interest and motivation in facilitating collaborative processes to address health, relational, economic, and environmental issues

**Objective III: Resource Inventory Development**

1. Identify local resources that can be utilized to actualize desired individual, familial, and communal outcomes.
2. Identify external resources needed to target key health, economic, and environmental issues to achieve desired communal outcomes.

**Objective IV: Action Plan Development:**

1. Engage in other steps of the Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPR) approach, plan development and implementation, as appropriate.
2. Explore how the assessment findings can be used as an informant of community need, resource allocation, plan development, and plan implementation.
3. Explore the effectiveness and efficiency of participatory community assessments in engaging and mobilizing community members around local concerns.
4. Develop a formal report for ProTECTOR and GHI documenting assessment findings with a concentration on community needs and intervention recommendations.

The successful achievement of the outlined objectives will provide information needed to facilitate purposeful intervention design and implementation in both communities.
Conceptual Framework

The outline of this project is informed by ideas from three theories. In particular, assumptions outlined in (1) The Social Ecological Model-Natural Systems Theory, (2) Liberation Psychology, (3) and Critical Race Feminism, together provide a coherent understanding of human development in context to individual, relational, and contextual factors informing health, wellness, and illness for this project.

Social Ecological Model-Natural Systems Theory

Social ecology theory is a lens that conceptualizes human development through biological and social dimensions. Bronfenbrenner (1979), the creator of the theory, described development stating the following,

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as the process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger context in which the settings are embedded. (p. 21)

In short, the theory positions family development as occurring through an interrelated and interdependent relationship with the environment. The human ecological model will be utilized for this project for that reason, and for its attention to the relatedness of multiple factors in shaping human development within and across various environments. This idea is critical to operate from when conducting community assessments in international communities because it would prevent marriage and family therapists from looking at the health and wellness of individuals and families in isolation, and promote the consideration of larger ecosystem issues. Such considerations are important as development occurs through
interaction with a number of nested structures, each of which have a direct impact on family
growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bugolz & Sontag, 1993).

The model describes human growth as it occurs in the context of several systems. The
five system levels outlined by Bronfenbrenner (1994) as shaping human development are as
follows: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

Bronfenbrenner described a microsystem as:

A pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by the
developing person in a given face to face setting with a particular physical, social, and
symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained progressively
more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. (p. 39)

He described the mesosystem as comprising, “the linkages and processes between two or
more settings containing the developing person” (p. 40). The exosystem, which is distinct
from the mesosystem and microsystem in that it punctuates how people can be influenced by
systems they are not directly a part, is defined as:

The linkages and processes taking place in two or more settings, at least one of which
does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly
influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person
lives. (p. 40)

The macrosystem which conceptually explores the influence of large structural cultural
dimensions on development is described as:

The overarching pattern of micro, meso, and exosystem characteristics of a given
culture or subculture, with particular reference to the beliefs systems, bodies of
knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, and life
course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. (p. 40)

The last system, chronosystem, captures an important element unattended to conceptually in
the previous systems, time. Bronfenbrenner (1994) defined the chronosystem stating:

It encompasses change or consistency over time not only of the characteristics of the
person but also of the environment in which that persons lives (e.g. changes over life
course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or
degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life. (p.40)

Understanding the systems in which individuals and families are nested can prevent
the utilization of reductionist research practices and interventions that ignore larger power,
culture, and structure dynamics that shape human development. This awareness would prove
to be critical when working with families and interpreting their overt and covert behaviors, as
they grapple with staying the same or changing, and as they evaluate their development in
context to small and large systemic issues.

Human ecology theory also describes families as being goal directed, complex, and
adaptive. Humans and other living organisms are thought to naturally engage in behaviors
that sustain life. To this end humans engage in behaviors that contribute to both their survival
and betterment. In their capacity to do both, families possess the ability to evolve as needed
to exist in their natural environments. A major contributor to these ideas is Kenneth
Boulding, a general systems theorist. In his writing he promoted the idea that humans should
strive to change in ways that improve their conditions for the better. He believed such growth
should also contribute to the ultimate good of all living things. In this work, Boulding (1985)
listed four virtues, that when lived from, contribute to the “ultimate good.” The four virtues
are: economic adequacy (adequate resources available for everyone), justice (equal access to
needed resources such as employment and education), freedom, and peacefulness. The
virtues are viewed as universal values, being appropriate to families around the globe
(Bugolz & Sontag, 1993). The degree to which people are able to take steps to better
themselves is very much informed by environmental conditions that inform how families act
and consequently how they adapt. However, environmental conditions alone do not
“determine” human behavior, but instead impose limits that challenge possibilities and
movement. Options available to families are informed by the freedom and privileges that they have, advantages that may vary from family to family, and or by context (Bugolz et al., 1993).

These assumptions provide a strength-based framework for working with families, especially those who have multiple chronic issues. The ideas position researchers and marriage and family therapists working in international contexts with families addressing complex issues, to avoid deterministic and static assumptions of families, because, as mentioned above, people inherently possess the capacity to be flexible, intentional, and survival oriented. However, it also primes professionals to gauge change realistically, which is important because, although families are able to adapt, the possibilities available to them may vary based on the contextual factors described above. Similarly, the theory positions researchers and practitioners to reduce disparities, as they are prompted to improve conditions for those they directly serve, but also for the betterment of all living things. In this way the theory is holistic and promotes systemic action, interventions that attend to human and natural environmental issues with attention to justice and power dynamics (Bugolz et al., 1993).

The theory’s sound conceptualization of environmental and human health issues in relationship to contextual dynamics makes the model an appropriate fit for this project, as those factors were found to exist during the preliminary assessment in Punta Raton. However, while the theory provides a systemic framework to understand wellness, the framework does not extensively address power, an important dynamic shaping human behavior. Power is inherent to the theory, as it is more often than not attended to within descriptions of multisystem functioning. However, it does not directly attend to power, as it
shapes health and quality of life. Power is a system’s (individual, family, community) ability to promote wellness, protect against oppression, and facilitate liberation. The construct is informed by both psychological and political dynamics (Prilleltensky, 2008). Liberation Psychology is a theoretical orientation that attends directly to issues of power. The theory describes how power disparities manifest within communities, illuminating the relationships between power and access, and marginalization and oppression (Martin-Baro, 1996).

**Liberation Psychology**

Liberation Social Psychology (La Psicología Social de la Liberación) is an intellectual and political movement and model that was constructed to address oppression, disparity, and marginalization in Latin America. The movement began in the 1960’s as an effort to address the social inequalities that were affecting large groups of people (Burton & Kagan, 2004; Watt & Flanagan, 2007). For a theory, the model is descriptive in conceptualizing the effects of oppression, marginalization, and discrimination on people. The model names factors that contribute to structural disparities and negative conditions for families. For example, politics, economics, and cultural ideologies are named as factors undergirding oppressive social conditions (Moane, 2003). Social action is promoted by the theory as a means to challenge disparities ranging from micro systemic (individual) to macro systemic level issues (societal) (Martin-Baro, 1996; Prilleltensky, 2003; Moane, 2006).

Liberation psychology is similar to social ecology, in that it too conceptualizes human development as being impacted by multiple systems. In contrast, liberation psychology more heavily punctuates the existence of disparities within and across systems, and extensively addresses how human development is informed by such conditions. In fact, at the center of
the model, is a commitment to address oppressive challenges at both individual and collective levels (Moane, 2003). Breaking down social inequalities is critical to improving social conditions and human rights (Moane, 2003; Watts et al., 2007).

An understanding of human growth is critical to combat social inequality. Liberation psychology breaks down human growth into collective and personal liberation. Personal growth encompasses self-esteem building, shedding of helplessness, strength building, and healing trauma. Interpersonal growth embodies a sense of solidarity with others, group work and political growth, protesting, and lobbying (Martin-Baro, 1996). In addition to possessing an understanding of growth itself, the model also promotes awareness of individual and group trauma (Martin-Buro, 1996). Comprehension of both intrapsychic and interpersonal trauma is critical to resolving exploitation and dehumanization (Lykes et al., 2009; Lykes, 2000). Dehumanization, a source of trauma, needs to be explored both in terms of current oppressive realities, but also historically (Freire, 1970). In this way, dehumanization is not only understood from the position of those persons who have been robbed of their humanity, but also from the perspectives of those who have taken it, and the conditions in which oppression has occurred (Freire, 1970; Lykes, 2009). In this way dehumanization is perpetuated through the internalization of oppressive ideas and behaviors and the perpetuation of those practices on self and others (Freire, 1970). However, with knowledge, and the strength born out of suffering, oppressed persons can create a language that captures their experiences, construct resources to address oppression, and develop strategies to resolve injustices that will eradicate their own suffering, and liberate their oppressors as well (Freire, 1970; Lykes). Oppressed persons are viewed as the individuals or groups best equipped to
eradicate suffering, as they understand firsthand the realities of oppression, suffering, and the importance of liberation (Freire, 1970).

It is important to note Liberation psychology is much more than an awareness generating theory or approach. The model values participatory measures of engagement as a means of mobilizing oppressed persons to look at and address inequalities (Lykes & Moan, 2009). However, even when operating with an awareness of power, inequality, and systemic oppression, challenges can still occur (Lykes, 2000). The nature of oppression is that groups of peoples overtly and covertly experience dehumanizing messages while also being denied opportunities and resources. Consequently, oppressed groups may not immediately be able to perceive themselves as being capable of engaging with or combating the social political systems that have oppressed them, as their sense of agency is diminished or never developed (Freire, 1970; Moane, 2003). In order to engage with oppressive sociopolitical forces, dynamics that are both organized and powerful, oppressed groups often need to analyze, process, and document the trauma and suffering that they have experienced, and use that information to unlearn or counteract restrictive ways of being (Lykes, 2000; Moane, 2003). The healing that needs to occur during such processes is a testament to the interpersonal and intrapersonal fragmentation that can occur via interaction with oppressive systems.

Liberation social psychology makes it explicit that participatory processes are a critical means to healing as oppressed and economically disadvantaged groups are empowered through them (Moane, 2003). The process becomes a means to combat oppression and unequal power through collaboration and equality. In this way the model is practical about the unique interplay of intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics that need to be addressed during participatory processes to allow stakeholders and community members
to equitably engage around a common cause. In short, equality does not just happen when groups come together (Moane, 2005; Martin-Baro, 1996). Instead, such processes must be intentional and co-constructed, through trust promoting, honest and critical dialogues. In this way, liberation psychology punctuates the importance of consciousness raising and critical interventions (Moane, 2005; Martin-Baro, 1996).

Liberation psychology is a very pragmatic theory in its consideration of macro and micro level factors on human development. The framework extends from individual to social policy level interests, eloquently capturing the binds of marginalization and promoting meaningful interactions to facilitate healing. The theory is similar to another formative theory, critical race feminism, in its concise conceptualization of repetitive patterns of exploitation. Critical race feminism punctuates the discussion of power and marginalization through its discussion of identity and power. Both constructs are addressed by liberation psychology, however, critical race feminism uses unique language to describe the relationship between power and identity, thus furthering the human development discussion.

**Critical Race Feminism**

Critical race feminism theory addresses how dominant groups marginalize minority groups in different situations and at different times to accommodate personal needs (Reus et al., 2005). The theory recognizes the affect that social policies and laws have on the creation of strategies that help oppressed groups, such as women, certain races, and ethnic minorities (DeReus, Few, & Blume, 2005). Similar to social ecology and liberation psychology, the theory punctuates the importance of understanding the systems (micro, meso, and macro) that individuals and families are a part of, because such contexts have a significant impact on
development. Any change that occurs within and or across systems can have a rippling effect that can scale from the larger context to the individual (Few, 2007). The theory also addresses human development with considerable attention on the effect identity has on shaping human experience. Identity is not reduced to one characteristic, instead; people are described as holding multiple intersecting identities that inform development. In this way the theory is sensitive to layered multiplicative experience. More specifically, multiple identities can result in both multiple forms of oppression, discrimination, and burden, but can also embody numerous forms of resilience, as in strength or love (Wing, 2002). To grasp the meaning of experiences informed by identities, for individual or groups, experiences must be explored with sensitivity to the variable time. More specifically, historical and contextual (i.e. year, location, typical ideologies, etc.) factors shaping experience must be considered, understood. However, acquiring information that accurately reflects the lived experiences and voices of marginalized groups can be a challenge, as they have often been excluded from historical narration. Consequently, sometimes re-conceptualizing and rewriting of history is required to construct less pathologizing narratives and to allow for the telling of multiple truths by marginalized groups. The re-authoring process can be an empowering experience, as it permits choice and power (Few, 2007).

When exploring marginalization it is important to explore the infrastructures that create and perpetuate inequality. Marginalization does manifest in relational encounters, but it is built into the fabric of the culture of economic institutions. Biases that shape privilege and inequality are perpetuated through unconscious thoughts and behavior, which sustain the power of the privileged. Consequently, combating such inequality requires conscious, organized, and systemic action that addresses institutional infrastructures of oppression.
(Cleaver, 1997). Interventions that eradicate power differentials can not only create opportunities, but can also empower marginalized peoples (Few, 2007). The socio-historical context of experience needs to be understood in order to generate activity that changes global, legal, and economic challenges. Creating space for voices to be heard requires a process of critical thinking that takes into consideration socio-historical contextual dynamics and allow for the centering of experience. This type of critical review allows for the review of experience without permitting one voice/experience to be dominant. From this position, individuals and groups can begin to challenge established politics and institutional oppression.

Together, social ecological theory, liberation psychology, and critical race feminism create a human development framework that is attentive to micro and macro level factors that inform growth. The lens promotes consideration of and attention to the spectrum of factors shaping human quality of life and health disparities. This lens encourages a culturally sensitive approach to change, one that attends to marginalization, power, and culture. In this way, the framework is proactive in addressing power, and all related factors, that too often are active in maintaining and perpetuating health disparities. The framework’s attention to multilevel issues, and the structural factors that maintain them, makes the lens systemic enough to adequately guide a Marriage and Family Therapist in addressing the range of disparities identified during the preliminary assessment.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This project utilized a pragmatist research approach to participatory community assessments. Pragmatists are flexible researchers open to utilizing mixed methodologies to conduct and analyze research. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used to inform inquiry processes and to support or clarify the findings established by each respective methodology. Each method is valued as holding strengths that can be utilized to understand the world. The research flexibility that pragmatist researchers espouse is said to provide them with a bi-focal view that permits them to alternate between macro and micro levels of perception and analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

While pragmatists are not focused on methodological philosophical purity, they do believe research questions should drive the methodologies that are employed and analyze those undertaken. Consequently, pragmatists operate from the assumption that divergent methodologies can be utilized to verify, expand upon, or support the findings of other methods (Onwuesbuzie et al., 2005). In essence, they tend to be flexible, integrating research methodologies that allow engagement, observation, and triangulation (Onwuegbuzi et al., 2005). Their view allows for methodological adaptations throughout research and analysis processes, permitting the exploration of new research questions or insights as they manifest. Pragmatists do not believe a strong philosophical dichotomy exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods (Onwuegbuzie, 2005). However, they do perceive each methodology as being grounded by philosophies that are organized by assumptions about the natural world and research inquiry (Firestone, 1987). Such flexibility is often required in the
completion of community assessments to capture unique communal intricacies which only become visible during assessment processes in the field.

The appropriateness of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in participatory community assessments is much debated. The fit of concepts, such as validity and reliability in participatory community assessments, is sometimes discounted as being too positivistic (Bradbury et al., 2003). However, participatory community assessment research processes are open to quality, rigorous, and diverse research methods. Communities employ reflexive strategies that take into consideration the different forms of knowing.

A pragmatist and participatory approach to community assessments makes research investigation less about methodological philosophical purity and more about appropriate methodological inquiry and choice points (Bradbury et al., 2003). An open stance to research creates space for identification and application of methodology and analysis as appropriate, and facilitates the development of integrative conceptualizations and practices (Ledwich, 2005). This not only shapes what are considered strengths and limitations of methodologies, but shapes what approaches are even considered. Thus, evaluation of the research findings, strengths, and limitations of qualitative and quantitative methodologies from a pragmatist participatory community needs assessment approach is significantly correlated to the research purpose, questions, and overall methodological plan.

CBPR includes a recurrent pattern of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation (Minkler, 2013; Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007). Initially, the planning phase of the project focuses specifically on the formation of partnerships and a shared vision among invested groups in a project, more commonly referred to as stakeholders. Persons participating in CBPR processes may include, but are not limited to, researchers, investors, providers, and
community members (Minkler, 2013; Kindon et al., 2007). Co-learning, transfer of knowledge or expertise, shared power in decision-making, and shared ownership of research processes and outcomes related to the project values typically organizing values of CBPR (Viswanathan et al., 2004). In later stages of CBPR, planning occurs again as community members regroup and organize learned information in new strategies to achieve desired goals. Once participants have been organized for the project, the group begins to act by making pertinent decisions, such as: identifying additional participants to join; the focus of the project; location and timeframes of the research; and how the project will be implemented (Kindon et al., 2007). Considerable attention is given to understanding what resources exist among stakeholders and how to maximize the use of them.

In addition, roles and or tasks are often assigned among CBPR participants to promote inclusion, facilitate collaboration, and ensure the appropriate use of resources. Action in later stages of CBPR is typically focused in the areas of participant engagement, data collection, analyses of findings, future plan development, and dissemination of findings. Data collection and analysis procedures are selected based on appropriate project fit. The importance of capturing project participant feedback makes qualitative research an appropriate data inquiry method for CBPR. However, CBPR researchers often utilize multiple research methods (i.e. journaling, surveys, interviews, group process, etc.) to better capture participant and project diversity, and to triangulate sources of data, which lends to generating confidence in project conclusions (Mendenhall & Doherty, 2005). Reflection refers to the processes in which CBPR teams review their participation, work, research design, and the goals of their project. Reflection processes early in CBPR is typically focused on the review of knowledge, research design critique, ethical concern discussion, and group
accountability. While reflection later in the CBPR process focuses more specifically on project flow related issues, such as group collaboration and data collection, CBPR processes are evaluated based upon group actions, reflections, and by whatever mechanisms are enacted to collect information or induce change. Evaluation is implemented throughout the CBPR processes at whatever milestones are developed by the group to feed collected information back to the project (Kindon et al., 2007).

CBPR can attend to a wide range of concerns. Issues addressed can vary from structural, social, and physical environmental concerns (Holkup, Tripp-Reimer, Salois, Clarann, & Weinert, 2004). Using CBPR, local concerns can be progressively attended to as community members and stakeholders operate from core tenants of the theory. Organizing principles of the theory include: (a) community viewed as a unit, (b) building upon the strengths and resources of the community, (c) encouraging co-learning among community members and stakeholders, (d) creating a balance between needs and research interests, (e) facilitating development of community defined problems, (f) dissemination of core CBPR processes to all partners, and (g) acquiring long-term commitment in the resolution of local issues among community members and stakeholders (Holkup et al., 2004).

