The Freedom to Choose:

Sustainable livelihoods and (im)mobility decisions among youth in rural Honduras

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Public Health and Health Systems

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2020

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Author’s declaration

This thesis consists of material all of which I authored or co-authored: see Statement of Contributions included in the thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Statement of contributions

I, Sara Wyngaarden, authored Chapters 1, 2, and 5 of this thesis under the supervision of Dr. Warren Dodd. These chapters were not written for publication. Chapters 3 and 4 consist of two manuscripts written for publication. Co-authors contributed to the preparation of these manuscripts as described below:

Research presented in Chapter 3

Dr. Warren Dodd (University of Waterloo) and Dr. Sally Humphries (University of Guelph) were the co-principal investigators (co-PIs) on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Engage Grant (PEG) that funded an initial phase of research, which was conducted between May and October, 2018 in Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro in Honduras. *La Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; Spanish acronym: FIPAH) was listed as a partner on this grant.

Co-authors Veronica Zelaya Portillo and Paola Orellana are the regional directors for FIPAH's programming in the two study locations (Zelaya Portillo in Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Orellana in Yorito, Yoro). They served as members of the original research team, contributing to study design, facilitating participant recruitment, and overseeing data collection in their respective locations. They also represented FIPAH's organizational priorities and local expertise throughout study design and implementation, as well as data analysis and interpretation.

Youth leaders from the study communities served as members of the research team, including co-author Esmeralda Lobo Tosta and Carlos Rodriguez from Jesús de Otoro, as well as Sergio Ramírez and Jerman Filander Hernandez from Yorito. These youth represented the perspectives and priorities of rural youth throughout study design and implementation. They were trained in data collection techniques by the co-PIs and they proceeded to recruit participants and completed the data collection under the supervision of Zelaya Portillo and Orellana. Lobo Tosta also completed phase 1 transcriptions from Jesús de Otoro and contributed to preliminary data analysis by providing interpretive insight from the perspective of a local young person. Transcriptions from Yorito were completed by a FIPAH staff member.

Research presented in Chapter 4

I designed the study questions and materials for a second phase of research, which was conducted between September and November, 2019 in the two study locations. I defended this research proposal to Dr. Warren Dodd, Dr. Sally Humphries, and Dr. Kelly Skinner (University of Waterloo) and shared the successful proposal with FIPAH staff members in June 2019. FIPAH's leadership team contributed to further refining the study design. Zelaya Portillo and Orellana facilitated study execution. Lobo Tosta served as my research assistant. We co-facilitated all interviews and focus groups in the two study locations. Lobo Tosta completed transcriptions with assistance from Maria Jose Ponce and Jessenia Bauman Espinoza.

Data analysis for both manuscripts

I completed coding and analysis of all data under the supervision of Dr. Warren Dodd. Zelaya Portillo, Orellana, and Lobo Tosta acted as consultants to clarify locally-specific content and to help interpret the research findings. Dr. Sally Humphries supported the accuracy of translation for quotations embedded in the texts. I wrote the manuscripts, with intellectual input, guidance, and feedback from Drs. Warren Dodd, Sally Humphries, and Kelly Skinner.

Abstract

Background: Youth living in remote communities of Honduras face considerable barriers to establishing sustainable livelihoods, with implications for their well-being. In response to these barriers, many rural youth migrate internally or internationally. Existing literature provides meaningful insight into how livelihood instability in Honduras shapes the *push* and *pull factors* for migration; however, there is limited understanding of how rural youth navigate their livelihood options and (im)mobility decisions.

Objectives: The purpose of this thesis is to explore livelihood opportunities, aspirations, and choices among youth from two rural municipalities of Honduras. These topics are investigated through 1) an evaluation of youth-targeted programming offered by one Honduran non-governmental organization (*La Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras*: FIPAH); and 2) an exploration of the factors influencing (im)mobility choices among youth respondents, including an examination of FIPAH's role in these decisions.

Methods: Using participatory methods, demographic information was collected on 1596 former participants in FIPAH's youth programming, and qualitative interviews were conducted with 94 current and former participants. These data were analyzed through a realist lens to inform the findings from a participatory impact evaluation of FIPAH's program. In-depth, follow-up interviews were conducted with 32 youth to further examine livelihood aspirations and choices. (Im)mobility outcomes were analyzed using the aspiration-capability framework. Findings were interpreted with insights from the Capabilities Approach to development.

Results: FIPAH provided an enabling environment for capability expansion among rural youth by fostering an inclusive space in which youth broke down gender divisions and built solidarity. Youth developed skills in teamwork and leadership by jointly contributing toward community development initiatives. Youth also identified personal and professional interests by actively engaging in the diverse activities made available through the program. Youth who were practicing immobility described how taking advantage of FIPAH's program, alongside other rural opportunities, facilitated their capabilities to stay in rural areas. They positioned themselves

as agents of their immobility decisions, creatively navigating rural livelihood options in order to establish lives that they considered valuable and dignified.

Conclusion: This study provides insight into both structural- and individual-level factors shaping livelihood opportunities, aspirations, and choices among youth from remote areas of Honduras. The evaluation findings illustrate effective youth programming strategies in low resource settings, and contribute to the literature on positive approaches to youth development. Explanations of participants' (im)mobility decisions inform an understanding of migration flows in and from Honduras and contribute to the literature on immobility preferences and practices. Overall, this thesis reveals various factors affecting the well-being of rural youth in Honduras and can be used to support their flourishing.

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible through a large network of mentors, colleagues, friends, and family members. I am deeply grateful to each one.

First and foremost, I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Warren Dodd. You have always shown confidence in my abilities and have seen potential within me before I could envision it myself. I have benefitted significantly from your gifts in mentorship, as you pushed me to take ownership of my work and to think deeply about the topics with which I have engaged. You have been gracious, kind, and encouraging at all the right moments, and have continuously set an example of high quality community-engaged scholarship in the midst of leisure and rest. Thank you for fostering an environment in which I could flourish. It has been such a privilege to work with you.

