

STUDENT'S HANDOUT



Background Information

Honduras was the Central American country hardest hit by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. This natural disaster took some 6 000 lives and just as many disappeared. 70% of all crops were destroyed, not to mention all of the damage caused to homes, services and infrastructures. Today, Honduras and its population have not only recovered from this tragedy, but have begun a strong comeback thanks to an organized reconstruction program. However, two out of three people still live under the poverty line. *Source: CIDA (PROMESAS Program), IDRC (International Development Research Center), CARE*



Instructions

Read the following text and complete the activity suggested by your teacher.

Circumstances

In a small rural community in Honduras, village council members decided to ask for the support for a development program for a cooperative project. Several options are available: there are government financial assistance programs made possible thanks to international aid, and as well, several non-governmental organizations which are oriented towards development programs offer assistance. The council delegated David, the leader of the community, to meet with various representatives in Tegucigalpa to explore the options which are offered to the village.



Scene 1

Today, David is back from the capital city. He stayed there over a week to meet with various governmental representatives, and others from non-governmental Honduran organizations as well as others from various countries. The villagers can't wait to hear how the meetings went! David decided on a very interesting offer. He thus returned to the village to inform everyone of it. The council members were invited to a meeting at his place...

Characters

David, community leader Council Member

Strongly implicated in the development of his community, he is very attentive with the wellbeing of the village and its inhabitants. During his visit to the capital, he met with some municipal administrators. They told him that the government had obtained funds to finance rural projects. Here is how they proceeded: a commission in Tegucigalpa determine the exact needs for each community financed by the program. A delegation is then sent on site to install the necessary infrastructures.

David's village is very likely to receive financial assistance. However, nothing ensures that the needs determined by the commission will be the same as the one decided upon by the community.

David returns a little concerned because the program's decision making process implies very little participation on behalf of the villagers and it will be difficult to convince the council to accept such a proposal. Nonetheless, the community needs a better quality of life. A new project in the village, no matter what it is, should be welcome.

Alejandro, farmer Council Member

After Hurricane Mitch, Alejandro and its family lost all their crops. In order to prevent other large future losses, Alejandro decided to diversify his crops with more robust seedlings to hold tight during high winds and strong rains as well as using plants more resistant to heat waves. This way, the fruit of its efforts is not completely at the mercy the climate!

Alejandro is also concerned with the environment. One of his biggest concerns is the management of the country's natural resources because many city dwellers do not respect the environment and exploit it in an abusive way. They put the fragile ecosystem in danger. However, Alejandro knows well that the country has to export its resources so that the economy improves... but a cooperative... isn't it a better alternative which would make it possible for several families like his own to improve their quality of life?

Nicanor, the village elder Council Member

As the elder, Nicanor is respected by people and young members of the village. Nicanor has seen good and bad seasons throughout his life! He possesses a wealth of knowledge on many subjects and is an inexhaustible source of experience and wisdom.

We know quite well that because he is not very young any more that Nicanor would warily accept changes in the village. If he accepts any changes and new projects with opened arms, it is well because the villagers are not afraid to go and ask him for guidance. "This is the way things should happen!" Nicanor believes. Young people should take into account the council's knowledge and that of the elderly!

Anita, Village Water Management Board representative Council Member

A few years ago, Anita took part in a project for the improvement of quality and access to water. She remembers that during a few weeks, people from different places came and lived in the community. They organized meetings in which all of the villagers were invited to participate. During these meetings, Anita and her neighbors learned a lot about the importance and conservation of drinking water, on basic hygienic practices and the prevention of waterborne diseases.

A water management board was formed. As a member of this board, Anita received training in administrative practices, financial management, the operation and maintenance of water provisional systems, and the protection of small hydrographical areas. After which the specialists left, and the community now manages its own water supply system.

All the villagers that took part in this project enjoyed the experience because everyone contributed and took part. Everyone is very proud of this, Anita included. She now believes that the participation of each and everyone is essential for the success of a project.

Activity

In groups of four, act out the council meeting with each member of the group as a different character.

Questions:

- *Do the council members seem ready to accept the proposal that is offered to them?*

- *If not, why? Then what kind of offer would the council be ready to accept?*

- *If yes, is the decision unanimous? Who is reluctant about the proposal? Why?*



Scene 2

During his visit in Tegucigalpa, David met all the representatives that were referred to him except for one, a Canadian aid-worker living in Honduras. As she was working outside the city, the receptionist promised David that as soon as she was available, the aid-worker would go to his village.

A week after his return, the children of the village enthusiastically announced the arrival of a jeep. It was Stephanie, the aid-worker.

Stephanie, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) aid-worker

After the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, Canada became one of the countries to offer assistance to Honduras. However, non-coordinated help is like throwing seeds in the wind. In order to ensure sustainable projects, Canada makes a point of financing local initiatives, with the human and technical resources already available in the country. Canada also makes a point of ensuring that there is a dialogue between the government and representatives of the various Honduran groups, so that everyone agrees on the priorities with regards to the country's development.

Stephanie believes in the vision of international aid. This is why she lives in Honduras and works for the CIDA's PRO-MESAS project. She makes sure that Canadian aid to this country is channeled towards sustainable projects. This is why Stephanie has offered her expertise to the villagers. She came to encourage them in order to identify their own needs and to take part in the process of their project from start to finish. She will later to put them in contact with key people in Tegucigalpa who would be willing to support and finance them. The kind of assistance Stephanie offers favors and encourages participation of all the target groups of any given project. Above all, she supports LOCAL PARTICIPATION.

Activity

A fifth person plays the role of the aid-worker. Once again, act out the scene starting with the arrival of Stephanie

Questions:

- *Do the council members seem ready to accept the new proposal offered to them?*
- *If not, what is missing from the proposal so that the council will accept it?*
- *If yes, is the decision unanimous?*

How does the Canadian aid-worker's proposal differ from the first proposal? What are the advantages?

Personally, which offer would you have accepted? Why?

General informations

	Honduras	Canada
Capital	Tegucigalpa	Ottawa
Population (in millions of inhabitants)	7,1 (2004)	32,0 (2004)
Urban Population (%-2003)	46	80
Gross National Product (GNP) (per person)	\$970 US (2003)	\$23 930 US (2003)
Life expectancy at birth	48 years (1960) 69 years (2003)	71 years (1960) 79 years (2003)
Mortality rate for children under age 5 (per 1000 children)	204 (1960) 41 (2003)	33 (1960) 6 (2003)
Adult literacy rate (% 2000-2004)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Total	80	99
<input type="checkbox"/> Men	80	99
<input type="checkbox"/> Women	80	99
Population using treated drinking water (% 2002)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Total population	90	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban population	99	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural population	82	99
Source: CIDA		

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