The focus of this doctoral project was on the engagement and concern identification tasks of the approach, as allowed by the one-month assessment timeframe afforded for the project. The processes of this doctoral project were limited to the initial steps of CBPR. Consequently, CBPR processes of focus during the participatory community needs assessments conducted in Punta Raton and El Venado for this doctoral project included: (a) engagement of community members in dialogues (b) generation of insights into communal issues and (c) development of appropriate actions plans that address key communal concerns.
The participatory community assessment processes used for this project followed typical Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPR) protocols (Mendenhall & Doherty, 2005). As mentioned above, participatory community needs assessments consider individuals and families as research investigators (Kindon et al., 2007). Community members are involved in the selection and implementation of appropriate research methodologies. Typically, community members are invested not only in an understanding of their experiences, but also in constructing solutions that can bring about desired changes. The curiosity that community members present with is often a reflection of an interest in practical insights into familial and local concerns (Ledwich, 2005). Participatory community assessments are designed to acquire information about the specific experiences of local community members and key stakeholders that can be utilized for mobilization and change (Ledwich, 2005). Inquiry processes are often reflexive and emancipatory in nature (Bradbury et al., 2003; Ledwich, 2005). Research methodological criteria and processes are major informative structures that shape the types of initiations and actions that are constructed and implemented by communities.

A multi-method data collection process was utilized for this doctoral project that included interviews, community forums, and surveys.

Participants

This project used a convenient sampling method. Community members were approached in their homes and in local community organizations and informed of the project, and their participation was requested. Individual, small, or large group interviews were held in both communities with a total of 152 participants (Punta Raton, \( n=114 \) and El Venado \( n= \))
38). Forums were held in both communities, for a total of four community meetings (Punta Raton \(n=3\), El Venado \(n=1\)). A total of 58 people participated in the community meetings in Punta Raton and 15 people participated in the meeting in El Venado. Surveys were administered in both communities, with a total of 254 surveys completed (Punta Raton, \(n=177\) & El Venado, \(n=77\)).

**Data Collection - Procedure**

Between September 16, 2011 and October 16, 2011 participatory community assessments were conducted in two southern Honduran communities, Punta Raton and El Venado. The participatory community assessments utilized a multi-method information collection process, including interviews, surveys, and community meetings to successfully engage and organize community members around prevalent local concerns. An American doctoral student and a native Honduran bilingual translator worked in collaboration with the two communities to complete the assessments. The bilingual interpreter supported the researcher during the assessment process by translating dialogues, verbally administering surveys, and explaining cultural nuances. The participatory assessments were designed to generate community understanding about the economic, health, relational, and environmental conditions shaping human quality of life and environmental sustainability in Punta Raton and El Venado. In addition, the assessments were also designed to facilitate the construction of community strategic development plans that could be implemented by local community members, ProTECTOR, Loma Linda University Global Health Institute (GHI), and international stakeholders.
At the start of the assessments community members were approached in local venues and the turtle centre. The doctoral student and translator introduced themselves and asked subsequent questions about who had influence in the communities. Once the names and locations of persons of influence within the community had been acquired, they were subsequently approached in their homes or local venues as advised by community members. Discussions were then held with powerbrokers and the nature of the community assessments were described to obtain buy-in. The doctoral student and translator explained the details of the assessments, made changes to assessment procedures as advised, and acquired consent to move forward. For example, powerbrokers asked to inform the community members about the assessment instead of the interviewer and translator completing that task. Also, the powerbrokers educated the researcher about the roles and typical behaviours of men and women. They explained that it was typical for women to work in the homes and men to be at the beach or out at sea. This information helped the interview and translator to take detours from the homes and community spaces to make a considerate effort to go to the beach during the day to acquire male feedback in the assessment.

After contact had been made with community powerbrokers, local families were approached in their homes and communal spaces daily. First the qualitative interviews were conducted and were subsequently followed up by the surveys. The community meetings were spread out over the course of the trip and the dates for meeting were selected by the community powerbrokers.

Natural paths were followed in the communities and all viewable homes and community spaces were approached to engage community members in for the interviews and surveys. There were homes lining the beach and these homes were also visited along with
any persons working or relaxing on the beach. Homes and community spaces were visited more than once if new persons were identified to be there in subsequent passing of the spaces. It is important to note that often homes contained multiple, non-biological families, and it was typical that the current residents in the homes were not the owners of the homes.

Qualitative interviews were completed to obtain detailed accounts of individual, familial, and communal experiences in both communities. At the start of the discussion the interviewer and translator introduced themselves and shared their interest in collaborating on the completion of an assessment with community members. Community members were given a brief overview of the assessment processes and their participation was requested. Consent was requested for the recording of the discussions. Also, community members were informed they could stop the discussion process anytime they desired. If community members declined to participate in the assessment the discussion would end at that time. However, if community members consented, which was more often than not the case, semi-structured interviews were conducted in individual, and small and large group formats. Pre-developed interview questions (APPENDIX A) were used as a guide for the interviews. Questions were adapted and probes were used based on the clarity and depth of community member responses, to acquire more descriptive explanations.

Again, interviews were recorded with the permission of participants. The recordings were transcribed in the evening and the themes that emerged from the interviews were noted and incorporated into the next day’s questions and probes. More specifically, interactions between the translator, community members, and the interviewer were typed word for word at the end of the day. After the discussions were transcribed, the interviews were all scanned for frequent descriptions or phrases with particular attention to concerns, needs, and
resources. Frequent statements were documented. In subsequent interviews those statements were drawn upon if community members used similar descriptors (i.e. education) to deepen conversation.

Each audio recording was given a specific number. Participant information was not recorded on the tapes or used to label the information. The only available information for each recording is the type of meeting, number of participants, and the actual recording number. This information was actually collected on the audiotape or documented in the interviewers’ field notes. The interviewer also kept field notes documenting general reflections, observations about community member interactions, and strategies for improving the assessment process.

Individual and small group discussions were considered an appropriate assessment approach as it created an opportunity to elicit the participation of typically detached persons or marginalized voices in the community. Interviews were held in both communities with a total of 152 contacts made (Punta Raton n=114 and El Venado n= 38). Some contacts in Punta Raton may have been duplicate interviews, with community members being participatory in more than one context when interviews were being held. The interview length ranged from ten minutes to one hour.

Community meetings were also held in both communities to mobilize and engage community members and key stakeholders around core community concerns. Community meetings were formally organized by community powerbrokers. These stakeholders identified appropriate meeting locations and sent out verbal correspondence announcing the community meetings. Community members were also informed about the meetings during individual and small group meetings with the doctoral student and translator. A total of four
community meetings were held across both communities (Punta Raton \(n=3\), El Venado \(n=1\)). A total of 58 people participated in the community meetings in Punta Raton and 15 people participated in the meeting in El Venado. The meetings ranged in length from 45 minutes to an hour and a half.

Community members were involved in the organization and facilitation of community meetings through the recruitment of local participants and selection of discussion topics. Community members were engaged in the following ways: (a) community members were informed of the community forums and their active involvement was encouraged; (b) their participation was requested during individual and small group discussions and by major powerbrokers; (c) they were asked to bring other community members; (d) they were encouraged to be prepared to have a discussion in which they would shape the meeting agenda by naming community issues and developing potential solutions; and (e) they were asked to participate in co-creating a dialogue about the conditions of the community. Community members participated in the aforementioned ways and consequently were active in the organization and facilitation of the meetings as evidenced by community members attending the meetings themselves and inviting others, and by their active participation in community discussions. At the onset of each of the community meetings, a dialogue was held about the nature of the meeting. Information was provided about the doctoral student, translator, Loma Linda University, ProTECTOR, and about the initial hope for the community forum and community assessment in general. Space was then created for community members to suggest what would be discussed and how the process would evolve. If community members needed further clarity about the possibilities of the forum or assessment, suggestions were given. Community members immediately did understand the
importance of holding community meetings and contributing to the discussion as evidenced by their attendance at the function, and naming of local concerns, resources, and needs. However, community members had difficulty leading discussions. While they were comfortable naming concerns and expanded upon identified issues, they were not willing to lead the discussion or take on leadership roles in addressing identified local issues.

The community meetings were recorded with the permission of participants. In addition, notes were taken and were referenced throughout the discussion if needed. For example, it was often the case that notes were used to track and or summarize the discussions at different time points over the course of the community meeting. The recordings of each community meeting were typed word for word in the evening, and frequently raised ideas were identified, documented, and were incorporated into subsequent community meeting questions and probes. More specifically, notes and or transcriptions were reviewed at the end of each meeting and themes were identified. The number of times topics or issues were named was explored, with frequent concerns or themes being noted. When appropriate, ideas from previous community meetings were introduced into the forum. Often, this information was shared at the beginning of community meetings to inform the assessment processes to date, and to provide an example of the kinds of topics and processes that could unfold during the meeting.

Surveys were administered to further confirm qualitative themes generated from communal interviews and to gather additional information on familial functioning. As mentioned above, discussions were transcribed each day and prevalent themes were documented. These themes, in addition to two family functioning surveys were developed to further assess the conditions of families within the communities. In total, two surveys, were
created. The original survey was comprised of three sections. The first section was designed to verify emergent qualitative themes identified as core communal issues found in community interviews and community forums. The remaining two sections were utilized to capture familial functioning, specifically, familial coping and distress. The Family Coping Inventory (McCubbin, Boss, Wilson, & Dahl, 1991) and the Family Distress Index (McCubbin, Thompson, & Elver, 1996) were the two surveys selected based on measure relevance and instrument simplicity. The question generated themes and the two family surveys were combined and formatted into a two-page document (APPENDIX B).

The surveys were translated from English to Spanish in accordance with the back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). This is a process in which a bilingual person translates an instrument from its original language to the language of the specific study. A second person, unfamiliar with the original scale, is then asked to translate the survey back to its original language. To minimize translation error, this process was completed twice with four bilingual persons completing the parallel-back translation procedure constructing a total of two Spanish versions of the survey (APPENDIX C, APPENDIX D). The interpreter and the doctoral student assessed which version of the translated instruments were the most appropriate for the two communities and selected the most suitable version. More specifically, the interpreter and researcher evaluated the different translations based on English-Spanish translation accuracy, evaluated the versions based on perceived fidelity with the original instruments questions meaning (the degree to which the translated version seemed to capture the nuances of the original questions), and critiqued them based on culture and language, based on the speaking patterns of Hondurans, and more specifically the Punta Raton and El Venado communities. The translator’s experience and skill as both a bilingual
professional and as a native Honduran was heavily drawn upon during the development of the survey.

It was reported that community members in both communities had low literacy rates, thus to decrease anxiety during survey administration, the surveys were administered verbally by the translator. Administration of the first survey proved to be unsuccessful. Community members displayed high levels of confusion, anxiety, and frustration when answering survey questions. Specifically, the Family Coping Index and the Family Distress Index questions had to be reread, reworded, and explained in several different ways before participants provided a verbal response. Community members had difficulty selecting a scaling response typical of Likert scales. During and after the verbal administration of the survey, community members communicated their personal confusion when completing the survey and testified that the survey was too complicated to be completed by community members. Eight consecutive people were administered the survey. Each participant displayed similar levels of confusion, anxiety, and frustration. The translator administering the surveys reported that she did not know what community members were responding to by the time they had provided a response to the questions. Community members seemed to be uncomfortable with the questions and scale not the translation. The forced choice and actual response options seemed unfamiliar to community members. While participants would naturally, that is without prompting, communicate the frequency of occurrences within the community, when presented with specific response options they had difficulty responding. Storytelling seemed to be the preferred means of communicating and the survey appeared restrictive. In addition, the language seemed incongruent with their way of thinking. It seemed as though the assessment mechanism and language of the survey was unfamiliar and
too complex, those factors coupled with low self-reported literacy rates may have triggered anxiety. The anxiety then seemed to shape their ability to understand and response to the questions, which proved to be challenging and time consuming. The administration of the eight surveys ranged from 30 minutes to 50 minutes. Given time constraints and community member anxiety and confusion in completing the survey, a decision was made to create a second survey.

A second survey was drafted. The *Family Coping Index* was removed from the instrument. The survey was removed because the changes that would have had to be made to the instrument, to make it comprehensible to community members, would not permit the insights into family coping as initially hoped. The remaining two sections were reworded and the scaling options changed to a yes, no, or I do not know (APPENDIX E & APPENDIX F). The revised survey questions were short and concise, and the scaling options were equally straightforward. Again, the changes were made given literacy concerns and preferred communication styles. The second survey proved to be comprehensible by community members and easier to administer. Assessment participants appeared comfortable and able to complete the survey, as evidenced by quick responses and their tendency to contextualize their answers. More specifically, when communicating, they would select a forced response and then explain why they reported what they did. This communicated both their comprehension of the question and their desire to also provide a thorough response. The second survey was administered verbally by reading each question in both communities (Punta Raton, n=138, El Venado, n= 77). Community members were approached in their homes or in communal spaces and asked to complete the survey. Average completion time for the survey was twenty minutes. During the administration of the survey it was typical for
community members to select one of the forced options, but they also often elaborated on their responses verbally. Thus, to capture community members’ complete responses, qualitative information was also collected during the administration of the survey as an explanation was provided by community members.

A multi-method data collection process was utilized for this doctoral project that included interviews, community forums, and surveys. First, content analysis was performed on the qualitative data collected during discussions, community meetings, surveys, and field notes and assessment findings reported. Finally, Chi square analysis was used to test community differences on categorical responses. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0.

As the information was collected, it was continually organized and presented back to the communities for verification. This was done to assess comprehension of familial experiences and to understand the level of agreement among community members about local conditions. It is important to note however, verification happened in a number of ways. First, the verbal responses provided by participants were always reflected back to them during the assessment processes to assess comprehension. Also, as mentioned above, assessment themes were introduced into conversations to probe, deepen conversations, and to understand the frequency of certain experiences or thoughts. In addition to community member verification, the researcher and translator debriefed daily and discussed assessment findings. The discussions reflected on the day-to-day experiences of the researcher and translator, and on the assessment findings. The assessment findings were discussed in relationship to the contextual and socio-cultural dynamics perceived to be informing the research process.
All of the information collected during the assessment process was used to inform the researcher, translator, and community members of local issues as the information was always assessed in relationship to one another. Analysis of the information collected during the community assessments conducted in Punta Raton and El Venado included: field notes collected throughout the assessment process; analysis of qualitative discussion \((n=152)\); community meeting transcriptions \((n=4)\); and statistical analysis of surveyed data \(n=215\). The assessment information is currently stored on two encrypted USBs without any protected health information.

**Content Analysis**

The assessment data were reviewed for errors and cleared as appropriate. Analysis was completed to gather demographic information about the participants that completed the survey. The remaining data were explored to uncover any unique information within and across groups, and to gain insight into communal experiences and concerns. Because the survey was changed due to comprehension concerns, there were limitations to the types of statistical analyses that could be performed. For example, while the study could not explore family coping and stress, the analysis could explore the frequency of presenting issues within homes and the communities. Thus, descriptive statistics were the form of quantitative analysis conducted with this study.

Content analysis was performed on the qualitative data collected during discussions, community meetings, surveys, and field notes. Content analysis is a research methodological approach that allows for replicable and valid inferences to be derived from field notes, transcripts, observations, and other relevant important sources of information (Hsieh &
The methodology can be employed to understand the presence and prevalence of words and concepts within documents. In addition, the method can be particularly helpful when analyzing information that is readily available, such as books, newspapers, or discussions. The approach includes developing a mechanism by which to code or classify information. Specifically, the process includes: (a) collecting and organizing data into text; (b) developing codes that are inductively or analytically assigned to the data; (c) sorting data by categories with particular patterns being arranged by commonality or relationship; and (d) reviewing patterns in the context of previous research and theory (Berg, 2001).

This approach was particularly helpful in understanding the importance of descriptions used by community members to describe community experiences in an international context. Variance in the primary languages spoken between the interviewer and community members meant that some critical information shared in the assessment processes may have been lost. Resource limitations prevented the verification of interview-translator and translator-community member translations. While a subsequent translator did not review the recordings, the researcher did experience the translator as being consistent in translations throughout the assessments. This was evident as community members frequently named the same topics for discussion. Because community members named the same issues, the translator repeated the same words and phrases to the researcher. Consequently, as the assessment progressed the researcher became familiar with the Spanish descriptors used to describe community member experiences. Because the qualitative interviews were not substantiated by another bilingual translator, the amount of information lost due to translation inaccuracy could not be determined. The potential for loss of information in the translation
processes illuminated the need for heightened sensitivity when coding and interpreting the dialogues.

Content analysis, however, facilitates the comprehension of data through the coding and organizing of information into meaningful categories that can be used to make inferences about the collected data (Krippendorff, 2004). Because exact translations of discussion may not have occurred throughout the assessment process, understanding lived experiences in the voices of community members is not possible. However, it is possible to punctuate frequently used descriptions of experience that capture the essence of lived experiences.

Two types of content analyses were performed. Conceptual content analysis was utilized to quantify the presence of descriptions from the qualitative data. Relational content analysis was also performed to understand the relationship between the themes found in the conceptual analysis. Coding was performed with all qualitative data into clearly defined categories that provided insight into the experiences of community members.

Data triangulation, between quantitative and qualitative data, was completed to cross-examine the assessment findings in order to develop a clear picture of community functioning (Denzin, 1978). Triangulated data included a cross sample of participants from different backgrounds and neighborhoods within the communities. Also, some data triangulation occurred during assessment processes as participants reviewed, revised, and built upon the already collected information from discussions, community forums, and survey administration. For example, themes identified during assessment processes were confirmed through community member checks (internal validity) and debriefing sessions with the translator.
Analysis of the data for this project explored multiple data sources (journals entries, field notes, transcriptions, and survey data) in relationship to one another to determine general patterns of experience and needs. The process was particularly helpful in understanding if an authentic and representative account of local experience had been obtained (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch, 1993). Also, the process provided a balanced account of the intricate and complex nature of lived experiences in the communities (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to utilize participatory community assessments as a means to generate local awareness, engagement, and collaboration around community concerns. In particular, assessment processes were designed to engage community members and raise consciousness, develop inventories of community resources, and facilitate the development of action plans. This section outlines what was learned in these areas during the implementation of assessment processes.

In this section, the assessment findings will first be discussed. The results of each community will be presented. The significant concerns of each community will be highlighted and described in detail. Similarities and differences found between the two communities will be explored with attention to specific community needs, socio-cultural factors maintaining and perpetuating communal culture, and developmental considerations.