Thanks to my committee members, Dr. Kelly Skinner and Dr. Sally Humphries, for investing in me as a student and making such thoughtful contributions to my work. Kelly, your insights on program evaluation have been particularly formative in enriching this thesis and guiding my next steps. Sally, your deep love for FIPAH, and for the communities in which they work, has been contagious. I think back fondly on the hours we spent in that little café (with the real milk!) where you regaled me with stories of your work in Honduras. Thank you for inviting me into partnerships that are so close to your heart. Thanks also for your confidence in me and your excitement toward my findings. I am more than honoured to be one of your "grandstudents".

Gracias a FIPAH por darme la bienvenida a su equipo y por invitarme a las comunidades que tanto se preocupan. Gracias por enseñarme su enfoque en apoyar el desarrollo de estas zonas rurales. Gracias por compartir sus conocimientos sobre las investigaciones, por facilitar la recopilación de datos, y por ayudarme interpretar los resultados. Estoy muy agradecida por su paciencia, gracia, y apoyo por todo este proceso, y me siento muy bendecida de haber tenido la oportunidad de trabajar con ustedes. Gracias también a mi asistente de investigación, Esmeralda, por trabajar tan fuerte conmigo. ¡Creo que nunca hayas tenido que digitar tanto, y espero que nunca tengas que hacerlo otra vez! Gracias por acompañarme en tantas aventuras de investigación y por traducir mi español roto (¡es increíble que siempre pudiste entenderme!) Más que todo, estoy muy agradecida por tu amistad durante los meses de investigación.

I am grateful for the financial support that facilitated this work. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) provided a Partnership Engage Grant (phase one), as well as a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canadian Graduate Scholarship and a Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement (phase two). The University of Waterloo also supported this work through a Provost Graduate Scholarship, David Johnston International Experience Award, President's Graduate Scholarship, and the Jean and William Leach Memorial Scholarship.

I am blessed with a strong network of family members, friends, and colleagues who have journeyed with me throughout this process. *Gracias a mi familia hondureña. A los chiquitos por su compañerismo con muchos jueguitos, tonterías, y sonrisas. A Omar por compartir sus experiencias con la migración, por contarme los detalles de la agricultura en Otoro, y por enseñarme las palabras Hondureñas. (¡Gracias a Dios que Ángela pudo traducir esas palabras a una forma de español que pudiera entender!) Gracias a usted, Ángela, por su deliciosa comida, por su paciencia con mi español, y por su preciosa amistad. Más que todo, gracias a ustedes por compartir tan generosamente su hogar y su amor. Siempre están en mi corazón.*

I am grateful to various friends, colleagues, and family members for providing space for me to process ideas while also reminding me to engage joyfully with the world outside my thesis. Special thanks to Ellen, for the conversation that led me to apply to this program; Mika, for talking me through my thesis proposal; *Harvey, por enseñarme tanto español;* Eduard, for lifting my spirits during fieldwork and analysis; and the Bauman-Ogilvie family for supporting my language development. Thanks to Rick, Erin, Coda, and Valla for being family to me during the first wave of COVID, and Vanessa, for keeping me fed, fit, and focused during the second wave. Thanks also to Ang, Kathy, and Michelle, for ongoing discussions about the joys and challenges of qualitative research. And of course, thanks to my parents, brothers, and grandmother for your endless love, prayer, encouragement, and support. I can always count on you to troop along with my adventures, to give me honest feedback, and to celebrate my every success.

Finalmente, gracias a Dios por la oportunidad y la capacidad de realizar este trabajo. Gracias por apoyarme, sostenerme y madurarme en todas las circunstancias.

Dedication

A los jóvenes de las zonas rurales de Honduras: con la esperanza de que puedan desarrollar sus capacidades, realizar sus aspiraciones, y prosperar en los medios de sustento que valoran.

To the youth from rural areas of Honduras: with the hope that you can develop your capabilities, realize your aspirations, and flourish in the livelihoods that you value.

Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá, Honduras

November, 2019

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List of abbreviations

ACJ	*Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes* (Association of Christian Youth)
CA	Capabilities Approach
CADERH	*Centro Asesor de Desarrollo de Recursos Humanos* (Advisory Center for Human Resource Development)
CDF	*Con Derecho a un Futuro* (With the Right to a Future)
CF	Choice Framework
CIAL	*Comités de Investigación Agrícola Local* (Local Agricultural Research Committees)
CIAT	*Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical* (International Center for Tropical Agriculture)
DION	*Centro Juvenil Dion* (A branch of the Youth Center)
FIPAH	*Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers)
FORPRIDEH	*Federación de Organizaciones Para el Desarrollo de Honduras* (Federation of Organizations for the Development of Honduras)
HDA	Human Development Approach
HDCA	Human Development and Capabilities Approach
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
NGO	Non-governmental organization
P-PE	Practical Participatory Evaluation
PYD	Positive Youth Development
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USC Canada	Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (now SeedChange)

"Development is indeed a momentous engagement with freedom's possibilities."

Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom*, 1999, p 297

View from Los Higueros, Yorito, Yoro, Honduras.
November, 2019

Chapter 1: Introduction

Rural livelihoods and global health

In October 2018, hundreds of Hondurans left their homes and began walking toward the U.S.-Mexico border. Joined by migrants from El Salvador and Guatemala, *La Caravana* soon became the largest Central American migrant caravan in decades, with thousands of asylum-seekers making the journey (Semple, 2018; Sieff & Partlow, 2018). This "migrant crisis" highlighted the transnational implications of distress migration[1] driven by social, economic, political, and environmental instability in the Northern Triangle (Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala) (Campanella, 2019; Jervis et al., 2019; Lind, 2019). Thus, the caravan drew international attention to key determinants of health and well-being among populations in this region who are experiencing marginalization. The Trump administration responded by placing sanctions on the Northern Triangle, withdrawing millions of dollars of foreign aid, closing numerous long-term rural development projects implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and cracking down on undocumented migration at the U.S.-Mexico border (Meyer, 2020; Ortagus, 2019). These economic and political repercussions have had implications on rural development capacity in the region. With the COVID-19 pandemic further intensifying livelihood instability and health inequities, rural communities in the Northern Triangle are left in particularly precarious situations (Meyer, 2020).

According to Koplan et al. (2009), global health "focuses on issues that directly or indirectly affect health, but that can transcend national boundaries" (p. 1994) and "places a priority on improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide" (p. 1995). In light of these definitions and the situation described above, livelihood instability in rural areas of the Northern Triangle can be considered a significant global health issue. As a result, research that explores livelihood opportunities in rural areas, and livelihood decision-making among rural populations, should be considered a global health priority.

