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Honduras, Factor 17: Good Governance

The Hindering Government of Honduras

There are a lot of misunderstandings when it comes to comprehending how the government could play a role in the field of agriculture. However, agriculture plays a huge role in reducing poverty levels and securing local livelihoods. Good governance is not always about making the correct decisions but ensuring that the process of making those decisions is the best it can be. There are four pillars in which a government should be judged; accountability, transparency, the rule of law, and participation (IFAD). Each pillar is interlinking in some way or another, and each is crucial for supporting and maintaining an efficient government within a country. Institutions such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development are essential for empowering those in the lower classes and providing a supportive policy framework for those in developing countries. A robust and cooperative government will be the key to bringing countries out of desperate times and into the light of a new era which will hopefully bring low poverty levels and an end to hungry citizens.

Honduras is located in Central America, bordered by Guatemala to the west, the Pacific Ocean to the south, and the Caribbean Sea to the north. With a population of about 8,893,259 people, a typical family usually consists of multiple generations in one household, being that most young couples can not afford to move out. In rural Honduras, there is an average family size of seven with all persons sharing one room. They reside in rows of homes called *cuarterías*, and the alleyways serve as sewage and waste disposal area. Households typically lack running water and electricity which creates a messy living situation and poor health conditions (Compassion). Beans, corn, and eggs are the staple crops which make up meals that include the beans and handmade corn tortillas (Countries and Cultures). The meat most commonly consumed comes from a variety of animals and usually includes beef, pork, and chicken. 1.5 million people or 20% of the population faces hunger on a daily basis (Borgen Project). Only about 32 of every 100 children will finish primary school without repeating grades (Global Exchange). The Honduran Constitution states that children must have their education taken care of, but many continue into adulthood without knowing how to read and write. Due to being forced into the workforce at a young age to ensure a steady family income, children are not receiving a proper education.

The quality and access to healthcare are tied directly to the amount of income a family receives. Therefore, urban and rural healthcare is very rare and limited. Lack of available healthcare is evident in high malnutrition rates, and Honduras has the highest number of HIV/AIDS cases in Central America. More than half of the countries adults have no formal jobs. In urban areas, the average income from informal employment amounts to \$6 a day with half of the income having to be spent on food. Unemployment has increased to 7.30 percent in the last two years and is expected to decrease as the population and job competition rise continually. The most commonly found employment in the urban areas are coffee and banana farmers, bricklayers, and street sweepers. All jobs that cannot sustain a family of seven efficiently.

Little to no education and abusive lives at home force children to the streets of Honduras. In the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in gang-related violence. With a homicide rate of 142 for

every 100,000 people, San Pedro Sula is considered the world's most violent city (IN-sight crime). The gangs ignore all laws and are constantly in bloody battles for territory and drugs. The government has taken some but little action against protecting the citizens. First, the government passed the "Iron Fist" legislation which leads to thousands of arrests of suspected gang members. However, instead of slowing up the gang violence this only allowed them to consolidate their leadership within prison walls. The gangs run rampant on the streets, terrorizing people, commencing in massive killing sprees, and imposing street taxes which forces households to pay them for living within a territory.

Another issue that the government is turning a blind eye at is little to no sustainable agriculture and lack of readily available nutritional foods. Due to a lack of not knowing how to grow their food the agriculture and drought, nutritional levels are at an all-time low. Money earned by families must be spent on food that is not adequate in providing nutritional needs. Programs such as Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger, and food security initiative, focuses on interventions in targeted value chains intended to increase incomes and earning potential for households and individuals (USAID). Though the nutrition situation is improving, there is still need to teach people basic hygiene and install necessary plumbing necessities that will eliminate unsanitary water and disease-ridden water in the streets.

Honduras, a democratic constitutional republic, is controlled by a president who is the head of both the state and government. With very little economic freedom, poor education rates, through the roof poverty levels, little to no access to healthcare, and a very high violence rate, there's no wonder that many people consider the government of Honduras to be corrupt. Corrupt is defined in the dictionary as having or showing a willingness to act dishonestly in return for money or personal gain. Corruption is found in all sectors of society but particularly in each government institution. Foreign aid should make a slight shift in their goals towards these developing countries such, as Honduras, and turn to help and guide policymakers and political leaders of the country to create proper standards and incentives that will affect citizens and sustainable agriculture.

The Pilot Project for Strengthening Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture and Food Security in the Central District's primary goal are to increase the daily consumption of fruit and vegetables, which was estimated at 110 g per capita, by installing and maintaining community and family gardens (fao.org). By creating family gardens, the responsibility of growing and taking care of a small plot is dispersed among various members of the community. Growing food eliminates the needs to have to buy food, and the money can, therefore, be dispersed to other necessities such as running water or electricity. With 63% of people living below the poverty line, 800,000 citizens lack access to safe water, and 1.4 million do not have access to improved sanitation (water.org). Bringing clean water and proper sanitation will improve the health situation and allow for more people to attend jobs.