Secondly, the assessment process findings will be discussed, as was outlined in the projects goals and objectives. More specifically, process findings in the areas of: community engagement and consciousness raising; resource inventories; and action plan development will be discussed. The outlined results are the assessment findings generated from the review of the qualitative interviews, survey data, and community forums.

Participants

Individual, small, or large group interviews were held in both communities with a total of 152 contacts made (Punta Raton, n=114, El Venado n= 38). A total of four community meetings were held across both communities (Punta Raton n=3, El Venado n=1).
A total of 58 people participated in community meetings in Punta Raton and 15 people participated in the meeting in El Venado. Also, a total of 215 men and women from the two communities were surveyed. The first community (Punta Raton) consisted of 138 individuals. The second community (El Venado) consisted of 77 individuals (see Tables 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Chi square test of independence was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and gender. The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 215) = 4.85, p = .028$ (see Table 2).
Table 2

*Gender Comparison Within and Between Communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>El Venado</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age breakdown of the participants is displayed in Table 3. There were no statistically significant age differences between the two communities.

Table 3

*Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>N</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>36.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>40.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The poverty level is very high in this region of the country underemployment and unemployment. Chi square was used to test whether these differences were statistically significant. While there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between the level of employed and unemployed individuals between the communities, the type of employment varied by community (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Employment El Venado vs Punta Raton Communities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant/Seller</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punta Raton</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant/Seller</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Punta Raton Community Assessment Findings

Punta Raton is a small coastal community in Southern Honduras with an estimated population of one thousand people. The community has three major sections: La Puntilla, El Centro, and La Guadera.

Community Strengths and Resources

Community members highlighted several local features they considered to be resources. First, the safety of the community was frequently referenced. Families reported enjoying the community and feeling safe from violence and theft. For example, one community member stated during a discussion, “I enjoy the beach and the safety.” Similarly, another discussion participant reported, “I love the community because it is tranquil and safe…most people here think the community is safe.” The safety of the community was described as allowing adults and children to live very peacefully. One community member described the community during a community meeting as a, “great place, no delinquents, very peaceful place, the people can live very well, in the city there are too many challenges that affect living.” Although the community was described as being safe in general, a few community members reported an increase in stealing in recent years. However, even though theft was described as a prevalent issue, the community was still described as safe. For example one person stated during a discussion, “We don’t have too many problems here because it is a safe place. The only problem we have is chicken theft.” Theft was not described as a serious issue during the assessment.

Adolescents and young adults were referenced a few times as the groups engaging in behaviors having a negative impact on community safety. For example, one community
member, during a one-on-one discussion, described the change in community safety saying, “The kids are using drugs, they steal things that don’t belong to them.” Drug use was another safety concern raised by community members during assessment processes. One community member, during a large group discussion stated, “The young get drunk really often, but not too often, and they do drugs.” Few community members thought the issue was significant enough to warrant intervention. For example during a discussion, one community member, stated, “Maybe we need to make this place safer, have security.” Again, the increased drug use and theft was not a significant concern, as most community participants described the environment as safe and tranquil.

The natural environment was frequently described as a local resource. In particular, trees, and the sea and its inhabitants were named as local resources. For example, one community member stated, “We enjoy the environment because of all the food we have here, all the fish in the sea. We are able to get food easily.” Similarly, community members reported enjoying swimming, playing in the sea, and fishing. One community member described local interest in fishing saying, “We like to fish.” In addition, many community members reported enjoying having immediate access to natural resources. Similarly, during a discussion, another community member described using resources from the environment stating, “When there is fish we get from the mangroves or from the ocean, that is when we have food and things are better during that time.”

Community members described the natural resources in the community as being a means of employment, a resource that could eventually generate jobs, and as an attraction for tourists. The natural environment was often referenced as a local attraction that could be used to entice out of region Hondurans and international travelers to the community. All of these
factors were described as having direct implications on the local economy. For example, one community member stated, “We take care of the animals and the forest because we have a project planting trees. That is our job opportunity here.” Similarly, another community member stated, “The tourist can come here. They can swim in the beach. Tourists say Punta Raton has the best beach.” Directly, but more often than not indirectly, community members referenced the natural environment, turtle center, and La Veda as a community resource. One community member made this point clear during a discussion stating, “If we have a resource it would be La Veda because we take care of the turtles, but that’s our only resource.” When asked about the benefits of taking care of the turtles a community member stated, “Ecotourism would help get people to the community. We need to promote tourism here… the community can sell the fish to the restaurants and the restaurants can attend to the tourists.” The community was specifically interested in starting up ecotourism ventures in the area, with tree and turtle conservation as the primary tourist attraction. Community members reported being interested in receiving assistance setting ecotourism ventures. A community member expressed the community’s need for support setting up ecotourism during a forum stating, “We need help to get more tourist. Help for the women to be able to prepare good food to get good tourist.” Ecotourism was seen as a viable solution to address the community’s economic concerns.

**Economic Stability and Employment**

Community members in the different sections of Punta Raton reported a number of local concerns during interviews, small group discussions, and community forums. The most significant concern reported was finances, with the issue being described in relationship to
unemployment and underemployment. In particular, community members stated that there was not enough work opportunities in the community to sustain the basic needs of families. When asked about family access related concerns once community member stated, “We have trouble getting the things we need for our homes. There are a lot of houses in this community with this problem. You will see. Some houses have it worse than others.” One community member described the limited employment and the economic conditions of the community saying, “There are no jobs here….if you don’t have a job you don’t have anything to eat.” When asked if this was his experience the community member stated, “Yes. That happens a lot for the most part of us. We don’t have food and maybe go days without eating. We live from the fish in the sea. If there are not fish enough we don’t eat that day… maybe not everybody but many families, especially families with children, don’t have food to feed everybody.” Similarly, another community member described her employment and economic condition stating, “I make tortillas to sell, then I go fishing for oysters and shrimp. I get them from the sea. But sometimes I just get 50 lemps for tortillas and that is not enough money. And sometimes I go to fishing and I just get three pounds of oysters and 25 lemps per pound. It’s just not enough.” Families become strategic in how they use and save resources, which allows them to both continue to be able to work and to be able to eat. One family described the balance stating, “If we get three pounds of oysters today we go and buy supplies, and if we get another three pounds of oyster we go get beans. In that way we are completing the work.” The lack of economic resources has adversely impacted families in a number of ways. One particular reality faced by economically unstable families is that they do not have homes or they do not have structurally secure or complete homes. One family described their living situation during a discussion stating, “We don’t have a house here… someone loaned this to
When asked how many participants did not have a home to live in, one community meeting member stated, “Most part of the group don’t have homes because they don’t have land to build a house.” Multiple families often live in one home and pool resources among each other to prevent homelessness. Often these families are not related. When asked whether or not multiple families live together in one home, one community member reported, “Yes.” Another assessment participant during a discussion described the supportive nature of community members stating, “If they don’t have any place to live you have to give them a place.” Yet, even among families with homes, housing concerns were reported. Often these families reported structural related concerns. Such concerns often came up during discussions and community meetings. For example, during a meeting one community member stated, “We don’t have toilets and we need toilets, we don’t have water storage units.” Another community member described not having resources for his home during a discussion stating, “Most of us don’t have toilets so we don’t have a place to take care of our needs.” The absence of structural resources was evident even among visitors in the community. A researcher visiting the community reported the same issue stating, “They don’t have toilets and they don’t have a sewer system.”

In addition to missing important structural features, most of the homes in the community were made of plastic, and sticks, mud, and other natural resources available in the area. The instability of the homes and lack of toilets and water storage was visually evident (APPENDIX G).

Community members were blunt when describing the conditions of their homes. In fact, the issue was often described as an obvious issue. During an individual discussion, one community member described the apparent nature of housing conditions in the community
stating, “You can see where we live.” When describing her discomfort with the location of her home she stated “I don’t like it because when it rains the water moves the earth and we are put in danger. The water takes the land with it.” However, some homes were observably more secure than others in the community. These homes were made of brick or stone.

It is important to note however, that variance in economic stability existed throughout the community. More specifically, poverty levels varied between the specific sections of Punta Raton. In terms of resources by section, La Guadera is responsible for three major shrimp farm lagoons, which were donated by the Spanish Cooperation. One community member during a discussion described how they had come to care for the lagoons stating, “They left one for La Puntia, the others in El Centro and La Guadera. But La Puntia group withdrew from the project. They were trained but they didn’t do anything. The El Centro group worked for two years but they felt the work was too hard so they gave up too. El Centro did not want to work in the shrimp lagoon because they are close to the beach. So the Spanish Cooperation gave La Guadera the other two lagoons because the other communities did not work.” El Centro had the most businesses, most of which were restaurants. This was evident when walking through the community, as restaurants were found in close proximity to one another, slightly larger in size than the houses, with purchasable merchandise on display. La Puntilla is where the turtle center is operated and where a large number of the community’s fishermen live.

The variance in economic status and resource accessibility in the different communities was evident in conversations based on the type and frequency of employment and economic security statements. El Centro lagoon workers often listed one form of employment. For example, one community member described his employment stating, “I am
a watchmen of one of the lagoons.” Similarly, another community member described the benefit of working as part of the cooperation stating, “Working in the shrimp lagoons gives job security more than others.” Most of the economic related statements were about investing in the lagoons and getting them functioning at capacity. For example, one community member during a discussion described the experience stating, “If we had enough money to plant more we would have a larger harvest.” Compared to other sections of the community, La Guadera was described as having resources. For example, one La Puntilla community member during a discussion stated, “If I don’t have money to get medicine I can go to a friend, to one who is taking care of the lagoons, and get a loan for the amount I need.”

In contrast, in El Centro and La Puntilla community members reported economic distress more frequently using language that illuminated underemployment, unemployment, economic strain, and resource access issues. For example, a business owner in El Centro described the impact of environmental conditions on business stating, “There is no product in the sea so nobody can come and buy anything because they don’t have money.” In La Puntilla one community member described the employment situation stating, “If we can’t sell fish than we can’t have work… it is too difficult to earn money any other way.” Similarly, another community member described the poverty in La Puntilla saying, “Yes there is too much poverty. If we had work here many things would be different. We would be able to buy more food, and buy clothes. We have many needs here that are not being met. For example, it is difficult for me to get milk for my child. If I had a job opportunity I would be able to.”

In general, limited employment opportunities and declining natural resources were described as issues increasingly challenging the economic conditions of families. Of community members who completed the survey 71% of them stated the head of their
household was not always able to find a job.” Employment opportunities in the community ranged from fishing, lagoon watchman, shrimp lagoon maintenance, tortilla preparation and sales, agriculture, carpentry, reforestation, and housework. One community member described the employment options in the community saying, “Some of the people who work here fish, others work in agriculture, cut grass, or work in the shrimp lagoons.” Often, community members reported having more than one job. For example, one community member described the work of himself and his friend saying, “We work in the country in the land and sometimes we go and sell something if we can.”

The majority of community members reported having a trade they considered a primary occupation. During discussions, women typically described their form of employment as “working in the home”. For example, one woman when describing what women do on the typical day stated, “Just clean the homes.” Tasks the women were described as completing included “care of children,” “completing housework,” “preparing tortillas,” and “selling tortillas.” “Housework” was described as “employment” by both men and women, however income was not generated from housework activities. Employment opportunities for women outside the home were described as being limited. For example, when asked about jobs in the community, one community member stated that jobs are, “just for men.” In this community there is not too much work for women.” Although limited employment opportunities exist in the community, the women reported wanting to work. Some women knew specifically what they wanted to do. For example, women reported wanting to, “have a beautiful restaurant,” and “plant trees.” Some women, who did express an interest in working outside their homes raised concerns. Concerns varied from childrearing responsibilities, (who would take care of the children), to spousal jealousy. For
example, one women, when describing her inability to work outside the home stated, “I can’t go to work because he [my husband] thinks I am going to be unfaithful.”

Most of the men who participated in discussions reported their occupation as “fisherman.” One fisherman described how fish availability impacted employment stating, “When there is fish we fish, but if there is no fish we don’t do it.” This was more often than not the case for fisherman in the community. The decline in fish and turtles in the region was reported as impacting the daily catch of fishermen. The situation had not only exacerbated the economic conditions of families in the community but also created the need for additional forms of employment. During one discussion, one community man described the employment reality reporting, “We don’t like when there aren’t any fish. We don’t have any money or anything to do. We do other jobs maybe two or three times in the year, but most of the time we do nothing.” One community member described the shortage of fish and its impact on the community saying, “I would like to have another job opportunity, because some days there are fish and some days there aren’t any fish. When we don’t have another work opportunity, we spend too much time doing nothing. Too many people are going to the United States because there is no work here.”

The decline in natural resources meant limited employment opportunities, a circumstance that had a direct effect on community business and family finances. In some instances, even when product is available, people in the community were not able to purchase the items because of economic limitations. One business owner described the dilemma during a discussion stating, “We can’t sell anything. For example, I have fish and shrimp to sell and there is nobody to come and buy it.” This business owner was very much aware of how the environmental conditions shaped both retail and family economic realities as
evidenced in the statement, “There is no product in the sea, so nobody can come and buy anything because they don’t have money.”

During assessment processes, families were noticeably distressed about declining natural resources. The distress was evident in a discussion with one community member who reported, “There is no fish anymore. We can’t sell even one thing, there is no product here. I want tell you that we can’t sell anything here.” In addition to a negative impact on finances, the decline in natural resources has had unfavorable effects on community members’ diets. One community member described food shortages in the community stating, “We don’t have food and maybe go entire days without food. We live from the fish in the sea. If there are no fish we don’t eat that day.”

The economic challenges faced by community members as a consequence of employment limitations, unfortunately, extended beyond food shortages. For example, when surveyed, 83% of participants reported not having enough money to cover basic needs. However, 74% of participants reported that they had access to clean water.

Community members disclosed that it is frequently the case, when families are unable to earn enough money to take care of basic needs, a family member will relocate to another area of the country or travel overseas for employment. Family separation for economic reasons was described as a common phenomenon, with most family members relocating to the United States. Upon relocation, relocated family members acquire employment and send money back home to family members. This practice was described as improving the conditions of families. Families with relocated family members are visible in the community because they had homes made of brick instead of sticks.
As mentioned above, assessment participants reported being interested in acquiring alternative employment opportunities to improve their economic conditions. Men and women made it clear they would move quickly to secure employment and that they would also work long hours if they could. Many men reported being bored with fishing, while many women expressed a strong interest in acquiring work outside of the home in the local area.

Health

The majority of community members listed the local health center as a significant concern. During a community meeting, one assessment participant stated, “We have a health center, but we do not have doctors or enough medicine.” When surveyed, 75% of participants reported that the community health center was not operating well. Also, 61% of participants reported a person in their home had been sick and had not been able to receive medical attention at the health center. In particular, community members described the health center as lacking doctors, medical technology needed for appropriate assessments, and the medicine needed for treatment. For example, during a discussion, one community member described access to health care stating, “They have to go to the center of health or to the hospital in Choluteca and ask for doctors because there is only one nurse here who pretends to be a doctor.” Similarly, another community member described the conditions of the health center during a discussion reporting, “We go and there is nothing there. So most of us don’t visit the health center because of that.”

Community members described the clinic as being operated and run by one nurse who travels into the community several times a week to attend to health issues. During a discussion, one community member described the work of the nurse stating, “[she] gives
medicine and vaccinations.” Community members often made it very clear they were appreciative of the efforts of their one nurse and were often cautious about disparaging her efforts, as it was recognized that she had to travel into the community to help them. One community member described the community’s value of the nurse stating, “The nurse, when we see her in the center for health, we appreciate her because she is there.” During a discussion, the nurse was described as, “Good. The nurse is not receiving any payment for being here.” However, they listed their lack of access to a physician as an important issue. Without a physician in the center they reported only being able to receive medical attention for simple health related concerns, such as the common cold, and having to leave the community for more critical health related issues, such as surgery and childbirth. One community member described health concerns stating, “Most of the time we feel pains in different places in our body, but we don’t know what it is. We just know about asthma and colds, but we don’t know anything else. We don’t know if we are sick with something serious.” Another community member described not being able to access resources at the local health center saying, “I have health problems, I have high blood pressure and I have to travel to San Lorenzo to get the medication.”

Poor infrastructure was an issue raised about the health center. When talking about the conditions of the health center, one community member stated, “It is a crime, the health center.” One community member described the infrastructure of the clinic reporting, “It’s not like a real health center, it is a house. We want to make the center bigger, and make it a real health center. The community has the land to do it, but we don’t have the resources to build.”

Community members described the medicine they had access to as limited. In some instances, community members questioned the appropriateness of what they were given
because they believed they were being given the same medicine regardless of the reported ailment. One community member described the limited resources during a discussion stating, “The problem is that the health center does not have enough medicines. It is without doctors or nurses.” Community members reported traveling by bus or car outside of the community to cities, such as Choluteca and Monjaras, to access to health care. One community member described traveling for care stating, “When we get a prescription we go to hospitals in Choluteca or Monjaras.” When traveling by bus, community members have to be prepared to leave at 5:00 am to be transported outside of the village. Traveling to an external health center is often challenging for families because of financial limitation. One community member, during a discussion, described travel-related concerns to access health care stating, “It is difficult, because we just have two buses here and they leave in the morning or evening.” Similarly, another community member during a discussion expressed the challenge stating, “We cannot get help here, in another city yes, but not here. But it is difficult because we have to get a ride up there. Because the health center is not able to attend to all the needs of the people here. Because there is just one nurse and the other thing is they don’t have enough medicines for us.” Typical health concerns in the community included asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, rashes, malaria, dengue, cough, cold, ache in the lungs, headaches, fever, stomach pains, back pains, eye problems, teeth problems, and fungal conditions. During one discussion, a community member described the health of families and a local concern stating, “The center doesn’t have medicine. The sickness that is very frequent here is paludismo (another type of dengue). It is caused by mosquitoes and there are a lot of mosquito’s here.” Another community member listed, “diarrhea, respiratory infection (bronchitis), anemia, eye problems, and dental problems” as problems encountered in the
community. The same participant reported the following types of providers were needed, “ear doctors, children doctors, general doctors.” Another community member expressed his experience stating. “There are not too many ailments here, colds, but nothing bad.” Community members did not describe their health concerns as critical, however, they did indicate a range of health concerns and medical needs. One community member, during a discussion, normalized local health concerns stating, “We get sick, but it is not weird sickness, maybe just cough or colds for example.” When surveyed, 52% of respondents stated that they had a sick person in their home at that time. Health concerns are the most prevalent community wide, during the winter season (May through September) and for several weeks post rainy season (September through November). One community member, during a discussion, stated, “In the winter is when most people here get sick.” The survey used in this study was administered during the winter season. Health concerns during and post winter season are linked to the intensified mosquito problem. Naturally formed lagoons in the area exacerbate the mosquito problem during the winter season. A community member described the issues stating, “The lagoons are forming around the health center. There is a lagoon next to the health center and they haven’t drained it because they don’t have the money to do it.” During a discussion, another community member described the problem created by the lagoons stating, “Lagoons create mosquitos that create health issues.” Similarly, another community member reported, “In the winter, we have too much sickness from the mosquitos’ malaria, diarrhea, and asthma. Some lagoons get full of water and that is where the mosquitos reproduce themselves.” During the discussions, it was evident community members did not have mosquito nets or insect repellent to minimize bites. Instead, burning plastic and paper waste in homes and yards was a local practice used to
deter mosquitos from entering into living space. In fact, the burning of trash in the community was used both as a form of mosquito repellent and as a form of trash disposal. One community member described his disposal of trash stating, “I try to put all the garbage over there and burn it up and we try to clean it up.”