[1] Distress migration has been defined as, "movements from the usual place of residence, undertaken when the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options open to them to survive with dignity, except to migrate." (Mander & Sahgal, 2012, p. 2)

This thesis examines livelihood opportunities, aspirations, and choices among youth from two rural municipalities of Honduras. Focusing primarily on the lived experiences of study participants, I provide detailed insight into structural- and individual-level factors that influence livelihood decision-making among these youth. Livelihoods are predominantly explored in relation to educational pursuits, career choices, and migration decisions. I specifically examine the influence of one youth-targeted rural development program implemented by a Honduran non-governmental organization (introduced below under "Research partnership") on the livelihood decisions of study participants. Using the Capabilities Approach to development, I discuss participants' decision-making outcomes through the lenses of human development, aspirations and capabilities, freedom of choice, personal and societal values, and the pursuit of health and well-being. In this introductory chapter, I provide background information on youth in the context of international development, explain the foundational components of the Capabilities Approach, review factors contributing to livelihood instability for rural youth in Honduras, and describe the study objectives in detail.

International development and youth well-being

The well-being of youth has long been highlighted as an international development priority. In 1965, the United Nations (UN) published the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect, and Understanding between Peoples, emphasizing a commitment to high quality educational opportunities that endorse equal rights, moral virtues, and opportunities for self-determination among youth (UN, 1965). The UN also dubbed 1985 to be "International Youth Year", calling for the inclusion of youth in international development and peace-building efforts (UN, 1979). In 2006, the World Bank emphasized the societal benefits of investing in young people through a World Development Report entitled "Development and the next generation" (World Bank, 2006). More recently, youth leaders were involved in establishing youth-specific targets for the Sustainable Development Goals spanning 2015-2030 (UN, 2015). In and through these youth-centered initiatives, the unique characteristics and developmental needs of this demographic have been acknowledged by international development organizations.

In spite of documented attention toward this demographic, there is controversy around the characterization of *youth* and a common definition has continuously eluded researchers and

practitioners (UN, 2020). Adolescence is generally understood to refer to the second decade of life (Lerner, Brindis, Batanova, & Blum, 2018), and common characteristics of this life stage have been observed across countries and cultures (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). However, *youth* is often understood to extend beyond adolescence into the third decade of life and there are many overlapping definitions of the term. For example, while the World Health Organization defines *adolescents* as individuals between the ages of 10 and 19 years (WHO, 2014), the UN categorizes *youth* as being between 15 and 24 years (UN, 2020). Some organizations group these categories together, referring to ages 10-24 as *young people*, while others consider adolescence to begin at age 12, and still others extend youth to age thirty and beyond (WHO, 2014).

In the development psychology literature, Jeffrey Arnett's seminal work on *emerging adulthood* is commonly used to characterize the life stage following adolescence. Arnett observed that youth between the ages of 18 and 30 from high income countries experienced a unique period of exploring identity, career, love, and worldview (Arnett, 2000). He argued that the diverse demographic characteristics within this group set them apart from both younger and older demographics, thus constituting a distinct life stage (Arnett, 2000, 2006, 2007). Researchers have observed this phenomenon in lower income countries as well; however, in these contexts, it appears most prominently in the upper middle class in more urbanized areas (Dutra-Thome & Koller, 2014; Fuligni, 2007; Galambos & Martínez, 2007). As such, Arnett's theory has been criticized for its limited transferability across cultures and socio-economic contexts (Hendry & Kloep, 2007). More specifically, the concept has been characterized as a description of developmental luxuries afforded to certain privileged groups, rather than a reflection of general patterns in psychological development among young people (Hendry & Kloep, 2007). Indeed, in low resource settings young people tend to bear more household and employment responsibilities, and therefore have less opportunity than their higher-resourced peers to devote time and attention to self-actualization (Blum & Boyden, 2018).

Ambiguity in the definition and characterization of *youth* creates practical complexities in targeting development interventions that specifically support the well-being of young people in low resource settings. The overlapping definitions noted above encompass significant disparities in the biological traits, demographic norms, cultural customs, socio-economic privileges, and

subjective identities that can characterize this cohort. In international development practice, subsets of youth have often been categorized with children or adults. For example, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child classifies all individuals below the age of 18 as *children*, thus including most adolescents in this broad, younger category (UN, 1959). Meanwhile, individuals above 18 are often classified as *adults*, even though the self-perceptions of emerging adults may differ significantly from this label (Arnett, 2000). Beyond age-based categories, youth may be grouped with children or adults based on their life experiences: an adolescent student may be categorized as a child, while a migrant worker or young mother may be categorized as adults, despite being of the same age. Arbitrary categorization of *youth* risks overlooking the unique developmental traits and needs of this demographic, with the implication that youth may be underserved by development interventions.

As the global population of young people expands, particularly in low resource settings, the need for high quality, youth-targeted development interventions has never been more important. In 2019, there were 1.2 billion youth in the world, representing 16% of the global population (UNDESA, 2019). Approximately 90% of these youth were living in low- and middle-income countries (Blum & Boyden, 2018). While low resource settings may have limited capacity to invest in youth-specific programming, these communities also stand to benefit significantly from developmentally-appropriate formative growth among young people. Therefore, high quality interventions that support the personal development and capability expansion of youth in low resource settings can be seen as a meaningful investment in both present and future societies.

The Capabilities Approach to development

Through Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach (CA), the success of a development intervention is evaluated by the degree to which the intervention expands the freedom that people experience to pursue and achieve well-being (Sen, 1999). In other words, *freedom of choice* is the primary objective of development processes, with well-being as the desirable secondary outcome (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010). In the context of this theoretical framework, all possible human activities and states of being ("doings and beings") are referred to as human "functionings" (Sen, 1999). Well-being is associated with the achievement of functionings that people have reason to value, such as being well-nourished, being educated, having gainful employment, managing

mobility opportunities, exercising democratic rights, developing positive relationships, and participating in community life (Sen, 1999, 2003).