Corruption restricts millions of people on a daily basis of their simple human rights and fundamental freedoms. For a country to flourish and it's people to have adequate health care, proper nutrition, low poverty, and a safe atmosphere there need to be a vigorous and active government. The only way to end corruption in government and get citizens the help they need is by focusing on the areas that impact the future. Creating a foundation where everyone gets an education, people are aware of the issues at hand, and there is accountability on the part of the government. In order to achieve these fundamentals

organizations such as U.S Department of State, must address the citizen security through community based crime prevention activities, with a focus on the cities where crime is at it's highest and those youth which are most at risk.

Currently, there is not enough schools or staff available in the country to meet the mandatory education policy where each child can attend a fully functional school. By hiring adults and educating them on teaching, there are not only jobs being provided, but also a strong education system put into place. In these schools, children can learn how to grow their food and maintain a garden properly, so in the future, they do not have to go hungry and provide not only for themselves but their families as well.

Organizations such as Compassion International are working throughout the cities in Honduras to formulate budgets and plans to build more schools and train staff members in that tutor and are mentors to these children. In giving education to future generations, integrity is being created. Integrity will develop skills among that will ensure strong leaders in the future and eliminate the chance of the country falling back into its old habits.

Sustainable agriculture will be necessary to support the growing population. By teaching families and future generations how to grow their food and how to care for plants in extreme situations such as drought, they are better able to care for their families and expand the knowledge to other countries in need of food. The food they grow will provide healthy options and proper nutrition which will bring down the high percent of malnourished children. The most commonly grown and exported crops are bananas, coffee, corn, sorghum, beans, and rice. However, only a small percentage of citizens have access and know how to adequately care for these crops. Installing community gardens, hydroponic systems, water wells, and small fields and informing people how to maintain them and educate others will also provide more jobs and readily available food sources.

The U.S and other foreign countries are aiding Honduras by providing comprehensive and a robust partnership which provides economic opportunities to the country's people and create more accountable, transparent, and effective public institutions. Ensuring a safe environment will encourage more citizens to be active members in the community and allow for more participation among members of the community. By giving the citizens an understanding of their government and how they can stand up for their own human rights, action will be taken to hold the government accountable.

USAID programs in the country of Honduras are increasing food security, supporting renewable energy and environmental conservation, expanding basic education and training for at risk youth, and enhance citizen access to quality public education and health services by improving the performance of local governments, authorities, and civil society. Each area crucial in stabilizing the government of Honduras and providing a safe environment for future generations.

It's crucial that developing countries have enough funds to get out of the pit of poverty. Foreign aid is one of the main sources of help. Some of the richest countries in the world; United States, Western and Northern Europe, Canada, Australia, and Japan have met under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) to make concrete efforts towards putting 0.7% of their gross national product towards these struggling countries (povertyeducation.org). This money would go towards tools, fertilizers, drought

resistant seeds, bed nets for Malaria prevention, treatments to diseases such as AIDS/HIV, new rain water technology, and much more. These tools and technology would send the country into a prosperity cycle and ensure their economy growth due to other countries being more interested in providing more aid. Both Taiwan and South Korea saw massive growth back in the 1960's because of the theory of the prosperity cycle.

In a globalized economy corruption increasingly has a borderline dimension. The key to a strong government is a strong framework. The UN Convention Against Corruption Recently, the UNCAC had proved to be a reliable source of global framework which involves both developed and developing nations. Their main focuses are very broad and include issues such as domestic and foreign corruption, extortion, preventive measures, anti-money laundering provisions, conflict of interest laws, means to recover illicit funds deposited by officials in offshore banks, among others. A vast majority of the United Nation members are present during this convention. The convention focuses mainly on five areas; preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance and information exchange. Each area is crucial in either preventing or escalating the issue of corruption.

Times are tough all over the world but in order to begin climbing that ladder of development, it's important that citizens realize the importance of foreign aid and why it's necessary. It's difficult to see the value in helping another country when your own country is struggling. Education on the subject of the matter is detrimental to understanding why foreign aid is a key component to a better world. By realizing the true value through educating citizens on the importance of imports and exports, possible partnerships, new technology, and a wide array of cultures within these developing countries there will hopefully be a new openness to supporting these foreign poverty stricken countries. By providing developing countries with sufficient funds to build a foundation to relieving poverty, there is a diplomatic relationship being developed between the donor and recipient. A chain reaction would occur where the newly developed country would then work towards funding another country. With time, funds, and cooperation on multiple countries parts, help for these developing countries is possible and would provide a brighter future for years to come.

The time has come for the country's leaders and inhabitants to think and act differently concerning agriculture in all countries. The government and its role in dealing with agricultural governance need to be strengthened. Ensuring high market dynamics, improving macroeconomic policies and ensuring that agriculture policies are reinforced to compliment the needs of citizens are critical to ensuring that partnerships are stronger and more responsive to the emerging challenges of national and global agricultural scenarios. The world is in drastic need of improvement as the population continues to rise. Agricultural education and government cooperation in addressing these issues are going to be crucial to bring the country out of poverty and hunger and help others understand all the components that go into changing not only one country but the entire world. The time for change, is now.

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