**Education**

While many community members described the education system in Punta Raton as “good,” the majority described the education system as one of the core areas of concerns during the assessment. For these participants “good” simply came down to having access to an education. One community member described the education saying, “It is good… it is open to all community members… but it would be better if we had a high school.” Another community member described the education in the community stating, “They are receiving a good education at school because they have a teacher in the classrooms.”

When surveyed, 67% of respondents stated that the children in the community were not getting a “good” education. The community’s education concerns in this area can be broken down into two areas: education quality and education availability. The first issue, education quality, was related to the limited number of teachers available to teach the community’s children. It was reported that a total of four teachers are present to teach the six grade levels. One community member described the quality of the education systems saying, “We have just six grades in the school and there are teachers, not real teachers, they don’t have all the education that they need, but they are teaching with books.” Another community member described the teacher and student ratios stating, “There are not enough teachers in the school, too many children with too few teachers. That is why they are not learning as
much as we would like. We give money at the end of the month to the teachers so that they will teach our children.” Grade levels are clumped together with two grades being taught at the same time by one teacher. One community member, during a discussion, described the issue stating, “We have a teacher in the classes; two teachers for 1-6 grades, but one for preschool. Each teacher has two grades. So they can only teach a little bit on each subject. The kids are not getting a good or complete education…. Yes we need more teachers because there are too many children in one classroom.” Grade clumping, because of space and instructor shortages, was a frequently reported concern. One community member made the concern known stating, “There are not enough classrooms or teachers. There are too many children going to the school.” In addition, some community members were concerned because teachers were requesting money for teaching. For example, one community member reported, “We don’t have a good education because sometimes the teachers ask for money and the teachers are not teaching the kids.” One community member communicated displeasure about being asked for money stating, “Sometimes they demand money from us to teach the classes, but they are private teachers and we don’t have money to pay them for that service, and sometimes they are asking us for our signatures. The government gave them a secure job in the school.”

The second issue, quality of education, was described as an on-going concern. More specifically, teachers were described as not showing up to teach their classes. One community member expressed concern about teacher availability and the quality of education stating, “Sometimes they don’t give classes, maybe like a month, and when they come they just come to paint their nails.”
When the teachers did hold classes, they were described as completing short school days of two hours. The teachers were also described as being underprepared to teach. They were described as lacking teaching materials or not having enough information to cover for the day.

Another community education concern reported was limited education opportunities. The majority of the children in Punta Raton do not have access to education beyond the sixth grade. One community member described the issue during a discussion saying, “Everyone who finishes sixth grade doesn’t have anything to do. Nobody in high school to teach them. The building of high school…there is no one working and we think that the kids need teachers in the high school.” While a high school was built in the community several years ago, the school has yet to be staffed with teachers to permit the youth to continue their education. One community member described the high school during a community meeting stating, “The high school was built so they can prepare to go to college, but we don’t have teachers, and the government gives the teachers.” Another community member described the conditions during an interview stating, “We have the building for the high school, but we don’t have teachers. The high school doesn’t have teachers so the youth are just wandering the streets.”

Community members reported valuing education and stressed the importance of their children being able to continue their education. One community member made it clear that education was desired stating, “We need a high school because if there was a high school the children could study more.” Consequently, families often save or pool resources to permit children to continue school in another community. In some situations, children just leave the community for a few hours and receive their education in another community. Some families
who do not have the financial resources to send their children daily to another community for school, choose to send their children to live with a family friend or an extended family member in another city. One community member described her children’s education saying, “The little ones are in school here; the others are in Monjaras because we have a high school there, but it is just a building. We don’t have teachers here.” Another community member described her daughter’s relocation to get an education stating, “My daughter lives in Tegucigalpa so that she can go to school.” Education access is one of the most frequently described reasons for separated families in the community, second to employment and income reasons, as mentioned above. When asked if the youth wanted to continue their education, one community member stated, “The majority, yes. Too many kids go to Monjaras to get an education, but many of them can’t go because they don’t have the resources they don’t have the money or transportation to get there.”

Many families in the community reported not having the financial or relational resources to send their children outside of the community to continue their education. One community member described the situation stating, “The children have to go to another community because we don’t have a high school. There is a building but we don’t have teachers. But we don’t have enough money to take the children to another community to go to school.” The lack of resources has meant most of the children in the community do not have access to education beyond the sixth grade. These children are described as having nothing to do. One community member described the situation stating, “I have two children, and they just finished the 6th grade. They don’t have anywhere to go all day; it is a problem.”

It was evident during assessment processes that participants appreciated what education was available to the children in the community, though it was made clear
improvements in the quality and comprehensiveness of the system were in need. While community members could articulate concerns, solutions were not introduced.

Relationships

The topic of family relationships was the issue that participants provided the least amount of information on during all assessment formats: interviews, group discussions, community forums, and surveys. Family relationship conditions were often described as “normal” or “good.” For example, one community member described spousal relationships stating, “Mostly everything is quiet and normal.” Specifically, spousal relationships and parent-child relationships were described as typical to other areas in the world. During a discussion, one community member described local relationships stating, “They are doing well, maybe sometime spouses have conflict, but there are no problems.” One woman described healthy familial relationship stating, “Children do what their parents tell them to do.” Participants who reported some familial conflict described the situations as though they were of minimal concerns, short in duration, or easily worked through. One community member described parent-child interactions reporting, “Parents make rules to make the children stay out of the street all of the time.” Another community member during a discussion gave an example of how couples resolve issues stating, “Sometimes the men get drunk and then they argue with their spouses. They only argue a little bit, give each other space, and the problem resolves itself.”

When surveyed, 41% of participants stated that a person in their family suffered from emotional problems in the last twelve months. Also, 31% of participants reported conflicts between parents and children, and 44% stated that their children have conflicts among
themselves. As mentioned above, many community members described the conflict as normal. In addition, when surveyed, 14% of community members stated they had problems with their in-laws.

Exploration into what they considered “normal” dynamics of relationships revealed that incidents of domestic violence and infidelity occur, and are considered normal. The severity of the issue was hard to gauge, as most of the information was disclosed sporadically and off the record. However, during assessment processes, some community members did admit infidelity was an issue. For example, when asked if infidelity was an issue in the community, one community member stated, “In most of the homes, yes.” Similarly, during a community meeting, a participant described infidelity saying, “If one spouse is unfaithful then the other spouse is unfaithful too.” During a discussion, one community member described how infidelity comes to pass, stating, “Yes, the people have love to give and they want to give it to everyone… (laughing)…if you like a woman you should try to be with her.” One community member described concerns about infidelity in her relationship stating, “For example when there is jealousy there’s so much problems it make so much problems come up. For example my husband says that I can’t work far from home because he thinks that I am going to be unfaithful.” In contrast, during a discussion another community member reported infidelity as being, “a normal problem here.”

Some community members admitted domestic violence did happen between partners. During a discussion, one community member addressed the issues stating, “Husbands and wives hit each other.” When describing domestic violence in homes, one community member distinguished between the frequency of the issues locally and in the country stating, “It is very common Honduras, but here couples don’t really have that problem, it is not
common for men to hit the women here.” Some women during a discussion described the violence stating, “Sometimes we hit each other with shoes.” When describing the nature of spousal conflict, the concerns named were often domestic in nature. For example, during a discussion, one man reported, “We go to work and some women don’t have the food ready… so we have to do the food for ourselves… in the night.” One community member described the violence situation during an interview stating, “The way men treat women here is really aggressive. They talk to them with authority. They usually beat them.” While men were described as the “leader” of the home, it was evident that some relationships were not violent and in fact collaborative. One man described his relationship with his spouse during a discussion stating, “You have to learn how to understand your wife, for example I go fishing and when I come home my wife travels to different places to sell the fish. Then we spend time together, lots of time together.” While it is evident infidelity and domestic violence does happen in the community, it was hard to gauge the severity of the issues. Off the record, disclosures varied significantly from survey data. For example, when surveyed, 80% of participants reported that violence did not occur in their homes and 63% of participants stated that infidelity was not an issue in their homes. Again these responses varied some from informal disclosures.

The community has several relational practices that are “normal.” First, coupling in the community starts at a very young age. Coupling for young girls was described as beginning as early as thirteen years of age. Most girls in the community are cohabitating with a partner by 20. One community member described marriage in the community stating, “some people get married as young as 12. They go with their husband.” Similarly, another community member stated, “We get married at 13, 15; it is not weird to get married at that
age.” One community member described marriage trends reporting people get married, “15, 16, others 20 (years of age). Few people get married in their twenties. If you get married in your twenties it’s because nobody wanted to be with you.” Spousal relationships are informal and many couples do not get married, though they refer to one another as husband and wife. One community member described the marriage practice during a discussion stating, “Here people don’t get married. They take girls from their houses and then just be with them….they don’t have good relationships. The men just get the girls pregnant, and then leave.”

Similarly, the researcher/translator described the Honduran coupling tradition stating, “Girls, maybe starting at 10, 11, 12; they just go, they don’t get married they just leave the house. The parents don’t know that they are gone until the morning. Most girls leave their homes that way. Men go to homes at night and take the girls from their houses. We normally call that stealing the girl, but it is not a legal issue.” It was normal for people to report marrying early.

Some women reported being single, though they at one time had partners. One community member during a discussion described how women in the community become single stating, “Most of our husbands left us here. Some women have husbands who are dead.”

Community members often provided mixed responses about community connectedness and cohesion. At times, community members reported having intimate and supportive relationships, while some people described distant, conflictual, and distrusting interactions. When asked if community members were close, one assessment participant reported, “not much.” One community member reported selfishness as the cause of community conflicts. More specifically, during a discussion, this community member stated,
“There is too much selfishness.” When asked to describe selfish actions, the community member stated, “When you tell someone something, suddenly everyone knows.” Another community member reported selfishness in the community, yet described the situation differently. During a discussion the community member stated, “The people here are very selfish, they want things just for themselves; they are not sharing.” In contrast, a community member during a discussion described the closeness of women in the community saying, “Yes we support one another when we can.” Similarly, another community member described the supportiveness of herself and others stating, “There are groups from the church and they are divided ladies, children, boys, men, and other group friendships or groups of people who come to them help. In the groups they help each other if they have resources to do so. If someone gets something she shares it. I have learned to share to have.” In some instances people reported that families took care of themselves or described support as occurring in certain regions or among particular groups in the community. One community member described local behavior stating, “Here everybody has to take care of their own problems.” In contrast another community member stated, “It is better to share with the community …but if the community doesn’t want we just do it in the group.” One assessment participant, during a discussion, described boundaries between subsections of the community stating, “Just in this area we are supportive of one another. The people there think they are better than us.” The variance in responses seemed to imply some community members are more supportive than others and that resources and issues around trust shaped closeness.
Environment and Community Infrastructure

As mentioned above, the local environment was cited as a resource in the community. Assessment participants described the resources in the area as tourist attractions. However, infrastructure related concerns were reported as being needed to permit tourism. In particular, paved streets (leading into the community and within the community) and housing updates (making homes more structurally secure and practical) were reported as being needed to make the community accessible and comfortable. One community member described an infrastructure concern stating, “People come here but we don’t have water; it is necessary to have water.” Similarly, during a discussion another community member reported, “The community needs help because we need streets. Paved streets.” One community member described the streets as a barrier to tourism stating, “Tourists want to come here but they don’t come here because of the streets.” During a discussion, one community member described the range of issues needing to be addressed to encourage tourism. “We have to pave the streets, after the streets we need to build hotels to house people. If we do that we can open more business here and give services to clients. Tourists will come and visit us.”

Assessment participants were in agreement about the structural updates needed. To encourage tourism, assessment participants reported they needed “investments” and “help.” One community member stressed the importance of investors stating, “We need beds in the rooms. We need investors.” Similarly, during a community meeting, another participant made it clear that help was needed stating, “We need help to get more tourists. Help for the women to be able to prepare good food to get good tourist.” In contrast, some assessment participants described the community as being prepared to acquire tourists. When asked if the community was prepared to take tourists, one community member during a discussion
reported, “Yes we are ready.” Though participants varied some in their perceptions on the community’s preparedness to receive tourists, tourism was consistently described as a potential means to improve the economic conditions of families in the areas.

Assessment participants varied in their opinions about community member care of the local environment. One community member during a discussion, described the care of the environment stating, “We don’t take care of the environment all of the time.” Similarly, another community member expressed concerns around the care for the environment stating, “It is hard to take care of the environment because we don’t have any place to throw away garbage. For example, the fishers throw all their fishing waste onto the beach.” In contrast, some assessment members reported care for the environment as normal behavior. During a discussion one community member described local efforts stating, “Maybe we are not perfect in our care of the environment but we try.” One community member described the importance of caring for the environment stating, “We take care of the environment because we know if we don’t we destroy ourselves.” During assessments community members reported some efforts were being made to take care of the environment through reforestation of the mangroves, turtle protection, and appropriate disposal of waste and plastic.

As mentioned earlier, assessment participants reported tough economic conditions in the community and limited resources as making it hard for families to take care of themselves and the environment. In many instances, individuals and families reported consuming, purchasing, and or selling natural resources they described protecting. For example, when asked how the community takes care of the environment, one assessment participant reported, “We plant mangroves.” One assessment participant described a bind encountered by community members stating, “We have to take care of the environment but
we have to eat, too. Sometimes people cut down trees to make fire to cook food.” Similarly, during a discussion, another community member described another bind stating, “There are some families that don’t have homes to live in. They have to use the wood from the mangroves to make their homes.” Natural resource consumption concerns were not limited to trees, but also included turtle consumption and sales. One community member described the role of the turtle committee and La Veda stating “The program protects turtles.” When describing public opinion about the program, one community member reported, “We don’t like the program because the turtle committee takes the eggs and prevents us from taking them. But some of us know that that they do so because they are taking care of the turtle.”

The issue is a particularly sensitive one, as one community member reported during a discussion, stating, “The committee is trying to protect the turtles’ eggs from people who are trying to collect them and sell them.” Another community member described the issue stating, “We take care of the environment but when we get hungry and we don’t have any food we have to take turtle eggs to eat or sell.”

Older adult assessment participants, who had been in the community for decades, reported noticing sharp declines in the sea life on the shores of the beach. The most noticeable population declines reported were fish, turtles, and crabs. For example, one community member during a discussion reported, “When I moved here there were a lot of turtles on the beach. There were so many that they stuck to one another.” Similarly, another community member describes the environmental conditions upon arriving in the community decades earlier stating, “When my wife and I went to the beach I would see 25 turtles around her. Nobody used to bother the turtles. Around that time we use to eat the eggs but we didn’t sell them. We use to just get enough to feed our families.”
A number of reasons were listed for the shifts in the local sea life population. Some assessment participants described the increased human population in Punta Raton as having an impact on the consumption of natural resources. In addition to local consumption, it was reported that an increased demand in seafood in other areas of the country and in several of the neighboring countries had contributed to the problem. A shift in cultural eating practices was also reported. Eating turtles was described as not being a normal practice in Honduras. One community member described shifts in local practices stating, “When I moved here just a few people were living here. People maybe took eggs but they always left eggs. As time has passed lots of people have come to live. They moved from the center of the country. Too many people are coming to live here and things are changing.” Assessment participants also reported local practices as contributing to environmental concerns. Men were described as overfishing and shifts in fishing practices were described as contributing to recent marine population declines. Specifically, changes in the fishermen nets were described as contributing to the problem. One community member described previous fishing practices stating, “When I got here people use to fish with a fishing pole or a manga, another type of net with larger holes, that only captured big fish, not small fish. This didn’t put a lot of fish in danger. But now, we do the worst type of fishing with nets that kill all the types of fish.” Similarly, a researcher visiting the community described the community’s relationship with the environment stating, “They are cutting mangroves, overfishing the ocean, the holes of the nets are too little and they press on the fish. That is why the fish are dying so fast. What you saw yesterday, waste flowing into the ocean, inorganic material all in the street. They don’t have any place to put garbage, so they just throw it out. The fishermen, when they are in their boats, they throw out whatever they have in their boats into the ocean. Anything that moves
here they eat. There is a saying, anything that swims, walks, flies, and crawls you can eat it. The shrimp lagoons are toxic and the water has little oxygen; poor conditions to cultivate shrimp.”

**Turtle Committee**

One local resource in the community, is the turtle committee, a group organized to protect the environment. The turtle committee is located in La Puntilla in Punta Raton. It is a committee made up of approximately seven people who are all responsible for taking care of the turtle center and organizing efforts during La Veda. Participant responses about the turtle committee varied. However, responses appeared to be related to what aspect of the turtle committee community members were describing. Community members appeared to provide feedback either on the functioning of the turtle committee or the purpose of the turtle committee.

Many community members reported liking the purpose of the turtle committee which they described as being focused on saving turtles. Assessment participants reported the intervention was necessary to protect the declining turtle population in the region. The turtle population was described as a critical economic and dietary resource for families in the community. The status of the turtle population is interrelated with the functioning of the community. One community member described the work of the committee stating, “They are taking care of the turtles. Always during this time they are taking care of the turtles.” During a community meeting, participants described protective efforts stating, “We collect eggs and take them to the hatchery during the Veda.” During a discussion, one community member described the importance of the program stating, “To produce more turtles because there are
too few animals in the ocean.” One community member described the impact of the turtle committee and family functioning stating, “Most people here depend on the eggs of the turtles. The people who don’t believe the Veda is working are the people that are upset they can’t collect eggs. They can’t make money.” One community member described the long-term implications of the program during a discussion reporting, “If we don’t have turtles we don’t have eggs to sell later and we don’t have anything to eat. We don’t have a way to make more money. Some people don’t care about the turtles.”