Sen recognized that individuals may experience barriers to achieving desirable human functionings based on their personal characteristics, the resources available to them, and the structures or institutions that they navigate (Kleine, 2010; Sen, 1999). Sen referred to these barriers as "unfreedoms" and used the term "capabilities" to describe the human functionings that people are actually able to achieve within their social, environmental, economic, and political contexts (Sen, 1999). Sen argued that development interventions should focus on "the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity" (Sen, 1999, pg xii) and should expand peoples' capabilities to achieve positive functionings (Sen, 1999). In other words, according to the CA, development should expand the real freedoms that people enjoy to "[exercise] their reasoned agency" (Sen, 1999, pg xii) regarding the types of lives they want to live. Sen provided the caveat that the options available to people should be of a quality that they have reason to value, and not merely in a quantity that can "bemuse and befuddle, and make one's life more wretched" (Sen, 1992, p. 59).

The CA can be contrasted with definitions of development that focus on economic growth and income per capita (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999; UNDP, 2020). While Sen acknowledged the important roles of household income and national economic growth in development processes, he characterized economics as a *means to*, rather than an *end of*, development (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010). Sen recognized that governing bodies and institutions bear responsibility for facilitating structures and enabling environments that expand real freedoms, while individuals themselves bear responsibility for exercising their agency in light of the freedoms and opportunities available to them (Sen, 1999).

The CA has been refined and expanded throughout the years (see Alkire, 2002, 2005; Deneulin & Shahani, 2008; Robeyns, 2005; Stewart, 2013, 2019). Most notably, Martha Nussbaum is considered a co-developer of the CA, forwarding key concepts related to *internal* and *combined* capabilities and formulating a list of ten *threshold* capabilities that she argued should be afforded

to all people[2] (Nussbaum, 1997, 2003, 2011). Nussbaum emphasizes the importance of *human dignity* in her iteration of the CA, arguing that public policy should be evaluated by the degree to which it protects and promotes a dignified life (Nussbaum, 2011).

The CA is highly relevant in the field of global health. Sen's community-based, person-centered approach to supporting human flourishing parallels the "population-based prevention" and "individual-level […] care" (Koplan et al., 2009, p. 1995) that health researchers and practitioners prioritize in their work. Nussbaum's policy-level perspective on Sen's community-based ideas (Preibisch, Dodd, & Su, 2016) aligns with the system-thinking associated with global health research and practice. Indeed, the CA has been applied to the field of global health by numerous scholars (Alkire & Chen, 2004; Ndomoto et al., 2018; Ruger, 2008; Venkatapuram, 2011) and continues to provide a useful and appropriate theory to support global health research.

Another key application of the CA in the context of this thesis is its association with the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Development Approach (HDA). The HDI endeavours to measure human development holistically by combining assessments of economic prosperity with measures of education and health (UNDP, 2020). The HDA promotes human flourishing at all ages and in all settings, focusing on the opportunities that people experience to choose a decent standard of living, to access knowledge, and to enjoy a long and healthy life (UNDP, 2020). These concepts have such substantive overlap with the CA that the terms are often used interchangeably, or in tandem (as in, the Human Development and Capabilities Approach, or the HDCA) (Nussbaum, 2011). The HDCA does not conceptualize high quality formative development as a luxury afforded to certain privileged groups. Instead, youth-targeted development interventions that align with this framework consider the unique characteristics and developmental needs of their target demographic as an important priority for supporting their well-being, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances.

Other applications of the CA that are relevant to this thesis include its connections with the literature on sustainable livelihoods and empowerment theory (Kleine, 2010, 2011; Kleine,

[2] Nussbaum's ten threshold capabilities include: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over one's environment. They are described in greater detail in her book *Creating Capabilities* (Nussbaum, 2011).

Light, & Montero, 2012), as well as migration and mobility studies (de Haas, 2003, 2010; Schewel, 2020). Certainly, humans have reason to value the opportunity to establish a sustainable livelihood. Therefore, expanding their capabilities to do so is an important goal of development interventions. Furthermore, humans have reason to value having some degree of agency over their mobility decisions, whether aspiring to move or to remain in place. Therefore, addressing factors that contribute to undue forms of involuntary mobility (e.g. distress migration) or immobility (e.g. inadequate resources to pursue alternative livelihood trajectories) are reasonable objectives of development endeavours. Finally, since the CA emphasizes agency and choice, effectively empowering the target demographic for a development intervention is critical to the efficacy of CA-based development. Overall, applying a CA lens to the lived experiences of youth in low resource, rural communities provides an opportunity to investigate how well-being can be actualized when navigating livelihood options in highly unstable environments.

Livelihood instability and migration: evidence of *unfreedoms* in Honduras

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Approximately 48% of its 9.6 million people live below the national poverty line and 16.5% survive on less than $1.90 per day (UNDP, 2019c; World Bank, 2018c, 2018b). Although, in recent years, Honduras has shown some of Latin America's highest economic growth rates (World Bank, 2020), this lower-middle-income country also exhibits high inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 52.1 (World Bank, 2018a). The poorest 40% of the population holds merely 11% of the wealth while the richest 10% hold nearly 38% of the wealth, demonstrating that economic prosperity has not been dispersed equitably across the population (UNDP, 2019c). Neoliberal policies, such as the privatization of natural resource management, are said to be widening this gap (Shipley, 2016), and a lack of economic resources and employment opportunities continue to drive both internal and international migration (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Petrozziello, 2011).

Livelihood instability is exacerbated by high rates of crime, including drug trafficking and gang-related violence. With 39 intentional homicides per 100,000 people in 2018, Honduras bears one of the highest homicide rates in the world, excluding areas of armed conflict (World Bank, 2017). Crime and violence are experienced differentially across geographic areas and demographics (Berg & Carranza, 2018; Eguizabal et al., 2015). For example, when homicide rates peaked at 90.4 per 100,000 people in 2012, researchers found that 65% of these deaths had

occurred in only 5% of urban municipalities, with young men as the predominant perpetrators and victims (UNAH-IUDPAS, 2014 in Berg & Carranza, 2015). Still, the social insecurity associated with criminal activity is felt throughout the country, with fear and uncertainty acting as barriers to social cohesion, trust, and social stability (Berg & Carranza, 2015; Brenneman, 2014; Hansen-Nord et al., 2014). Insecurity associated with widespread crime and violence is another major driver of outmigration (CIPPDV, 2015; Quijada & Sierra, 2018), and may act as a deterrent for rural-to-urban migration within Honduras (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020). Critics argue that the government's zero tolerance policies, first instituted in 2003, have failed to reduce organized crime sustainably, instead perpetuating a "culture of violence" (Cruz, 2011, p. 5) and further aggravating social instability (Brenneman, 2014; Bruneau, 2014; Gutiérrez Rivera, 2010).

