

# Who's Developing Rural Paradise?

## Multiple perspectives and experiences from community leaders and national agencies

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### Cross-team social science collaboration

Renée Hill- Team Turri  
Irene Shaver- Team Bala

### Objectives

1. Understand larger context of rural development and community organization in study regions
2. Investigate multi-scale interactions between community organizations and national agencies



### Two Study Regions

Heredia Province – Sarapiquí Canton  
Cartago Province – Turrialba & Jiménez Cantons



### Situating Costa Rica within global rural development trends

Neoliberal Reform  
Decentralization  
Decrease in State Investment  
Liberalization of agricultural sector



### Project Design

#### Government Agencies:

10 interviews

Main Topics: Development goals, community needs, agency activities and responses



#### Community Development Organizations:

4 workshops (2 in each study region)  
45 community leaders

Participatory mapping: Shared History & Future Visions



*Paternalism still exists, communities continue to wait for things to be given to them, they are not self-sufficient to generate development. This doesn't happen, but it would be ideal to form more leaders that are self-sufficient to generate development in their communities. They don't take advantage of local resources, they don't search for them or know about them.*

- National Agency for Community Development



*Community development for me is a group of people that fight to achieve better things in their community, to be better off. And that's why it has to be done together, it has to be a group that joins forces and knocks on doors to obtain resources, from basic necessities to the most technological. For me this is community development. This is the fight, this is desire, this is development.*

- National Agency for Community Development

### Community Organization

*The public institutions are designed in such a way and there are so many laws here that don't allow them to do anything... so much control that doesn't allow us to do absolutely anything. Here the bureaucracy is a monstrous ghost, and there are too many laws that don't allow us to work. There is so much control that in the end it is not efficient control.*

- Agrarian Development Agency

*Producers have to modernize, look for profitable alternatives for production and commercialization, such as export crops, but without leaving behind food security.*

- Agrarian Development Agency

### Preliminary Analysis

Who is responsible for rural development?  
What factors influence rural development?

*Community development used to be easier. Communities can develop on their own without the government, but the government puts so many hurdles for communities to develop alone. In this moment the government isn't giving communities support or permission to develop alone.*

- Community Leader

*Agriculture has been abandoned because the government lacks a clear policy to support agricultural producers.*

- Community Leader

*State policies definitely need to change to create incentives for small and medium producers... without incentives like access to credit, training and markets the small and medium producers tend to disappear. And the whole process of rural development that the government has invested in over the years could be reversed... So it is important in the short- and medium-term to provide incentives for small and medium producers.*

-Agrarian Development Agency

### Bureaucracy

### Agricultural Change

### Next Steps

1. Data analysis continued
2. Write and deliver report of findings and interpretations to all participants
4. Manuscript as shared chapter of dissertation