Feedback from assessment participants about the functioning of the committee was often overwhelmingly negative. First, the committee member selection processes were described as biased. Most community members believed the committee was a closed system, open to only a small group of friends and families. Families who really needed the resources were reported as not having access to it. Assessment participants described committee members as controlling the leadership team. In particular, the leadership role was reported as cycling between a few members of the committee, which kept the same few people in power and prevented new persons from participating. During a discussion, one community member expressed concerns stating, “They don’t change the people who make up the leadership of the committee. So we can’t do anything. It is the same people from six or seven years ago. They have had two leaders over seven years.” During a separate discussion, another community member expressed a similar concern stating, “The turtle committee only allows a few friends to help with the program.”

It was also reported that volunteers were not provided with adequate food to compensate for the number of days worked. It was stated the amount of food promised was often not provided in full. One community member, during a discussion, highlighted this
issue stating, “The funder of the turtle project needs to make the president of the committee leave because he has stolen things from the community and the project.” One assessment participant described a compensation issue stating, “The mini market has not been paid for supplies.” The issue was further addressed during a discussion, when a community member stated, “The leader of the turtle committee had 80 lemps in his pocket for the food of the military and he hasn’t given it to them.”

Frustration with the operations of the turtle committee was not limited to the general community population; discord also existed within the committee. In general, poor leadership, inappropriate compensation, and poor committee follow through with assigned roles were the most frequent concerns named. One community member described the functioning of the committee stating, “The president of the committee has not treated the people of the committee well, which is bad, because if he does not treat the committee people well, then he is not going to treat the people of the community good.” The leader of the committee was described as engaging in behaviors that alienated the community from the turtle team. One community member described the issue during a discussion stating, “Yes, because as a committee he has made them get bad with the rest of the community. Like at the mini market because they have not paid.”

Community Development Interest, Power, and Collaboration

During assessment processes participants, indicated a desire to see the community improve. As discussed previously, the community members identified tourism as a viable means of generating income in the community. Although assessment participants identified tourism as a means of upward economic mobility, assessment participants did not report
being actively mobilized to develop the community. This was evidenced in how community members discussed who was responsible for the community’s growth. During assessment processes when asked who has power in the community, the “Patronato” or “the president of the Patronato” were identified as the persons or person having control. A few other responses were provided, including community members, God, and the Honduran government. One assessment participant described the potential for community members to address local concerns stating, “Yes, maybe we can have a meeting and people can go to see what we can do.” Another community member described who she believed held power stating, “The president of the committee and the leader of Honduras can help. Those are the only two people who can help. God can help them and take care of all the houses.” When asked who is capable of addressing local issues, assessment participants also identified the “Patronato” as the responsible group of persons. One assessment participant described the role of the Patronato during a discussion identifying them as, “the local government for the community.” When asked if community members can mobilize to address local issues, one community member stated, “We can’t do it. The Patronato has to do everything.” Another assessment participant described the group similarly during another discussion stating, “In the community, in Honduras, the community asks the Patronato. The Patronato is a group of people who guide the community. The Patronato inform the municipality about what is going on.” The Patronato was described as having power in the immediate community and working in collaboration with different branches of the Honduran government to generate change. One assessment participant made this point during a discussion stating, “The committee asks for meetings. They are working with the government to get the streets here paved. But they don’t know if the government will help them.” When describing the work of the Patronato,
one community member reported, “They don’t do anything.” Another assessment participant described the actions of the Patronato stating, “They mobilize themselves for themselves.” Another community member expressed similarly sentiments stating, “They ask for help but they just take care of themselves. If they give anything to the community it is just a little bit, a pound of oil maybe. The Patronato has power.”

Participants did express an interest in investments and collaborating in community development efforts. Assessment participants reported needing, “investments” to improve local conditions previously discussed (i.e. paved streets, water systems, and employment). When effort was directed during assessment processes to identify potential investors, participants were unable to identify funders, or fixed on Loma Linda University and ProTECTOR as investors. Assessment participants described the organizations, Loma Linda University and ProTECTOR, as having a commitment to the community because they had been active in the area. For example, during a community meeting one participant stated, “Loma Linda owes us a lot of things.” When asked what was owed to the community the assessment participant reported, “Because I have heard about Loma Linda four years ago. Loma Linda is very beautiful name but they don’t help us.” The sentiments were further elaborated upon during the community meeting by an assessment participant who stated, “For four years Loma Linda and ProTECTOR have been interested in Punta Raton. Loma Linda doesn’t have credibility when they come into our community.” Evident in the tone and discussion of community members was a frustration with people coming into the community and asking for information and making promises and not following through. One community member described a visiting institution stating, “They are from some institution, when they work here they don’t help us.” Another assessment participant expressed similar sentiments
reporting, “The government comes here and takes our identification and promises help, but we don’t get any help.” Similar frustrations were evident when ProTECTOR was discussed during a community meeting. When discussing community development needs one assessment participant reported, “The most important are water and energy. People come here but we don’t have water. It is necessary to have water. ProTECTOR was supposed to help with that.” The concern with ProTECTOR was elaborated upon during the assessment when a participant stated, “We have worked with ProTECTOR for four years. We give research to send to Loma Linda and we don’t have anything. Nothing has changed.”

When asked directly about what happens when outsiders engage with the community, assessment participant reported, “The problem is that they come and promise us help and then they don’t do anything.” Similar concerns were expressed in another discussion when an assessment participant stated, “Too many people come here just to do their work for college, to get their Masters or PhD, but they don’t come back. They don’t do anything.” It was evident from these statements that community members did not believe projects underway in the community were benefiting the community.

These finding reveal there might be a disconnect between community members and investors or stakeholders in what collaboration means and resulting expected outcomes. Such conversations may help to strengthen community ties and to assess if more practical measures can be taken to support the community in ways meaningful to them. One assessment participant stressed the importance of mutual assistance in community development efforts during a community meeting stating, “What I and all the people of Punta Raton think, is if we give turtle information to ProTECTOR, if we give useful information to the university, it is fair that we should get help.”
During assessment processes it became evident participants were interested in collaboration but expected investors to take the lead, start up projects, or create opportunities. This was evidenced in how assessment participants discussed collaboration. For example, during a community meeting it was recommended, “I am going to make a recommendation. You have a meeting with Loma Linda leaders and discuss how we can have a business relationship with them. We could send to Loma Linda maybe 1,000 to 2,000 turtle care shirts and they can send us money.” When discussing who was responsible for addressing the employment concerns in the community, one assessment participant stated, “If you assure us that you are going to bring help we can get organized, but if you are not going to help, we won’t get organized.”

Effort was made to acquire a more accurate understanding of what the participants considered help during the assessment process. One participant described help stating, “Maybe you can teach us how to do something and then after you teach you can create jobs for us.” Similarly, another assessment participant stated, “Let’s make business.” When asked specifically whether or not health assistance would be of assistance to community members, one assessment participant stated, “We would like to have dentists and doctors here. General doctors and doctors for children, because in that way we would feel we got help.”

During assessment processes it appeared as though community members were uneasy to identify and or lead change initiatives that would improve community functioning. During a discussion, a visiting person in the community stated, “They have learned to depend on people.” A number of reasons for not starting up and following through with community development efforts were provided during community meetings and discussions in addition to the aforementioned power issues. An assessment participant described the community’s
ability to mobilize stating, “They can’t do it by themselves, because they are not supportive people and they need somebody to come and to work with them. If that happened they would work but if they don’t have somebody telling them what to do they are not going to do anything.” Similarly another assessment participant reported, “People wait, they stand back and wait for other people to fix everything and then they expect resources when they come.” Additional engagement related barriers included ability, confidence, and trust issues. One assessment participant described community member comfort engaging with outsiders stating, “Sometimes we are ashamed to speak with the people who come here.” One community member addressed collaboration related trust issues stating, “We don’t get together to work. There is selfishness. It keeps us from working together better. Too many people send help but people are stealing it.” While confusion existed about how change would come happen in the community, it was evident that community members were open to change that would increase the number of resources in the community.

**El Venado Community Assessment Findings**

El Venado is a significantly smaller and less populated community than Punta Raton. It is estimated that a total population of 150 adults and children live in the community. Most community members are blood relatives or connected by “marriage” to other community members. The community has 30 homes that are shared among community residents. The majority of the houses are multi-family homes with many blood and non-blood families sharing space. One community member described the connectedness of the family stating, “Too much family. Normally they are very quiet.” Similarly, another community member
described the relationships in the community saying, “Most everybody here is family.”

Relationships were named as a community resource.

**Community Strengths and Resources**

The intimacy of the community has meant that the living conditions are experienced as being very safe and secure. One community member described the local conditions during a discussion stating, “We are good people. We are safe. We don’t have bars, no one sells alcohol. Nobody sells things that make youth lose themselves.” Concerns typical of other communities were described as non-issues in El Venado. Specifically, community members reported that alcohol and drug consumption were non-issues. Community members spoke positively about the absence of casinos, bars, and delinquents in the community. One community member expressed such sentiments during a discussion stating, “It is very safe, we don’t have bars here and that is a good thing.” Similarly, another community member reported, “It is a safe place. We don’t have delinquents here, and we have beaches, that’s the most important.” The absence of negative people and problematic conditions were often discussed together. During a discussion, one community member addressed the safety of the community stating, “We don’t have delinquents, bars; we don’t have casinos.”

In addition to close ties and a safe living environment, assessment participants described the environment as a critical community resource. The sea and the surrounding land were described as beautiful, peaceful, and a source of family food. Community members often described the people in the community as a resource. The supportive nature of the people was reported as providing support and security. During a discussion, one community member described the environment as a resource stating, “We have the mangroves and good
beach. The beach is important, tourism is important and it is good to have a beach. We have good areas to fish and different types of birds here.” Similarly, another community member listed “the sea and good people” as strengths of the community. Local projects were described as community resources. The community has a variation of committees that focus on local issues. The turtle, tourist, and fishing committees were described as positive projects that provide work opportunities to protect the environment, projects that also generate income. During a discussion, one community member described a local project as a resource stating, “I like it here because it is far away from other things. I like the center for turtles and the tourism project because they are good for the community. Similarly, another community member stated, “We have a tourism group and a turtle group. They are good. We are collecting turtles and taking care of them.”
Employment and Economic Status

Employment opportunities in the community were described as being very limited. When surveyed, 77% of participants reported the head of their household frequently had difficulty securing employment. One community member described a family member’s unemployment stating, “There are no jobs here. My sister has five children and she needs work. They are not able to make enough money.” Another community member described the employment conditions stating, “Most women work in the house. We don’t get paid but we work in the house. Most men work in the sea. Everyone in the community does not work. The sea doesn’t have resources.” Other descriptions provided during interviews included, but were not limited to “Work in agriculture,” “shrimp lagoons,” “working for center” (turtle), “raising cows.” During a community meeting, and individual and small group discussions work, options were described as being limited, most community members listing fishing for fish and turtles, housework, and lagoon maintenance as their job. Work opportunities were described as being sporadic. One community member described his unstable working situation stating, “Sometimes I have a job and sometimes I don’t. Often I don’t have a job.” Some community members are able to acquire odd jobs throughout the year selling products to generate additional family income. Often, people have to acquire work in other communities. One community member described her family’s employment situation stating, “My husband goes to buy fish and then we go and resell it in another community.” Another community member described employment stating, “Sometimes we work and sometimes we don’t have work, most of us are not working. If we don’t have work we look for work. We make house wood. We don’t look for work every day cause there is not a lot of work.”
Like Punta Raton, many families have relatives who have moved and acquired employment in another community or nation in order to help support the family. In some instances, families move away from the community entirely because they are not able to support themselves. One community member described how unemployment impacted the community stating, “There are no jobs, maybe that is why people move away. …yes people move away. Because we don’t have money for education, medicine, and food. We don’t have these things and we can’t if we don’t have money.” Another community member described the emigration-related issues stating, “There are a lot of economic problems because we don’t have job opportunities. There is so much emigration, people are going other places to live.” Among the people who do have employment, men occupy the majority of the employment opportunities in the community. Men in the community were reported as generating income primarily by fishing, working in the shrimp lagoons, or in agriculture. Most women work in the home and take care of the house and children. Many men and women are involved in local initiatives like the tourist or turtle committees, however, the projects are unpaid. Project participants called their efforts volunteer work. When men were describing the employment behaviors of their spouses they used language such as, “My wife works in the house” or “She works in the house, cleans and cooks.” In contrast, when women or children described the roles of the males in their families the men were referenced as working outside of the home. Such statements included descriptors such as “He is a fishermen,” “He works in the turtle center, “He is a teacher in another school.” When asked about the differences in male and female employment, community members acknowledged women worked in the homes. One community member made this point clear during a discussion stating, “Most women work in the house.” Another community member further
explained employment trends saying, “Most women work in the house, we don’t have jobs for women. We decide to do this because the men go fish. We help them clean. We work in this way.”

The limited employment opportunities in the community has meant that many families are not able to buy basic things that they need, such like food, water, and housing. When surveyed, 83% of participants reported that they were not able to access basic things they needed and 45% of participants did not have access to clean water. During a discussion, one community member described limited resource access stating, “The only problem here is that we don’t have job opportunities, we don’t have financial resources to buy things we need, and we often go without things we need.” One community member described economic strain stating, “If you don’t have a job then you don’t have food, sometimes it is difficult to get food.” Economic constraints were described as impacting access of “basic needs.” Community members reported going without “housing,” “food,” and “education.” Among the needs listed by community members were infrastructure. In particularly, paved streets and toilets. One community member described these concerns stating, “We don’t have paved streets. If we did we would have more tourists and the community would do better.” Similarly, another community member reported, “We would like to have job opportunities, we would like to have toilets. We need a lot because we don’t have many and we live with many people in one house. In this house we have three people. We don’t have enough money to build more houses. If we had more houses each house would not have so many people.”

Water access in the community was named as an important issue. Water access related concerns were broken into two categories, access related challenges and storage related issues. One community member described the water situation in the community
during a discussions stating, “We have water but it is not for drinking. We have to buy water to drink. Sometimes we don’t have.” During a small group discussion, another community member elaborated upon the water condition in the community saying, “We don’t have potable water. What we have is not good to drink. If we are able to buy water we buy it but sometimes we are not able to buy.” Assessment participants made it clear families sometimes run out of water. Water is made available to the community at local stores for a fee. During a discussion, one community member highlighted this issue stating, “We don’t have water, like today, it was supposed to be delivered in the morning but we don’t have water yet. We get water in bottles from someplace else because this water is not drinking water. Sometimes we don’t have clean drinking water.” One community member described water storage related concerns stating, “It’s hard to have money to buy water…. No, we don’t have storage bins. We don’t have water storage bins and a lot of us don’t have toilets.”

Another critical issue named by community members during assessment processes was housing. It was reported many community members did not have housing and consequently shared homes with other people. For example, during a discussion, one community member described his housing concern stating, “I don’t have a house.” Another participant described how families manage in the community stating, “We have many families in one house.” Similar to Punta Raton, many of the homes had insecure infrastructure, being made of sticks, plastic, and mud. This was evident through evaluation of the homes, and was especially evident when it rained. One community member described how rain impacted housing comfort stating, “When it rains a lot our homes fill with water.”

Assessment participants described themselves as making necessary progress to advance the economic conditions of the community. They are hopeful in their efforts to start
up tourist ventures, however, infrastructure-related concerns (i.e. paved streets) were seen as preventing people from traveling to the community. One community member described development efforts stating, “Yes we are looking for help. We try to get help for the community. We are looking for help because we need to sustain the turtle center and keep it working. The community is very active. We are trying to resolve some community issues. All the community work is responsible for change. We have a leader, but we are all working.” Another community member described infrastructure-related concerns stating, “The streets have too much water and cars cannot come into the community. We would like to have people come and visit us. For example, I work with the tourism group and when the streets are bad people don’t come here.” Assessment participants made it clear they were interested in employment opportunities and that they were prepared to collaborate with others to address the economic challenges in the community.

Health

During assessment processes community members were open to discussing community health issues. When surveyed, 40% of participants stated that the health center was not a good functioning facility. It was discussed that often, especially during winter, that children and adults experience fevers, coughs, cold, headaches, and diarrhea. An assessment participant described the health in the community stating, “We don’t have serious sickness, but we have colds, cough, headaches, and fevers. We have more sickness in the winter.” Another community member described how environmental conditions shape local health reporting, “When the raining ends, the sickness starts. Malaria and fevers. It happens when the lagoons fill with water. Sickness is the worst at the end of winter.” At the time of the
survey (winter season), 31% of participants reported they had a sick person in their home. Interactions with community members revealed that many young adults were missing several teeth with significant yellow-brown coloring evident on their remaining teeth.

The community did not have a local health center to access needed treated. Assessment participants reported individuals and families had to travel out of the community to get health services. Participants reported having to travel by foot or bike about 1.2 miles to the nearest health center. One community member described health access behaviors stating, “There is a health center in another community. Yes, it is easy to get there. We just have to go two kilometers to get there but when we get there we have to wait a long time because there are a lot of people. We go to get basic medicines. If we have more than basic sickness then we are sent to Monjaras or Choluteca. To go we have to take a bus at 6:00 in the morning.” Similarly, another community member described treatment seeking behavior stating, “If we don’t have enough help or medicine we have to go to Monjaras and or Choluteca. It depends on the sickness. Simple sickness we can get treated close, and more severe, further away. The further it is away, the harder it is to get there and it costs more money.” Thus, traveling is required to get treatment, although the distance varies depending on the severity of the issue.

Assessment participants disclosed that it can be challenging to access needed treatment because of resource limitation and clinic operations. Support is often acquired from other families in the community to access care. One community member described accessing support stating, “We go to another community to get health services. We just have one guy in the community with a car. He is the only person who can take us to the hospital as a favor. It’s difficult to get kids to the doctor. We have to find a car in the other community to get to
another community. In the winter kids get sick between August and October.” During the assessment process, one community member described clinic-related challenges encountered when seeking care outside of the community stating, “We don’t have a health center. We have to go to another community. The nurse works from 8-12 so if people get sick at other times they can’t get help. People have to go to Monjaras if they don’t get there in time.” During assessment processes, community members expressed interest in a health center being developed in the community. A health center was often among the list of infrastructural needs reported. During a discussion, one community member made this need known stating, “Yes, maybe job opportunities, health center, and toilets.” Similarly, during a discussion, a community member reported, “a center of health, houses for families, and improved streets” as the needs of the community. Having a health center in the community would make accessing treatment more possible and affordable as the added resource would terminate travel-related challenges.