Of particular concern is the increasing reach of gang violence and criminal activity into rural communities (Williams & Castellanos, 2020), where issues like poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation threaten livelihood stability. In remote communities, the primary career option is small-scale, low-resource, hillside farming (Díaz-Ambrona, Gigena, & Mendoza, 2013; Jansen, Pender, Damon, & Schipper, 2006). The Honduran hillsides cover approximately 80% of the country's land mass, but they offer marginal land where risk of erosion is high and crop productivity is low (Jansen et al., 2006). Rural households commonly practice livelihood diversification to boost household income and mitigate economic shocks (Bernard, Rowe, Bell, Ueffing, & Charles-Edwards, 2017; Nygren & Myatt-Hirvonen, 2009a), and yet, more than 60% of the rural population lives in poverty (World Bank, 2020). Food insecurity is widespread, with an acute 'hungry' or 'lean' season, known as *los junios,* experienced by many in the latter part of the growing season (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2015; Keller, Natalia, Bizikova, Rivera, & Murillo, 2018). Food insecurity and low household income are aggravated by environmental instability, as climate change and extreme weather events – such as droughts, erratic rainfall, and hurricanes – put increasing pressure on already precarious agricultural systems (Díaz-Ambrona et al., 2013; Harvey et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2018). With these factors at play, both internal and international migration are common aspirations and practices among rural Hondurans (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Quijada & Sierra, 2018; WFP, 2017).

Social inequalities in rural Honduran communities exacerbate the vulnerabilities experienced by women, children, and youth. Studies show that nutritional inadequacies particularly impact Honduran women and children, and researchers point to low female empowerment as a key factor in this outcome (Ben-Davies, Kinlaw, del Campo, Bentley, & Siega-riz, 2013; Keller et al., 2018; Larson, Castellanos, & Jensen, 2019). Indeed, rural Honduran populations are known for a stronger adherence to traditional gender roles than their counterparts in neighbouring countries (Ortega Hegg, Centeno Orozco, & Castillo Venerio, 2005). Many women lack decision-making power in their households and communities, and low female empowerment is perpetuated by a culture of *machismo* (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017; Humphries et al., 2012). This exaggerated form of masculinity emerges from an ideology that men are the biologically dominant sex and therefore have a right to ultimate authority in the household (Humphries et al., 2012; Ortega Hegg et al., 2005). *Machismo* is associated with aggressive assertions of male dominance, including the use of violence toward family members (Murphy-Graham, 2009; Ortega Hegg et al., 2005). Indeed, studies have highlighted excessive gender-based violence in Honduras (Jokela-Pansini, 2016; Menjívar & Walsh, 2017), including some of the highest rates of femicide in the world (Larson et al., 2019). Based on qualitative work by Petrozziello (2011), migration is used by some rural Honduran women as a means to escape violence, experience greater freedom of movement, gain financial independence, and to generally claim more power and control over their lives.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights argues that high rates of poverty, inequality, and insecurity in Honduras have been key factors driving not just migration, but also more than a decade of widespread civil unrest (OHCHR, 2017). The 2009 arrest and exile of President Manuel Zelaya, carried out by military personnel under order from the Honduran Supreme Court of Justice, interrupted 27 years of constitutional democratic rule in Honduras (Meyer, 2010; Walsh, 2010). Widely disputed and condemned, this act heightened existing tensions between civilians and their government (Jokela-Pansini, 2016; Meyer, 2010). Since the ouster, protesters have been calling on their government to address issues such as corruption, crime and impunity, environmental degradation, women's rights, unequal access to education for children and youth, insufficient market access for smallholder farmers, and inequitable healthcare access for all demographics (Jokela-Pansini, 2016). Human rights groups have

reported ongoing violations by government actors toward activists and civilians, including the use of excessive force by security personnel against demonstrators, arbitrary detention of civilian protesters, and intimidation of journalists and activists (OHCHR, 2017; Scholey, 2019).

Civil unrest has been particularly pronounced since the re-election of President Juan Orlando Hernández in 2017 through what was widely considered a rigged electoral process (OAS, 2017; The Economist, December 9, 2017). An eruption of protests across the country led the Hernández administration to declare a state of emergency prior to the President's inauguration, during which they enforced a 10-day curfew (OAS, 2017; OHCHR, 2017). The President's second term in office has been permeated by scandals, including the 2019 trial and conviction of his brother, Juan Antonio Hernández, in a U.S. court on a series of drug trafficking offenses (Palmer & Malkin, 2019). Although the President has not been officially implicated in these crimes, suspicions around his knowledge of and involvement in criminal activities have reignited nationwide protests calling for the President's resignation (Cuevas, 2019). Studies indicate a notable increase in outmigration since 2017 (Meyer, 2020). Most notably, in 2019, the U.S. Border Patrol reported apprehending 253,795 Honduran migrants, classified as "deportable aliens," at their border with Mexico (CPB, 2019). This apprehension rate was more than three times higher than in 2018 (CPB, 2019).

Implications for Honduran youth: *unfreedoms* versus *capabilities*

More than half of the Honduran population is younger than 25 (UNFPA, 2019). Growing up surrounded by the economic, social, environmental, and political instabilities noted above, Honduran youth experience significant barriers to establishing sustainable livelihoods, with implications for their well-being. According to the HDI, almost 28% of Honduran youth (ages 15-24), including 42% of young women, are neither employed nor pursuing further education or training (UNDP, 2019c). Researchers recognize that gang membership can be an attractive option for youth who are experiencing marginalization: gangs can provide a sense of belonging and a strong support network to young people who lack resources, desirable livelihood opportunities, and positive social relationships (Williams & Castellanos, 2020). Considerable research attention has been dedicated to understanding the risk factors for gang involvement, documenting the lived realities of current and former gang members, and implementing

interventions for “at risk” youth in Honduras (Berg & Carranza, 2015, 2018; Bosworth, 2010; Hansen-Nord et al., 2014).

With the proliferation of street gangs in Honduras, young people have become key targets for government action against criminal activity and violence (Gutiérrez Rivera, 2010). In the early 2000s, the government’s zero-tolerance policies, known as *Mano Dura* (Heavy Hand or Iron First) and *Ley Antimaras* (the anti-gang law), banned all “street groups” and extended the discretionary power of police to crack down on gang activity (Cruz, 2011, 2015). These policies led to a wave of systematic, state-sanctioned violence against street children and youth and an influx of youth incarcerations (Brenneman, 2014; Cruz, 2011; Williams & Castellanos, 2020). Human rights groups monitoring this “social cleansing” movement reported numerous extra-judicial killings enacted by “death squads” affiliated with the government (Amnesty International, 2003). Ongoing antagonism toward youth gang members has alienated young people from law enforcement personnel, exacerbating mistrust of legal and political authorities and widening the gap between political institutions and the younger demographics (Brenneman, 2014; Cruz, 2015; Gutiérrez Rivera, 2010).

While Honduran youth in both rural and urban areas face challenges in livelihood formation, rural youth experience unique disadvantages in navigating livelihood options. Geographic barriers, infrastructural limitations, and endemic poverty impede their educational opportunities, with implications for their career options. Although significant progress has been made in the provision of education, Honduras continues to have the lowest level of education in Central America (Marshall et al., 2014; República de Honduras, 2019). National statistics suggest that Honduran youth receive an average of 10.2 years of schooling[3] (UNDP, 2019c), while youth living in remote areas experience barriers to accessing even basic education. Where educational opportunities *have* been made geographically and financially accessible to rural youth, researchers have found that low quality schooling, poor support for education programs, and the opportunity costs of school involvement have contributed to high student attrition rates (Marshall et al., 2014).

[3] The expected years of schooling in Honduras can be compared to Guatemala at 10.6 (UNDP, 2019b), El Salvador at 12.0 (UNDP, 2019a), and Nicaragua at 12.2 (UNDP, 2019d)

As previously noted, migration is a common response to livelihood instability, limited opportunities, and insufficient resource access in Honduras. In other words, these factors can *push* Hondurans to migrate. Considerable *pull factors* for internal and international migration should also be acknowledged. Economic prospects, health services, education and training, and existing social networks are all factors which may draw rural Honduran youth to urban areas or other countries (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Quijada & Sierra, 2018). Indeed, migration can serve as an effective and profitable livelihood strategy for those who have the resources to choose this option, contributing to improvements in livelihood security and quality of life for individuals and their families (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Nygren & Myatt-Hirvonen, 2009a). However, migration introduces its own set of concerns for well-being. Internal migrants may be impacted by the previously-noted livelihood vulnerabilities that pervade areas across Honduras. Meanwhile, undocumented international migrants are vulnerable to physical dangers during transit[4], exploitation by human smugglers[5], unsafe and abusive working conditions, mistreatment by legal authorities, and risk of deportation even if they reach their destination (Paret, 2014; Quijada & Sierra, 2018; Sladkova, 2007, 2013).

In light of these opportunities and risks, it is valuable to differentiate between experiences of *voluntary* versus *distress* migration. For the purposes of this thesis, the former is distinguished from the latter by the *sense of choice* expressed in the context of migration decisions. Individuals who migrated voluntarily were understood as those who experienced a sense of choice in their mobility decision and preferred to migrate rather than practice immobility. On the other hand, individuals experiencing distress migration were characterized as those who lacked a sense of choice in their migration decision and may have preferred to remain immobile if they felt that this was an option. When rural youth experience *freedom of choice* in considering good quality migration opportunities, migration can be considered part of a portfolio of livelihood strategies that youth have reason to value. However, when youth feel *pushed* or *forced* to migrate due to livelihood instability in rural areas, migration patterns among rural Honduran youth can be considered a concern for well-being and human flourishing.

[4] Migrants traveling by foot to the United States have to cross desert areas, where they are at risk of dehydration or hypothermia. Many are robbed, assaulted, or killed in transit (Sladkova, 2007, 2013)
[5] One of the most common ways to travel undocumented to the United States is with the help of a human smuggler, known colloquially as a *coyote* (Sladkova, 2007, 2013)

Migration is a growing trend among young people in Honduras, including youth from rural areas (Gagnon, 2011; Quijada & Sierra, 2018). Of particular note, Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al. (2020) found that 97% of rural high school students surveyed (n=60) in one Northern Honduran municipality planned to migrate from their home communities after graduation, with 88.3% considering internal migration (n=53) and 6.7% considering international migration (n=4). Additionally, Quijada & Sierra (2018) found that young males with low education from low-income households in rural communities were the most prone to undocumented migration. The number of unaccompanied minors apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border has increased considerably in recent years (Villegas, 2019), raising concerns about the well-being of Honduran youth both at home and abroad, and thus emphasizing the importance of this research subject.

Study context and research objectives

While the literature provides meaningful insight into how instability in Honduras impacts livelihood options for Honduran youth, minimal attention has been given to how youth are navigating the livelihood options available to them. More specifically, the literature lacks insight into how rural-dwelling youth make decisions about career and educational pursuits, whether they choose to migrate, and of particular note, why they might actively choose to *avoid* migration and remain living in rural areas.

This gap in the literature reflects a number of biases in current research. Firstly, the wealth of research on gangs and "at risk" youth suggests an emphasis on *problem-based* views of young people in Honduras. Indeed, scholars have pointed out a tendency to associate youth with deviant behaviour or risk conditions that must be "corrected" in order to avoid negative development outcomes (Damon, 2004; Olenik, 2019). These scholars note that such an approach risks overlooking the assets, skills, and positive potential of young people. Secondly, this literature gap demonstrates a bias toward understanding and addressing the structural determinants of livelihood decision-making among youth, inadvertently positioning young people as passive actors in development processes. This tendency overlooks the agency of young people themselves, who may be actively and creatively navigating the livelihood options available to them in order to make choices that they value and establish lives that they consider dignified, even in the face of challenging circumstances.