Education Assessment participants did not communicate significant concerns about the education in the community. In fact, 55% of participants believed that the children in the community were getting a “good” education. When asked about the quality of the education system one participant stated, “The education is good because the kids are learning in school.” Another assessment participant expressed similar sentiments during another discussion stating, “We have a good education here because the kids are learning.” In contrast to Punta Raton, caregivers did not express as much concerns with the teachers educating the children. One assessment participant spoke of the education system and the teachers stating, “We have a little school here. My sons and daughters went to that school and now my grandchildren go to that school. My family has been here for several
generations. We have a good education, we have good professionals.” Similarly, another community member reported, “We don’t have issues with teachers. The teachers are teaching the kids well.” All assessment participants were not satisfied with the education system, however. Among participants unhappy with the education system, concerns were raised by 45%. More specifically, several community members identified limited and insufficient education as concerns. One assessment participant expressed concerns about the education system during a discussion stating, “We are poor we don’t have money to study past the sixth grade. The education we have here is good, but we are too poor to send our kids to school beyond the sixth grade. The people who have the money to pay for high school send them to high school, but those who don’t have money can’t go to school. They work. They get fish and crabs to sell.” Another assessment participant expressed similar sentiments during a discussion stating, “My son is not studying. We want him to be in high school. We need to send him to Monjaras, but we don’t have the money. I would like to see him study this year.”

One participant described the education as being insufficient stating, “The education is not that good because they are only in class for a few hours and are not learning as much as they need. The teachers are not teaching as much as they should because they have issues with the minister of education or the government. So the kids are waiting for teachers.” Another community member similarly described the situation stating, “The teachers are not coming every day, they just come when they can, the children don’t do anything.” Regardless of whether or not assessment participants approved of the quality of the education system they were in favor of a high school being available in the community. “A high school” was a frequently expressed need by community members when describing desired improvements.
Relationships

As mentioned earlier, assessment participants described the relationships in the community as “good.” People in the community were consistently described as close and supportive of one another. One assessment participant made this point clear during a discussion stating, “We don’t have problems between us, we have good relationships.” Again, connectedness might have been informed by the fact that most community members perceived themselves to be family. One important theme found during the assessment was single parenthood, which was described as a community concern. Often, when the concern was raised, it was done so in a short and concise manner. One community member disclosed on the issue during a discussion stating, “There are lots of single mothers here.” That exact statement was shared during several discussions. Another community member described the frequency of the issue reporting, “Most of the community is made up of single women. I separated from my husband, my sister also, and another sister is separated. We are all single women with children.”

Reasons provided for female single parenthood in the community included, male migration to the United States, death, male preferred separation, and female preferred separation. One community member described the issue during a discussion stating, “Lots of single mothers. Some of them are single because the men are going to the US and for some of them, the men are leaving them alone.” Another community member described the issue reporting, “Single parents sometimes like to be alone without their husband.”

Few assessment participants raised infidelity or domestic violence as an issue in the community. When violence was reported it was described as a rare event and happening between families (unrelated people). One assessment participant described infidelity stating,
“Infidelity is normal in most of the houses here, both men and women are unfaithful.” One assessment participant described in greater detail, relationship dynamics in the community and the country stating, “They are not getting married. They get pregnant in the houses of their parents. It is weird to see a person who is getting married. People just get together and then just leave each other. They stay with their mothers and fathers. When men are responsible, they help take care of the women and kids. Most are not responsible. They are leaving the women and kids. Infidelity is normal. Men don’t use contraception with their girlfriends but they use with other women. It’s not necessary to talk about this issue because it is normal. Men who have just one woman are not normal, most men usually have two, one in the house and one outside of the house. Women don’t like it. Women are not realizing that their men have other women. Women end the relationships with their men when they find out that they are cheating, that is why they are single. It is normal to just hook up and not get married. If men get married they don’t have more than one woman.” This statement was consistent with statements made in Punta Raton about infidelity being normal. It is believed that the “normalcy” of infidelity shaped community disclosure. Because infidelity is considered “normal,” it was not raised as a concern needing attention during the assessment.

When discussing violence, few community members reported concerns. During a discussion, one community member described government intervention in situations of violence. When addressing domestic violence in the community the participant reported, “Hitting or throwing things does not happen because the government protects people. If they are hitting each other they go to jail.” Conflict between families, but not within families, was a concern reported. One assessment participant described local conflict stating, “Maybe they are not getting along well with each other. Fighting about problems. Yes, there is hitting and
fighting with each other. Fighting across families, not in families.” It is important to note, conflict was not a frequently raised issue by assessment participants. In fact, as discussed earlier, people were generally described as close. One assessment participant described local conflict stating, “We don’t have a lot of problems, there is conflict, but it is normal.” Of all the topics addressed during the assessment, family relationships was discussed the least.

Environment and Community Infrastructure

As mentioned above, during the assessment community members described the natural environment as a resource. However, assessment participants did describe a complex situation in regards to their care of the environment. More specifically, assessment participants reported having both environmental positive and negative behaviors. Environmental concerns named by community members, during assessment processes, included: deforestation and littering. One community member expressed concern stating, “We are taking care of the mangroves (trees) that we plant close the streets and beach. It is forbidden to cut them. We are planting them, but people are cutting them down. People cut them down to make houses. People from outside our community are cutting down the trees. If you want wood, ask for permission.” Another participant expressed similar sentiments stating, “We are taking care of the mangroves. The community takes care of the mangroves because if the people cut them down there won’t be any more mangroves. Sometimes people in the community cut them down.” Another community member reported negative environmental behaviors stating, “Sometimes the water gets contaminated. For example, when people don’t keep their houses clean.”
One community member described the community’s impact on the turtle population stating, “They are going extinct because people are not taking care of the resources of the sea, because they are not using the resources well. They are over using and turtle eggs. Most people are selling the eggs. Fishermen are killing the turtles with their equipment.” In contrast, an assessment participant described the positive environmental behaviors of community members stating, “We cleaned up the beach because we want to give a good impression to tourists. We take care of the turtles. We have the Veda in September and we are forbidden to go to beach. We take the turtle eggs and help them grow, and then we take the hatchlings and put them in the ocean. It is good for the next generation to know what we have and how we have been working.” Another community member described the range of environmental protection behaviors of the community stating, “We are protecting the birds, we are protecting the forest, and we are protecting the Gulf and the turtle. The people in the committee work well together.”

As evidenced from the above assessment quotes, participants reported being active in a number of community care projects. Several projects were named. In particular, reforestation of the mangroves, clean-up of the land and the appropriate disposal of plastic and waste, and turtle protection. Trash was described as a past community concern. However, litter decreased significantly because of clean-up efforts and waste removal strategies. One community member described turtle protection in the community stating, “We are working to protect the beach, the turtles. Protecting turtles is important because they are going extinct and we want the next generation to know them. The turtles are going extinct because people are selling them, so the turtle population isn’t growing. We are cleaning the beach. Tourists come here to swim in the sea, and they like clean beaches. For holy week a
lot of people come.” During assessment processes community members appeared very proud of their environmental efforts. This was evident in the joy and esteem they displayed when communicating about their work, and their willingness to share openly about their efforts.

During assessment processes community members provided details about a number of projects community members identified as local resources. In particularly, the resources were identified as initiatives or committees organized around specific projects.

**Turtle Committee**

One project assessment participants discussed during assessment processes was the turtle committee. Assessment participants described the turtle committee as a collection of community members responsible for the annual care of the turtle center and for the protection of the turtles during Veda. More specifically, the committee was reported as being responsible for selecting a team of community members to assist in egg collection and protection during Veda. The project was reported as increasing the turtle population, an important action given the decline in the turtle population. One community member shared about their care of the turtles stating, “We are taking care of the turtle eggs; when they are born we take care of the turtles. It’s good to take care of turtles, because we started to not see turtles on the beach, but since we have been working to save them we have been seeing turtles.” During a discussion, another community member described the turtle project stating, “We have a turtle protection group. It is a group of people who work in the center to protect the turtles. It is helpful to biologist doing research, it is important because the turtles are going extinct and we have to protect them.” Similarly, another community member described the project reporting, “It is for the protection of the environment and the turtles. We are
trying to protect them. We need to increase the turtle population, it was getting smaller. We were losing the turtles, but today we have more turtles.” Assessment participants named a range of factors that had an adverse impact on the turtle population. Factors identified included, consumption and selling of turtles, and changed fishing practices. One assessment participant described community member turtle practices stating, “After the Veda people survive off the turtle eggs, they search for the eggs. Most of the time we survive by selling the eggs of turtles.” Another community member addressed the issue reporting, “Because we didn’t have a Veda, too many fishermen were killing the turtles, the turtles were going into the fishing nets and dying.” One assessment participant provided a concise description of the turtle project, the turtle population decline, and community members’ sale of the turtles for economic survival stating, “The committee is an organized group who wants to take care of the environment and protect the turtles. Because the turtles are going extinct because of how men are fishing. In their nets they are catching them and they are dying in the nets. People go after the Veda and sell them, and in that way they have money to buy food and things we needs for our houses.” In addition, assessment participants described the turtle committee positively. However, descriptions about the functioning of the committee were linked to the work of the committee, not necessarily to the functioning of the committee. This was a contrast to the Punta Raton assessment responses where the committee was discussed both in terms of the purpose of the project and involved persons. For example, in El Venado when describing the functioning of the turtle committee, during a discussion one participant reported, “They are working during the Veda, they find turtles and get the eggs of the turtles. Then they take care of the turtles. Yes, it is a good committee. They are good because they are doing things that are good.” Similarly, another assessment participant described the
quality of the committees work stating, “It is a good working committee, each year they work hard for 25 days in September. Every year they try to do better. Since last year we have seen more turtles on the beach coming to lay their eggs.” Again, participant feedback described the turtle committees’ ability to follow through with project purpose, as opposed to team functioning. The project was consistently described as “good.” A few project related concerns were raised during assessment processes. The issues, however, were developmental in nature, and focused on economic and infrastructural related concerns. For example, one assessment participant described the evolution of the project stating, “The turtle protection committee is a good functioning committee this time. Before they had much difficulty. They had to work to get where they are now. They didn’t have a building, now they have a building; it rained on them, but now they have more resources. They do their work and they receive their food.” Another community member described employment with the committee stating, “We have a job sometimes and sometimes we don’t have a job. I am part of the turtle committee.” The turtle project was described as a volunteer project because participants rarely received income for work. In fact, income was reported as being generated only as tourists were in the community, and as mentioned earlier, tourism was described as being limited due to infrastructural-related concerns. One community member described her employment status with the committee stating, “I don’t have a job, but I work with turtle committee. We have to keep it clean. We want to be paid for the project in the future so we want to make the turtle group grow up. We have to work all day. When we have tourist we have to attend to them all day. We want the center to attract tourists so we have more work to do.”
Community Development Interest, Power, and Collaboration

During assessment processes community members articulated interest in engaging in behaviors that would improve the conditions of the community. More specifically, assessment participants expressed interest in improving infrastructure related concerns and the economic stability of the community. One community member described infrastructural related needs stating, “We need support from the government. They have to send the equipment to make the streets better. We need all the material to make the street better.” Another assessment participant described an infrastructural need stating, “We have asked for toilets, but we don’t have them yet.” In addition, assessment participants raised resource-related concerns around establishing and promoting ecotourism in the community. One community member described community development concerns stating, “For example, we need to talk about how to get people here, to have more tourists, and in that way when we have tourists we will receive funds.” Another participant expressed similarly sentiments stating, “One of our problems is unpaved streets, and we don’t have money to make place public. We have visitors but they don’t stay here. They don’t stay here because it is too little, the rooms hold only eight people and it is full all of holy week.” Assessment participants were particularly interested in improving the conditions of the community and taking actions to get tourist into the area.

Assessment participants did talk explicitly during assessment processes about who was responsible for community development efforts. When asked who had power in the community to resolve issues, assessment participants reported “the Patronato.” One assessment participant expressed this point during a discussion stating, “The Patronato have control; it must be the Patronato, they are the maximum authority in the community.”
Another assessment participant expressed similar ideas during a discussion stating, “The Patronato work to resolve issues, if we have problems we meet with the Patronato. The whole community and the president goes to Marcovia to resolve issues.”

In contrast to Punta Raton, assessment participants also described themselves as being as much involved in community development efforts, as the Patronato. One community member described shared power in the community stating, “The Patronato lead. They work with the community, everyone has power.” Another assessment participant expressed similar sentiments stating, “All the community is working with the Patronato. We can all do it working together, or we can do it in our groups that are organized.” Assessment participants described most community members as being active and organized, in one or more of several groups. The groups were all described as environmental and tourist-related ventures geared toward preparing the community to receive tourists. Tourism was described as an important means to improve the community’s economic stability.

Assessment participants reported the community had three committees, in addition to the Patronato. The first committee, The Turtle Committee, was previously discussed. It is the group that is responsible for the local turtle center and facilitates the collection and protection of turtle eggs during the Veda. The second group described during the assessment was Espeven. The Espeven committee was described as a group dedicated to tourism in the community. Specifically, this group works to organize cleanup projects, maintains the tourist lodges, and attract tourists to the area. An assessment participant described the group stating, “Espeven is dedicated to tourism, they try to get people to visit the community; they have food and rooms. The area here is not declared as a tourist zone yet so they just have people here for one season. They are like us, we have people here during this time of Veda.”
final group reported was Apavel. Apavel was described as a committee focused on addressing fishermen concerns in the community. The group was described as not being “official” yet, they were, however, starting to mobilize to raise money to develop a committee. One assessment participant described the project stating, “Apavel is a project. They want to make a fishing project. They’re not an official project now. But they have a box to save money.” Assessment participants made it clear that while the groups were distinct, they collaborated on community development goals. One community member described collaboration between the projects stating, “Espeven and the turtle committee were created together, but Apavel is new. We work together. They handle housing and we work with tourists. If we have 10 people here we give them 10% and they give us 10%. If we have 20 people they have 10 people, and if they have 10 we share work. We work together. We want our projects to be sustainable, that is why we are working we do tourism.” It was reported that many community members are a part of more than one project. One assessment participant made this point stating, “Patronato members also work in these groups. They are our leaders and they are responsible to get help for the community but they are also members in the other groups (i.e., Apavel or Espeven). In addition to being collaborative, assessment participants described themselves as trustworthy. One community member described the functioning of the groups stating, “We have a good community. We are not corrupt. We are good people.”

In addition to appreciating the collaborative efforts among persons in the community, assessment participants expressed interest in outside groups coming into the community. They expressed interests in collaborating around research and the development of the community. Assessment participants reported being open to collaborating with other entities
on ventures that would improve the community, but they also reported not knowing how to go about creating new partnerships. One assessment participant positively described projects in the community stating, “For me it is good to have the center, because the center is helping people to do research here and it is helping us to get help from people doing research. If not, we would not be taking care of the turtles and they would be going more extinct every year.” Another community member described a positive training received by community members stating, “They taught us how to attend to tourists, how to make food. I found the information helpful.” One community member described local need and partnership interest stating, “We need to develop more so more people know this community. We want to make this a tourist community. We want people to know this place as a good place to travel. We are trying to get some training. We are learning how to make food, and customer service.” Another community member described partnership interests stating, “We know there are people interested in these type of projects. We hoping they can help us.” Unlike Punta Raton, community members in El Venado were already mobilized and prepared to collaborate with interested entities. Instead of waiting for others to come and initiate change, El Venado community members reported being organized, but in need of resources. One assessment participant described the organization of the community stating, “We talk about what we are going to do and how we are going to do it, we have two groups and the meetings are for each group, the turtle group and the ESPVEN, and the people in the groups work together.” El Venado community assessment participants described themselves as open, willing, and prepared to collaborate. When engaging with community members it was evident that they had a vision for the community and were trying to move forward in the ways that they could.
In addition, it was also evident they were appreciative of the resources that came into the community.

**Differences Between the Two Communities**

In order to compare how the two communities differed on the issues mentioned above, Chi Square was used on yes/no responses received on surveys. Responses of *Not Applicable* or *I Don’t Know* were not included in these analyses.

There were no significant differences between the two communities in the areas of reading, writing, ability to find work, having sufficient money to buy necessities, someone in the family having an emotional problem, children fighting between themselves, having problems unable to be resolved, or contentment with rules ($p > .05$).

A chi square test of independence was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and perception of how well the health center was working. Only 48.4% of participants ($n=31$) in El Venado said it was not working well but 81.3% ($n=109$) of those in Punta Raton reported that the health center was not working well (see Table 5). The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 198) = 22.64, p < .001$.

**Table 5**

*Health Center is Working Well in Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>El Venado</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130
A chi square test of independence was then performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and perception of the quality of the education the children were receiving. Only 43.2% of participants \((n=32)\) in El Venado said children were not receiving a good education but 79.9% \((n=107)\) of those in Punta Raton reported that their children were not receiving a good education (see Table 6). The difference was statistically significant, \(\chi^2 (1, N = 208) = 28.82, p < .001\).

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children are Receiving a Good Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Next, a chi square test of independence was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and sickness in the home. Over 53.3 of participants \((n=73)\) living in Punta Raton said that someone in their home was sick but only 32% \((n=24)\) of those living in El Venado reported sickness in the home (see Table 7). The difference was statistically significant, \(\chi^2 (1, N = 212) = 8.85, p = .003\).
Further, there was also a significant difference between the communities in those who could not receive necessary medical care (see Table 8). A chi square test of independence revealed a significant difference between community and availability of medical care when someone in the home was sick. Only 44.6% of participants ($n=29$) living in El Venado said someone in their house could not receive needed medical care but 65.2% ($n=90$) of those living in Punta Raton reported that this was a problem. The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 203) = 7.73, p = .005$.

### Table 8

**Some in Your House Could Not Receive Medical Care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>138</td>
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</table>
In testing for differences in access to clean water, a chi square test of independence was revealed a significant difference between community and family access to clean water. Only 54.5% of participants \((n=42)\) in El Venado said their family had access to clean water while 76.1% \((n=105)\) of those in Punta Raton reported that their family had access to clean water (see Table 9). The difference was statistically significant, \(\chi^2 (1, N = 215) = 10.61, p = .001\).

Table 9

*Family Has Access to Clean Water*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
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<th>Count</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>54.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and family violence between the two communities, a chi square test of independence was performed. Only 5.3% of participants \((n=4)\) living in El Venado said they had seen family violence while 20.6% \((n=28)\) of those living in Punta Raton reported this (see Table 10). The difference was statistically significant, \(\chi^2 (1, N = 211) = 8.74, p = .003\).
Table 10

*Have Seen Family Violence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>El Venado</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
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<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi square test of independence was also performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and alcohol or drug use. Only 6.6% of participants (*n*=5) living in El Venado said someone in their family depended on drugs or alcohol while 33.8% (*n*=46) of those living in Punta Raton reported this (Table 11). The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 212) = 19.81, p < .001$. 

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A chi square test of independence was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and parent/child conflict. Only 11% of participants ($n=8$) living in El Venado said they had seen family violence while 33.6% ($n=45$) of those living in Punta Raton reported this (Table 12). The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1, N = 207) = 12.70, p < .001$.