The objective of this thesis is to address the above-noted literature gaps by exploring how youth from two rural municipalities of Honduras navigated their livelihood opportunities and (im)mobility choices. I interpret the lived experiences of study participants through the lens of the CA in order to shed light on various enabling factors and impediments to the *freedom of choice* that study participants experienced in establishing livelihoods that they considered valuable and dignified. I also use the CA to reflect on livelihood choice as a component of well-being and human flourishing.

Research partnership

This study was conducted in partnership with *la Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; Spanish acronym: FIPAH). FIPAH is a rural development organization and research institution committed to working in partnership with smallholder farmers in remote communities of Honduras. Using the CIAL research methodology (Ashby et al., 2000), FIPAH's professional agronomists partner with teams of rural-dwelling adults and youth to conduct randomized control trials, improve seed varieties of local staple crops, implement agro-ecological production strategies, and manage natural resources. Through these *Comités de Investigación Agrícola Local* (Local Agricultural Research Committees; Spanish acronym: CIAL), FIPAH also supports capacity development in agri-business management and creatively expands rural livelihood opportunities beyond agriculture. FIPAH's adult-targeted programming is offered in five departments of Honduras, while their youth-targeted programming is focused in two municipalities. The organization's commitment to evidence-based development interventions has driven numerous studies on the livelihood context in their target communities, and has stimulated various program evaluations examining the quality and impact of their work (ASOHCIAL & Classen, 2008; Beaudette, 2000; Classen et al., 2008; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Gomez et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2012; Humphries, Gallardo, Jimenez, & Sierra, 2005; Humphries, Gonzales, Jimenez, & Sierra, 2000; Humphries et al., 2015; Ivanoff, 2012; Kocsis, 2011).

My collaboration with FIPAH was made possible through the organization's long-term partnerships with Dr. Warren Dodd[6] (thesis supervisor) and Dr. Sally Humphries[7] (committee member). Prior to the research described herein, studies related to FIPAH's programming had focused on their adult-targeted initiatives, while their youth-specific initiatives had not been formally analyzed. This thesis provides unique insight into the livelihood circumstances of youth in the two study locations and the short- and long-term impacts of more than 18 years of FIPAH's youth-targeted interventions in these settings. FIPAH's history of program implementation, evaluation, and research, as well as their consistent and committed presence in the study locations, ensured the feasibility of this research by providing a foundation of trust and rapport in the study communities and with the research participants.

Study location

The study was conducted in two locations: the Municipality of Yorito in the Department of Yoro in Northern Honduras, and the Municipality of Jesús de Otoro in the Department of Intibucá in Central Honduras. Both municipal centers are small, urbanized areas located in valleys. They are surrounded by remote villages scattered across mountainous terrain. Due to poor transportation infrastructure, these remote villages are difficult to access and their inhabitants experience significant barriers to connecting with markets and external resources. The primary employment opportunity is small-scale, hillside agriculture, with maize and beans as staple crops and coffee as the main cash crop (Beaudette, 2000; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; Ivanoff, 2012). Traditional gender roles are widely practiced with agricultural labour typically dominated by men, while women take on household roles and caretaking tasks (Ivanoff, 2012; Humphries et al., 2012). Educational opportunities are limited, and many young people contribute to the household economy by working on the family farm or earning wages through day labour on other local farms. The coffee harvest is a key source of income for day labourers and a driver of short-term migration between rural communities in these regions (Kocsis, 2011). Poverty and food insecurity are prevalent (Classen et al., 2008), contributing to patterns of internal and international labour migration from both settings (Ivanoff, 2012).

[6] Dr. Warren Dodd has conducted research in partnership with FIPAH since 2008 and has led various research projects in rural Honduras

[7] Dr. Sally Humphries helped found FIPAH (formerly IPCA) through leadership of a CIAT project in 1993, which evolved into FIPAH in 2003. Dr. Humphries has conducted participatory research with the organization since then.

Both study locations are vulnerable to drought, threatening agricultural productivity and the sustainability of rural livelihoods (FAO, 2016). In spite of drought risks, however, many farmers plant rice at lower altitudes in Jesús de Otoro, earning this region the title "rice capital of Honduras" (Ivanoff, 2012). While both regions offer the appropriate environmental conditions for high quality coffee production, Jesús de Otoro has a greater number of market connections and support systems to facilitate specialized coffee production and sale. Various internationally-recognized humanitarian organizations have supported rural development in Jesús de Otoro for decades. Yorito, on the other hand, has historically received less attention from both domestic and international aid organizations, perhaps due to greater geographic isolation.

FIPAH is one of the largest and longest-standing rural development organizations in Yorito. The organization has implemented adult-targeted rural development programming in this municipality since 1996. Their relative size proves beneficial in that FIPAH staff members face less competition for the time and attention of program beneficiaries in Yorito than in Jesús de Otoro. However, in Yorito, FIPAH is disadvantaged by having fewer organizations with whom to partner on larger, more complex programming initiatives when opportunities arise (Humphries et al., 2005). FIPAH's youth-targeted initiatives began in Yorito in 2000 and expanded across both study locations. This programming spanned three key phases: the early years (2000 – 2007); the project *Con Derecho a un Futuro* (With the Right to a Future, 2008 – 2012) funded by the Development Fund of Norway; and FIPAH's ongoing youth programming (2013 – present). The program history is described in further detail in Chapter 3.

Summary of manuscripts and contribution

The research described in this thesis is presented in two co-authored manuscripts (see Statement of Contributions for further information on co-authorship). In Chapter 3, I present a manuscript describing findings from a participatory impact evaluation of youth-targeted programming offered by FIPAH between 2000 and 2019. This chapter particularly highlights the ways that FIPAH structured an enabling environment for capability expansion among rural youth, impacting the livelihood opportunities and decision-making processes for program participants. These findings are discussed in the context of the HDCA and the youth empowerment literature, including the Positive Youth Development model. In Chapter 4, I present a manuscript exploring how study participants navigated (im)mobility decisions. This chapter focuses on the agency of

respondents as their socio-economic circumstances and personal characteristics intersect with their structural environment. FIPAH's work is positioned as an important component of that structural context. The findings are discussed in the context of the migration literature, particularly through the lens of concepts associated with the aspiration-capabilities framework. These two manuscripts offer a complementary assessment of both structure and agency, providing rich insight into various dimensions of livelihood decision-making for these youth. Together, they deliver a well-rounded and nuanced snapshot of the lived realities for study participants as they navigate livelihood options in remote communities of Honduras.