Table 12

*Discussions Between Parents/Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>El Venado</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td>89.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, a chi square test of independence was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between community and infidelity in the family. Only 12.3% of participants ($n=9$) living in El Venado said yes to family infidelity but 30.4% ($n=38$) of those living in Punta Raton reported this (Table 13). The difference was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 198) = 8.31, p = .004$.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infidelity in Family</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Venado</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punta Raton</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lessons Learned Methodology: Community Engagement and Consciousness Raising

The level of impact the participatory assessment processes had on increasing community engagement and raising awareness of local concerns varied by community. For example, in Punta Raton, the presence of women and persons from marginalized sections of the community was a testament that the process helped to include persons and engage voices that typically went unheard. Yet, it was evident during the assessment process that the level of participation of community members ranged in relationship to the assessment procedure used. While the community meetings sparked discussions that permitted the naming and exploration of core issues, the voices of marginalized persons had to be intentionally drawn out. Often these community members did not feel comfortable contributing to dialogues and
taking on responsibility to address community concerns based on action plans developed in
the meetings. In contrast, during one-on-one or familial discussions, marginalized persons
were very vocal and reported being committed to participating in steps that would achieve
collective communal interests. The variation in participation by assessment method captured
the importance of having multiple information collection strategies to elicit the involvement
of persons who might not otherwise be involved because of contextual social norms and
perceptions of self-efficacy. The process also illuminated the reality that the creation of space
to permit democratic and collaborative interactions does not necessarily mean that these
types of interactions will occur, because people may continue to act in accordance with
sanctioned individual, familial, or communal norms. Also, community sensitivity to
dynamics of power may shape what community members view themselves as being capable
of, even when they have worthy ideas that could positively impact the community.

Culture was a critical issue that naturally surfaced during assessment processes and
had to be navigated sensitively to facilitate for engagement and awareness-raising dialogues.
Understanding cultural customs and niceties proved to be critical in building connections that
would allow for more authentic and honest interactions. For example, it was custom for
community members to offer food and snacks during the assessment process. Community
members consistently offered the best food and drinks they had, although their resources
were limited. The researcher quickly learned, after being prompted by the translator, that it
would be rude to not accept their hospitality gestures because they were offering the best
they had in their homes. To not accept would have been to offend them. Thus, although
taking the snacks was against what the researcher believed to best, given resource limitations
in the community, it was done to be respectful and build relationship.
Reflection on formal and informal interactions with community members throughout assessment processes revealed that the level of connection and disclosure with community members seemed to vary based on contact type. More specifically, while community members were open and honest during assessment processes, they were often more detailed and shared more intimate information during conversations while eating, chatting, or relaxing. Recognizing this reality early on prompted the need to discuss with community members whether or not information disclosed informally could be included in the assessment. Doing so helped to avoid the violation of boundaries and relationships and helped to respect community member disclosure. The variation in community member disclosure revealed two important assessment engagement related issues. First, it was important that the researcher understood community members were relational. Once a connection was made they naturally shared some of the most intimate details of their life. While they were open to participate in the assessment and share about themselves, the level of sharing was not as intimate without a connection. Thus, simple gestures, such as like sharing a meal, sitting and admiring their gardens, and getting to know them, helped to create connections that could be built upon. Second, the process revealed storytelling as the natural way in which community members shared their experiences. While they could offer their opinion when asked directly through questions and surveys, the richness and intricacies of their lived experiences was better understood through natural disclosures where they decided on the how, when, and what they would disclose. Storytelling was evident even during verbal survey administration. When asked a question community members would select a forced choice response, but then would elaborate verbally as desired to make sure their position was understood. These encounters revealed the importance of connection and flexibility when
conducting community assessments. Such allowances may prove to be critical in shaping what is and is not disclosed by community members.

The assessment was also successful in assessing community member motivation to engage in collaborative partnerships that would facilitate the level of community development desired. The process revealed both communities were open to change and were prepared to move forward. However, the communities varied greatly in their definitions of collaboration. The process revealed stakeholders and community members may vary on definitions of collaboration and consequently time, patience, and sensitivity may be key ingredients to developing a shared and congruent vision of community development. Failure to do so may trigger anxiety and birth frustration, as contributions are unfulfilled, or are unrecognized, preventing a sense of mutual trust, contribution, and responsibility.

**Lessons Learned Methodology: Resource Inventory**

The assessment process did permit community members to identify and explore the resources available in the communities. The process revealed double binds may exist in communities like Punta Raton and El Venado where resources, although valuable, are exploited as community members are forced to use them excessively to survive. Both communities were sensitive to this dilemma and desired to shift their economic dependence on the natural resources, a change that would require a shift in the cultural norms of the communities. Both communities envisioned environment protection as a means of improving their economic conditions and as means of protecting the environment.

Working with the communities to identify external resources to be drawn upon for community development efforts was challenging, however. While the communities were
interested in collaborating with external partners, Punta Raton community members did not want to look beyond collaborating with Loma Linda University, and El Venado community members were unaware of partnership opportunities. The assessment process revealed access to appropriate resources during community development initiatives might be a critical factor to facilitate movement in community development efforts. Without access to appropriate resources, community members may be unaware of options available to them, and may develop unrealistic expectations of partners at the table. During this assessment, with both community members and the researcher unaware of potential national and international collaborators, while working without Internet access, moving forward in resource identification was impeded. While it may be a challenge to anticipate what the needs of a community are without first meeting with its members, it may be possible to more accurately anticipate the types of resources that could potentially be needed to maintain a dialogue and facilitate movement. Having access to technology, such as the Internet, may prove to be imperative when collaborating with communities to permit community development movement. Because most community members could not read or write online searchers, and grant identification may be a responsibility that falls onto researchers as community members develop proficiency in such tasks over the course of community development activities. Thus, having access to technology that would allow community members to begin the process of locating resources maybe critical for continued progress in community development efforts.
Action Plan Development

The assessment process revealed that participants were motivated to generate change in the community. However, the communities varied on what role community members should have and the level of contribution needed by them to actualize desired change. Also, the communities varied on what role potential partners should have. The assessment process revealed that while communities may be ready for change, a number of steps needed to be attended to before such change could occur. In some instances, those steps may require community members to explore and evaluate cultural dynamics, including values and rituals that govern their behavior. Reflection may pave the way for community members to develop ideas, assess the practicality of their ideas, and allow for the exploration of the potential short-term and long-term implications of their decisions, thus allowing for informed plan development and implementation. For example, in Punta Raton community members wanted change, yet their hierarchical power system kept community members waiting for an “other” to come in and facilitate that change. Punta Raton community members want investors to enter the community and develop the area, but they did not see themselves as being responsible for leading the development, although they were adamant they wanted to give ideas on how the development should happen and profit from the growth. In some respects, community members want the majority of the responsibility of community development to fall on investors, a responsibility that includes investors developing one-on-one relationships with each family in the community. As mentioned above, assessment and action plan development processes may need to explore the possibility of ideas and explore the long-term implication of decisions. This would help community members be able to both assess the likelihood of their plan and also would allow them to explore whether the potential
consequences are something they are prepared to live with. Time may be an important factor in this process as community member may need to explore their expectations in the context of their values and review the expectations of potential investors in the context of business values in order to understand how a collaborative and mutually beneficial vision and action plan can be developed. This process may include value shifts that may only occur over time as the practicality and consequences of ideas are explored and understood. The assessment process included the development of ideas and explored the practicality of ideas. The assessment time frame, however, did not allow for a back and forth between community members and potential partners, a process that would have provided insight into the ability of the communities to listen, negotiate, and engage in collaborative and mutually beneficially community development processes.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The communities of Punta Raton and El Venado have similar concerns and visions. Both communities are currently struggling with co-occurring and intersecting issues in the areas of economic hardship, environmental exploitation, limited education access, and limited health care services. The concerns found in both communities are consistent with documented concerns and areas of development in Honduras (World Bank, 2014; EIA, 2005; World Food Programme, 2014; UNICEF, 2011; Pavon; 2008). Both communities are interested in improving their conditions and are drawn to conservation and eco-tourism as a means for community development. However, the communities vary significantly in their energy and level of mobilization around core issues.

The large population size and declining resources in Punta Raton is exacerbating the health, environmental, and economic conditions. Anxiety around the current condition of the community is high and appears to be affecting how people connect with one another. While community members are very interested in change, the community does not have a functioning system in place to permit the community to work toward addressing their concerns. Isolation and distrust issues in the community need to be addressed to permit meaningful dialogues and collaboration to take place. Also, shifts in community perceptions around time investment, resource investment, collaboration, and responsibility need to be addressed in order for the community to move beyond the waiting position that they currently hold.

In contrast, El Venado is a much mobilized community that struggles with how to identify and apply for external resources that could help them to progress developmentally.
The community has a strong work ethic, sense of responsibility, and values partnerships and information. In addition, the community possesses a realistic picture of where they are developmentally and the types of issues that need to be addressed in order for them to grow.

Both communities are open to support from outside entities. However the aid that is needed between the two communities varies slightly based on the community organization, communal values, and community capacity. Recommendations have been provided below that address these areas.

**Recommendations and Implications**

**Recommendations Punta Raton**

To make implicit the needs of the community and to support the facilitation of community development efforts in Punta Raton, the following strategic plan and recommendations have been provided. These recommendations were developed based on the assessment findings for the community (see Figure 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Issues</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Coordinating Group</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Informational Workshop on LLU Collaboration</td>
<td>Brief workshops at the onset of community trip</td>
<td>Dependent on team visiting the community</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Community Health Clinics                        | Interdisciplinary teams of health care professionals travel for a period of seven days to address community health concerns in the winter. Spread out teams to travel to the community during and post the winter season. | Health Care Professionals (nurses, physicians, dentist, etc.) | May-November
|                                                   |                                                                                 |                                   | Ideally between September and November |
| 3. Community Cohesion and Collaboration Building    | Social Scientist develop initiatives to facilitate community resolution of address trust, isolation, connectedness, and accountability issues in the community | Marital and Family Therapist, Social Workers, Psychologist, or Nurses | Prior to business workshops. (4). Any time spring or winter |
|                                                   |                                                                                 |                                   |                                   |
| 4. Business Education                              | Presentation & workshops on important business, tourist, and hospitality information that can help community to actualize business visions. | Business Professionals, Biologist Organizational consultations SST | Immediately after community building activities. Winter |
|                                                   |                                                                                 |                                   |                                   |
| 5. Conservation and Eco Tourism                    | ProTECTOR to provide workshop and host strategic planning meetings to help community members balance conservation interest and community economic concerns | ProTECTOR                          | After project 4. Winter or Spring |

*Figure 1. Strategic Plan for Punta Raton*
Strategy 1: Informational Workshop on LLU Collaboration Interests

It is recommended that the community is educated about Loma Linda and ProTECTORS’s interest in the community because of previously noted collaboration concerns expressed by community members during the assessment process. Loma Linda and ProTECTORS should provide these workshops because they were the frequently cited entities the community reported having collaboration related concerns. However, upon entrance into the community, new organizations, interested in partnering with the locals, should be advised to collaborate and educate about their interests and efforts. Short workshops that inform the community about the purpose of specific projects should be provided to address communal participation concerns. Workshop presentations should be provided as frequently as needed to keep community members updated and informed about the projects underway in the region. Specific effort should be made to make explicit the positive and or negative effects of research and outreach activities in the community, punctuating communal benefits. While community development can occur with little or not feedback from locals, inclusion of community members in such processes can prove to be critical in improving the wellbeing, agency, and buy-in of typically marginalized groups (Classen, Humphries, Fitzsimons, Kaaria, 2008; Roussos, Fawcett, 2000; Nygren, 2005; O’Fallon & Derry, 2002; Draper, Gewitt, & Rifkin, 2010)

Strategy 2: Community Health Clinics

The community participants reported a wide number of health concerns ranging from infections, bodily aches and pains, and tooth aches. The concerns identified by community members are consistent with health issues identified as being prevalent in the region (World
Health Organization, 2013; PAHO-USAID, 2009; WHO, 2014; World Bank, 2012). It is recommended that teams of nurses, physicians, and dentists travel to the community to address core health concerns. While the community has a number of health concerns year round, it is recommended that health teams visit the community during the Honduran winter and post winter season since that is when the most health concerns exist community wide. Because of the high treatment need, teams should stay at least a few days to be able to treat as many community members as possible. Trips of a few days would permit the treatment of the potentially large group of people needing assistance. As mentioned above, the community is not set up to handle large teams traveling to the community. Large teams might run into safety and resource access issues. Again, these are concerns that exist without tourists in the area, so the issues can be exacerbated, if not addressed sensitively. It is estimated that the center can currently house eight people at a time with some potential resources access issues (the community is still learning how to accommodate travelers to the area, thus measures should be made to protect personal belongings and large amounts of water should be taken into the community). Because the community is sensitive to the entrance and exit of people in the community, it is recommended that small teams visit the community concurrently. This will minimize anxiety issues and reduce the stress on local resources.

**Strategy 3: Community Cohesion and Collaboration Building**

It is recommended that persons in the fields of marital and family therapy, social work, psychology and or nursing be sent to facilitate community team building and cohesion efforts. The community has a common vision that they are having difficulties mobilizing around because of the aforementioned trust and isolation issues. Women’s roles and
marginalization issues should specifically be addressed. An increased value of and attention to social capital by community members would better permit them to collectively address local issues. Increased trust, reciprocity, and connectedness would not only potentially improve local relations and eradicate power differentials, but could also facilitate the channeling of local resources for strategic action, thus permitting community members to meet their goals (Pretty & Ward, 2001; Pretty & Smith, 2004; Mayoux, 2001; Park, Nunkoo, Yoon. 2015).

**Strategy 4: Business Education**

Given the community has a strong business interest in the area of conservation and eco-tourism, it is recommended that informational workshop and trainings on business development be provided to the community. Such trainings would help the community to take the required steps to actualize their goals. Ecotourism has been found to be a successful means of community development, allowing for both conservation and economic growth (Horwich et al., 1993; Laverack & Thangphet, 2009; Foucat, 2002; Blang & Mehta, 2006). Educating community members of positive outcomes in addition to important concepts such as strategic planning, investments, informational capital, social capital, and other forms of capital may helpful to orient community members to reaching their goals. Issues of power, accountability and agency should also be addressed during the presentations (Po-Hsin & Nepal, 2006; Jones, 2005; Leksakundilok, 2004). Doing so would permit community members to address the power, agency, and accountability issues that were found during assessment processes, issues that shaped leader trust and community development efforts. The relevance of the information should be addressed at the onset of the training or
community members may question the relevance of the information and dropout (community members may quickly lose interest in projects that do not have immediate financial gain). It is recommended that professionals with some type of business background be sent to the community to help in this area. Professionals working in this capacity should have access to Internet and be informed of conservation and eco tourist possibilities to teach community members how to access information and apply for funding. Technology access would permit access to information needed to further support community members in idea development. As mentioned previously, the lack of technology, such as, Internet, may impede project development.

**Strategy 5: Conservation and Eco Tourism**

It is recommended that ProTECTOR educate the community on conservation and help the community to develop an economically viable strategy for balancing conservation and economic concerns. It may be beneficial for this project to occur concurrently with recommendation 4.

Implementation of the aforementioned strategic recommendation could prove to have a positive impact on community health and development. Teams visiting the community can support the community in a tangible way they would appreciate by staying in the community during trips and utilizing community resources. More specifically, it would be idea if teams visiting the community live in the community during the trip. Living in the community would not only educate professional about the systemic needs of the community, but would allow for the building of rapport, while also improving the economic conditions of many families. As mentioned previously, community members disclose more to people they trust,
and their economic conditions improve when people visit and purchase local resources (i.e. food, lodging). If possible monies should be allocated for food preparation, community guides, and local assistants.

**Recommendations EL Venado**

To make implicit the needs of the community and to support the facilitation of community development efforts in El Venado, the following strategic plan and recommendations have been provided. These recommendations were developed based on the analysis of the assessment findings (see Figure 2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Issues</th>
<th>Recommendations to Address Issues</th>
<th>Coordinating Team</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community health clinics</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary teams of health care professional travel for a period of seven days to address community health concerns in the winter. Spread out teams to travel to the community during and post the winter season.</td>
<td>Health Care Professionals (nurses, physicians, dentist, etc.)</td>
<td>May-November, Ideally between September and November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coupling and Parenting</td>
<td>Marital and Family therapist and or Social Workers to develop and implement programs on dating, coupling, and parenting for women in the community who are single parents</td>
<td>Marital and Family Therapist and Social Workers</td>
<td>Spring or Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Business Education</td>
<td>Presentation &amp; workshops on important business, tourist, and hospitality information that can help community to actualize business visions.</td>
<td>Business Professionals, Biologist, Organizational consultations SST</td>
<td>Immediately after community building activities. Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conservation and Eco Tourism</td>
<td>ProTECTOR to provide workshop and host strategic planning meetings to help community members balance conservation interest and community economic concerns</td>
<td>ProTECTOR</td>
<td>After project 4. Winter or Spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Strategic Plan for El Venado*

**Strategy 1: Community Health Clinics**

Similar to Punta Raton the community participants reported a wide number of health concerns ranging from infections, bodily aches and pains, and tooth aches. The concerns identified by community members are consistent with health issues identified as being prevalent in the region (World Health Organization, 2013; PAHO-USAID, 2009; WHO,
2014; World Bank, 2012). It is recommended that teams of nurses, physicians, and dentists travel to the community to address many of the core health concerns. Teams traveling to the community should stay at least a few days to be able to treat as many community members as possible. While the community has a number of health concerns year round, it is recommended that health teams visit the community during the Honduran winter and post winter season since that is when the most health concerns exist community wide. As mentioned above, the community is not set up to handle large teams traveling to the community. Large teams might run resource access issues. Again, these are concerns that exist without tourists in the area, so the issues can be exacerbated, if not addressed sensitively. It is estimated that the two centers can currently house up to twenty people at a time with some potential resources access issues. Because the community is sensitive to the entrance and exit of people in the community it is recommended that small teams visit the community concurrently. The community is well organized and would be willing to support visiting teams in getting organized and set up in the community. It is recommended that community member feedback is acquired onsite to determine the best approach to setup and run health clinics.

**Strategy 2: Coupling and Parenting**

It is recommended that marital and family therapists or social workers develop programs addressing coupling and parenting in the community to address the reported single-parenthood. These interventions should target mothers, because, as previously noted they are the single parents in the community. Single parenthood has been identified as an issue in the region, thus interventions targeting the concerns would provide much needed aid to a
vulnerable group (St. Bernard, 2003; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; UNICEF, 2007; Bradshaw, 1995). The community values education, thus it is anticipated community members will enroll and appreciate such interventions were they available.

**Strategy 3: Business Education**

Based on the community’s eco-tourism business interest, it is recommended that informational workshops and trainings on developing business ventures be provided to the community to help them take steps to actualizing their goals. El Venado community members are interested in identifying and connecting with potential partners and funders. As community members are highly motivated to lead establish business ventures they can self-manage, any training provided should foster their development of the necessary skills and proficiency to be able to continue such work on their own. It is recommended that professionals with some type of business background be sent to the community to help in this area. Professionals working in this capacity should have access to Internet and be informed of conservation and eco tourist possibilities to teach community members how to access information and apply for funding. Technology access would permit professionals to assist community members in locating resources that could prove to be critical in advancing their interests.

Similar to Punta Raton implementation of the aforementioned strategic recommendation could prove to have a positive impact on community health and development of El Venado. Consequently, teams visiting the community should try to access local resources to build rapport and improve the economic conditions during the community.
Practice Implications

The assessment process revealed treatment consideration that may be helpful to mental health professionals and educators who are contemplating working in small international communities.

First, the assessment process revealed relationships as being central to community health, organization, and development. Building rapport with community leaders and members permitted the creation of processes that facilitated local discovery and collaboration. The relational focus of Marriage and Family Therapists well adapts them as researchers and community organizers to both conceptualize and build connections that can permit healing and change to occur (Johnson, et al., 2002; Watzlawick, et al., 1967; Haley, 1987; Bowen, 1985; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). As mentioned previously, it was through connection that some of the most intimate findings of this study were acquired. This demonstrates the applicability and utility of the relational focus of Marriage and Family Therapist in community contexts.

Second, this study punctuates the importance of taking into consideration the range of co-occurring and interacting dynamics shaping family health and local organization. The multiple interacting variables in each community proved to be instrumental in shaping and maintaining local issues and thus illuminated the need for complex conceptualizations and interventions. Marriage and Family Therapists trained in systems theory, structure, and power, primes them well to identify and attend to issues occurring across multiple systems levels (Minuchin et al., 1981; Becvar & Becvar, 1999). Their understanding of pertinent issues, such as boundaries, coalitions, and roles positions them to not only be able to build
rapport, and connect in a meaningful and respectful way, but also to build alliances that permit both those with power and those without to engage and address contextual issues.

Third, the study revealed it is important to understand what community members value and consider support. While some communities, such as El Venado, may view education as a resource and are interested in workshops and education forums; some communities, such as Punta Raton, may prioritize monetary forms of help and may not value or be interested in educational types of support. Understanding what communities need and value is an important initial step to program development that may prevent the development and delivery of services that are not valued and or needed by communities. Listening and attending to the unique needs of all persons in treatment is a central tenant of Marriage and Family Therapy theoretical orientations (Minuchin et al., 1981; Bowen, 1985). The value is especially relevant in the community context, with marginalized, and disadvantaged groups, who are accustomed to having their voices ignored or minimized, and their needs dismissed by persons of authority. Consequently, the ability of Marriage and Family Therapists to notice and attend to the needs that manifest at multiple system levels (i.e. individual, familial, communal) is especially relevant in community context when the needs of multiple systems need to be acknowledged and addressed.

Finally, time, and change are also important consideration when working in community contexts. When rendering services, it may be important to attend to the short-term and long-term implications of acquiring and implementing knowledge and skills. While communities may value growth, they may not be able to anticipate the conditions they could experience over time as a consequence of successfully achieving their goal. Thus, a precursor to service delivery may need to include a thorough conversation on the positive and negative
issues that might occur as a consequence of learning and using information acquired. Marriage and Family Therapists sensitivity to human development, time, and contexts positions them well to be able to create appropriate engagement strategies that meet the developmental needs of individuals and families over the course of interventions (McGoldrick, Carter, & Preto, 2011; Becvar et al., 1999). Such understanding, as mentioned above, is needed to avoid both premature interventions and to aid families in successfully adapting to desired change.

**Ethical Issues Cross Cultural Assessments**

One important ethical issue that arose during the assessment processes was the negotiation of power between the community and the researcher. At the onset of the assessments in both communities, assessment participants naturally defaulted to a listening position. This occurred although a strong effort had been made to define the process as collaborative, being mutually constructed, and informed by the needs of the community. As dialogues continued, it was evident that the communities were interested in collaborating for change, but different ideas were possessed on how the process should unfold. In particular, the communities placed the researcher in a leadership role and expected guidance. The assessment process became a continual process of exploring collaboration processes based on expectations and values. It became evident that the communities and the researcher needed to allow for the evolution of ideas on what the collaboration processes would look like. Movement on the part of the researcher required that a shift from a flattened hierarchy position to a semi-hierarchical position be made to accommodate community expectation. More specifically, the researcher took on a leadership role in a continuum of leaders and
moved forward and led the group when appropriate. Often this meant the researcher had to lead assessment processes by creating space, yet pulling back in moments when community members wanted to contribute, own, and direct the process. The process also required that the communities looked at the level of personal accountability and responsibility they were willing to take on in the process. The dilemma required the researcher to be consistently reflective and evaluative of self while working to organize community members around concerns. Reflection made the research sensitive to the fact that she had a significant influence on the assessment process. Personal critique was imperative to prevent the researcher from taking on more power than warranted and creating community dependence.

An issue of time and commitment also manifested as an ethical dilemma during the assessment process. Shortly after arriving in the community, it became evident that the assessment process would allow for the actualization of assessment goals. However, it became increasingly evident in each community that they would require continued assistance, based on technological needs and literacy rates, to be able to follow through with community development goals. Time and commitment became important considerations, as a longer time commitment appeared to be needed to help community members to develop the ideas, skills, and resources they needed to achieve their goals. The question arose around whether or not it was ethical to engage and mobilize communities in community development efforts, yet but not be present on an ongoing basis to continue to support in the facilitation of growth. This ethical issue was addressed by (a) working effectively to identify community members who could continue to engage community members around core issues, (b) by making a personal commitment to draft a report that could inform potential
community partners of community issues, and (c) committing to return to the community with a product to contribute to the communities' ecotourism goals.

Finally, during assessment processes it was frequently the case that the researcher questioned if supporting community members in actualizing their goals was in the best interest of the community. Community members at times had community development visions that seemed to be in conflict with their dreams of growth. Thus, while supporting the communities, the question came up about whether or not it was in their best interest for them to reach their goals and whether the researcher should support them in the process. For example, the communities reported being very traditional with roles division, men work outside the home and women work inside the home. Community members in both communities reported jealousy and childrearing as the typical reasons that prevented women from working outside the home. Community members wanted to increase work opportunities for women to generate income, yet reported they did not anticipate women working outside of the home as having an impact on the family. In this situation, community members were not aware of the potential change that could occur between parent-child relationships and spousal relationships as responsibilities evolve and schedules change as needed to fulfill employment roles and commitments. To attend to this ethical issue it became necessary to begin to explore with participants the nature in which their lives could change if their goals were reached. Although space was created for such dialogues, it was evident community members either did not believe the changes would be positive or did not grasp the weight of the vision. Thus, it was made clear that as community development continues, it would be imperative that talks continue to allow locals to explore the short-term and long-term implications of their choices. This would help the locals to assess the degree to
which their goals are in line with their values, and prepare them to make value and behavioral shifts to accommodate new lifestyle realities if they are needed. A number of ethical issues have been documented in CBPR research studies. Identified ethical issues include: racism, insider outsider tension, ownership and utility of information, community member involvement and participation, research agenda prioritizing, time, change, and equitable participant benefits (Minkler, 2004; Minkler, 2005; Shore, Wong, Seifer, Grignon, & Gamble, 2008; Holkup et al., 2004). More research is needed to understand the range of value and behavioral accommodations made by locals to reach and maintain desired research outcomes. It is probable to assume such adjustments are required given that change is normally required to accommodate growth (Brandtstadter & Rothermud, 2002; Tripp-Reimer et al., 2004; Hull & Canedo, 2008).

**Conclusion**

The participatory community assessments facilitated community engagement around core community concerns in Punta Raton and El Venado. The study found intersecting health, education, and income disparities affecting human quality of life and environmental sustainability in the two communities. More specifically, limited health care access, low educational attainment, and severe poverty were critical issues named and discussed by community members across both communities. In addition, barriers to community development were also identified. Specifically, resource-access limitations, in addition to contextual dynamics (culture, power, and structure), were found to impede community motivation and mobilization efforts. This study found, that while participatory community assessments can be beneficial in helping communities to understand local concerns, the
political and cultural infrastructure of communities have significant influence on local change processes. Consequently, community development efforts need to both attend to local needs and the cultural infrastructures that maintain them. In addition, future research is needed to understand how to address contextual and resource challenges when implementing community assessments.

**Limitations of the Current Project**

While the findings for this project provide insight into the conditions in the two communities assessed, this project had several limitations. First, the assessments conducted as part of this study were highly individualized. The specificity of the approach and the outcomes mean that the findings may not be transferable to other contexts, although assessment processes might aid Marital and Family Therapists while conducting international community assessments. Second, limited time and funds prevented the verification of the translations provided by the translator assisting during this assessment. This means if errors existed in translations they are unknown and thus unaddressed in this project. Third, a convenience sample was used for this study. Though an effort was made to make connect with all available community members, there were residents of both community were not available or willing participate in this study. Consequently, their perceptions are not included in this assessment, making the assessment not represented of the entire community. However, the discourses among the participants in both communities told a common story, which made it possible to discern the conditions and needs of the communities.
References


Bradshaw, S. (1995). Women’s access to employment and the formation of female-headed households in rural and urban Honduras. *Bulletin of Latin American Research (is this correct), 14*(2), 143-158.


APPENDIX A

Discussion Questions

1. How long have you lived here?
2. Who are you here with
   a. number of people in the home
3. What do you do on a typical day?
4. What do most other community members do? (Job/work, Family, education)
5. Do you have a job?
6. How many people in your household have job?
7. What do you enjoy about the community?
8. What do you not enjoy about the community?
9. What are common problems that families have in the community?
   a. Health
   b. Environment
   c. Relational
   d. Economic
10. How could community members work to resolve those issues?
11. Who should be involved in addressing those issues?
12. Who has power in this community?
13. What outside resources are needed?
14. What resources inside the community could be used to help improve the community?
15. Are you interested in working to resolve those issues?
16. What would it take to get community members together to talk about and address these issues?
17. Can you bring two people to a group meeting?

18. What is the committee?
   a. Are you apart of the committee?
   b. What are your thoughts about the committee?
   c. How does it run?
APPENDIX B

Original Survey English

DOB ____________          Employed _______ Highest Grade Completed In School

__________

Can You Read _____ Can You Write _____ Area of Residence _____La Puntilla,
_____El Centro, _____La Guadera

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Community Themes</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The center for health is a good functioning center.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The children in the community have access to a good education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The head of our house is always able to find work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In the last month someone in our home got sick.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In the last month someone in our home got sick and was not able to get medical assistance (check if nurse or volunteers).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In the last month we did not have enough money to buy family necessities (food, water, clothes).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In the last month our family did not have access to clean water.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In the last month there was physical violence in our home (hitting shoe).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The turtle committee is a good functioning committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Family Coping Index

When we face problems or difficulties in our family we cope by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Accepting stressful events as a fact of life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Defining the family problem in a more positive way so that we do not become too discouraged.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Having faith in God.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family Distress Index (FDI)

Problems in the family in last 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Small Problem</th>
<th>Medium Problem</th>
<th>Large Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>A member appears to have emotional problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>A member appears to depend on alcohol or drugs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Increase in arguments between parents and children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Increase in conflict among children in the family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Increased disagreement about a members friends or activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Increase in the number of problems or issues which did not get resolved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Increase in the number of tasks or chores which don’t get done</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Increased conflict with in-laws or relatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX C

Spanish Survey Version 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOB ____________</th>
<th>Employed _______</th>
<th>Highest Grade Completed</th>
<th>In School ________</th>
<th>Can You Read ______</th>
<th>Can You Write _____</th>
<th>Area of Residence</th>
<th>Fuertemente</th>
<th>Desacuerdo</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Desacuerdo</th>
<th>Fuertemente</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. El centro de salud es un centro que funciona bien como tal

2. Los niños de la comunidad tienen acceso a una Buena educación

3. El/la cabeza de nuestra familia siempre puede encontrar trabajo.

4. Durante el mes pasado, un miembro de nuestra familia se enfermo

5. Durante el mes pasado, un miembro de nuestra familia se enfermo y no pudo obtener atención médica (revisar si hay enfermera o voluntarios)

6. Durante el mes pasado, no tuvimos suficiente dinero para comprar necesidades básicas (comida, agua, ropa)

7. Durante el mes pasado, nuestra familia no tuvo acceso a agua limpia

8. Durante el mes pasado, hubo violencia física en nuestra familia

9. El llamado comité Tortuga funciona bien
## Family Coping Index

*When we face problems or difficulties in our family we cope by:*

*Cuando sufrimos problemas o dificultades en nuestra familia, los sobrellevamos por medio de ....*

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Reconocer que tales circunstancias son la realidad de la vida .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Reconocer que tales dificultades surgen de modo inesperado</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Optar por considerer tales problemas familiares de manera mas postivia para que no nos desanimemos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Tener fe en dios</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Family Distress Index (FDI)

*Problems in the family in last 12 months*

*Indice de aflicciones familiares.Durante los ultimos 12 meses*

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Un miembro de nuestra familia parece haber sufrido problemas emocionales</td>
<td>No es un problema</td>
<td>Es un problema leve</td>
<td>Es un problema de nivel medio</td>
<td>Es un problema grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Un miembro de nuestra familia parece haber sufrido una dependencia de sustancias adictivas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Hubo un aumento en el numero de peleas entre padres y ninos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Aumento de conflictos entre los ninos de la familia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Hubo un aumento en el nivel de desacuerdo sobre los amigos o actividades de un miembro de la familia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Hubo un aumento en el numero de problemas o dificultades que no se resolvieron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Hubo un aumento en el numero de tareas o faenas que no se hicieron.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Hubo un aumento de tension o conflict con suegros o otros parientes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
Spanish Survey Version 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN1</th>
<th>DOB</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Highest Grade Completed</th>
<th>In School</th>
<th>Can You Read</th>
<th>Can You Write</th>
<th>Area of Residence</th>
<th>Complete Interview?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fuertemente desacuerdo</th>
<th>Desacuerdo</th>
<th>Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo</th>
<th>Deacuerdo</th>
<th>Fuertemente deacuerdo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. El centro de salud es un centro que funciona bien como tal

2. The children in the community have access to a good education.

3. The head of our house is always able to find work.

4. Durante el mes pasado, un miembro de nuestra casa se enfermo

5. Durante el mes pasado, alguien en nuestra casa se enfermo y no pudo recibir atencion medica (revisar si hay enfermera o voluntarios)

6. Durante el mes pasado, no tuvimos suficiente dinero para comprar necesidades basicas (comida, agua, ropa)

7. Durante el mes pasado, nuestra familia no tuvo acceso a agua limpia

8. Durante el mes pasado hubo violencia fisica en nuestra familia

9. El comite de la Tortuga es un comite que funciona bien
### Family Coping Index

*Cuando sufrimos problemas o dificultades en nuestra familia, los sobrellevamos por medio de ....*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fuertemente en</th>
<th>desacuerdo</th>
<th>Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo</th>
<th>Fuertemente desacuerdo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Aceptando los eventos estresantes como un factor de la vida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Aceptando que las dificultades ocurren inesperadamente</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Definiendo el problema de la familia de un forma mas positive para que no nos desanimemos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Teniendo fe en Dios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family Distress Index (FDI)

*Problemas en la familia en los ultimos 12 meses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No es un problema</th>
<th>Problema</th>
<th>Problema mediano</th>
<th>Problema a</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>A member appears to have emotional Un miembro de la familia parece tener problemas emocionales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>A member appears to depend on alcohol or drugs. Un miembro de la familia parece depender de alcohol o drogas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Increase in arguments between parents and children. Aumento de argumentos entre padres e hijos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Increase in conflict among children in the family Aumento de conflictos entre los ninos de la familia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Hubo un aumento en el nivel de desacuerdo sobre los amigos o actividades de un miembro de la familia</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Hubo un aumento en el número de problemas o dificultades que no se resolvieron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Increase in the number of tasks or chores which don’t get done</td>
<td>Aumento en el número de tareas o deberes que no terminamos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Increased conflict with in-laws or relatives</td>
<td>Aumento de conflictos con la familia política</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
English Final Survey Version 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOB ____________</th>
<th>Employed _______</th>
<th>Highest Grade Completed</th>
<th>In School ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can You Read ___</td>
<td>Can You Write ___</td>
<td>Area of Residence: La Puntilla, ___El Centro, <em><strong>La Guadera, ELVenado</strong></em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Are the services in this center beneficial to you?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Are your children receiving appropriate care?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the head of your household able to find adequate employment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is anyone in your home currently sick?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Has someone in your home been sick and were not able to receive appropriate medical care? (check for nurse or volunteers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Have you had enough money to buy your basic needs (food, water, clothes)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Has your family had access to clean water?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Have you witnessed physical violence in your family?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does the Turtle Committee work well?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Coping Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does anyone in your family suffer from emotional issues such as sadness, depression, aggressiveness or anger?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is anyone in your family alcohol or drug dependent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Are there arguments between parents and children in your home?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do the children in your home argue amongst themselves?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Has your family had problems or difficulties that they have not been able to resolve?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Are you content with the rules in your family?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Has there been infidelity in your family?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F
Final Spanish Survey Version 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fecha de Nacimiento</th>
<th>Empleado</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¿Cuál es el grado o nivel escolar más alto que ha completado?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿Puedes leer? ___ Puedes escribir? ___ Área de residencia: La Puntilla, ___ El Centro, ___ La Guadera, EL Venado ___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Esta trabajando bien el centro de salud? __________
2. Los niños están recibiendo una buena educación? __________
3. Puede siempre encontrar trabajo la cabeza del hogar? __________
4. Esta alguien enfermo en su casa? __________
5. Alguien en su casa se enfermo y no pudo recibir atención médica (revisar si hay enfermera o voluntarios)? __________
6. Ha tenido suficiente dinero para comprar sus necesidades básicas (comida, agua, ropa) (comida, agua, ropa)? __________
7. Tu familia ha tenido acceso a agua limpia? __________
8. Has visto violencia física en tu familia? __________
9. El comité de la Tortuga funciona bien? __________

**Family Coping Index**

| 10. Alguien en tu familia tiene problemas emocionales (tristeza, ira, depresión, agresividad) | Si | No | Se |
| 11. Alguien en tu familia depende del alcohol o drogas? | | | |
| 12. Hay discusiones entre padres e hijos en tu casa? | | | |
| 13. En tu familia los niños discuten entre ellos? | | | |
| 14. Han tenido algún problema o dificultad que no han podido solucionar? | | | |
| 15. Tienes problemas con tu familia política? | | | |
| 16. Ha habido infidelidad en tu familia? | | | |
APPENDIX G

Typical House