The remainder of the thesis proceeds as follows: in Chapter 2, I detail the research methods and methodologies employed in this work; in Chapters 3 and 4, I present the two manuscripts described above; in Chapter 5, I provide a conclusion to the thesis; following the final chapter, I include references and appendices relevant to the entire document. Overall, the thesis makes an important contribution toward understanding the opportunities and challenges of positive human development among rural youth in remote Honduran communities. The information presented herein can be used by policymakers and development practitioners to shape enabling environments for rural Honduran youth and young people in other low resource environments so that they can "[exercise] their reasoned agency" (Sen, 1999, pg xii) in pursuing lives that they consider valuable and dignified. Ultimately, this thesis promotes opportunities to support formative development and capability expansion among youth, enabling them to truly flourish in their livelihood pursuits.

Positionality statement

My personal identity, subjectivities, and previous experiences shaped the way that I engaged with this research topic and process of investigation. Before proceeding with the rest of this thesis, therefore, it is important to acknowledge my positionality in relation to its content.

I entered the School of Public Health and Health Systems at the University of Waterloo with undergraduate training in Agricultural Sciences and International Development Studies (BAS, University of Guelph, Ontario, 2016). Prior to starting this thesis, I had also spent ten months supporting program monitoring and evaluation activities for a non-governmental organization in Korba, Chhattisgarh, India. These experiences offered both theoretical and practical insights into

development processes in rural areas of low- and middle-income countries. And yet, I approached this thesis as a novice researcher, with limited background in the field of global health and limited experience conducting program evaluations and community-engaged qualitative research. In these areas, I benefitted significantly from the mentorship and experience of my supervisor and committee members.

As a white Canadian of European descent, I arrived in Honduras as an obvious foreigner. I entered the study communities with limited insight into how their social systems and cultural dynamics should be navigated. FIPAH staff members played a critical role in helping me acclimatize to the local context, and I benefitted from their previous experiences working with foreigners, including other Canadian graduate students. Staff members also helped to deepen my understanding of the study communities by providing socio-cultural insights; however, these insights were limited by our shared capacities to identify and address intercultural differences. Furthermore, our interactions were constrained by a language barrier: as a native English-speaker speaking Spanish as a second language, I engaged in Spanish-speaking environments with intermediate linguistic proficiency.

My age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and language skills influenced the nature of my interactions with study participants. While I was the average age of my study participants at the time of the interviews, my experiences of navigating livelihood options and making (im)mobility decisions were radically different from the young people I was interviewing. These differences allowed me to make observations that an insider to the study communities may overlook; however, I may also have overlooked factors that an insider would consider important. My language competencies introduced additional strengths and limitations to my position as a researcher in this context. An asset of having intermediate language skills was that it seemed to put my interviewees at ease in the midst of other formalities in the interview process. Thus, my linguistic shortfalls may have counteracted some of the power imbalances associated with North-South relations and interviewee-interviewer relationships. On the other hand, as a non-native Spanish speaker, I had limited capacity to probe deeply. Here, I benefitted from working with my research assistant, Esmeralda Lobo, who co-facilitated all interviews with me. It should be recognized that my research assistant and I are both females, while our interviews were

conducted with females and males from the study communities. Although a gendered analysis was not central to my thesis, I do acknowledge some of the gendered dimensions of my findings. Thus, it is important to recognize that gender dynamics may have shaped the nature of the interviews, thus influencing the co-construction of knowledge within those interviews.

All of the above-noted factors influenced my interpretation of the data and my construction of the research findings. I completed data analysis and wrote my thesis chapters while living and working in Waterloo Region, which introduces another dimension to my positionality as a researcher. This land is located on the Haldimand Tract, and is within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples. This area was promised to the Haudenosaunee Six Nations group. Thus, the opportunities and privileges afforded to me by the University of Waterloo throughout this research process were only available because those traditions were interrupted and those promises were not upheld. In this light, I also acknowledge the many ways that I continue to participate in systems that undermine, confine, neglect, and actively harm Indigenous peoples. I grieve the fact that many generations of Indigenous peoples in Canada have been prevented from experiencing the freedom to choose livelihoods that they have many reasons to value, and have been impeded from living with the dignity that they certainly deserve. I commit to ongoing learning and action to decolonize my thoughts and behaviours, and to work toward true reconciliation.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

Overall research methodology

The study described in this thesis investigated livelihood opportunities, aspirations, and decision-making processes among rural Honduran youth. Seeking to understand the lived experiences of youth from remote communities in the Municipalities of Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro, I prioritized a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis that aligns with phenomenological theory (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011; Reeves, Albert, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008; Smith, 2018). The main data sources were semi-structured interviews with rural youth. Descriptive analyses of quantitative demographic data from a larger cohort of rural youth were used to complement the qualitative findings. Supplementary data sources, described below, helped contextualize the findings. Data were collected in two phases: phase one occurred between May and October, 2018; phase two occurred between September and November, 2019.

This study specifically evaluated youth-targeted programming offered by *La Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (The Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; Spanish acronym: FIPAH) in Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro. Insights from program participants were triangulated with supplementary data sources in order to accurately interpret the findings in the context of FIPAH's programming history and the broader research context. Supplementary data sources included program documents, interviews with FIPAH staff and other local non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders, focus groups with local youth who were not involved with FIPAH, and field notes from eleven weeks of fieldwork in the study communities. I took an interpretive approach to data analysis that was grounded in the subjective experiences of study participants. Separate analyses were conducted to produce findings for two distinct manuscripts, which are presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis. The remainder of this chapter details the research methods supporting the overall study.

Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) approach

A key objective of this study was to support FIPAH's decision-making processes related to future youth-targeted programming within and beyond the study locations. As such, it was pertinent to collaborate with FIPAH's staff members and leadership team throughout study

design and execution. Stakeholders helped shape the nature of the evaluative research in order to enhance the relevance and utility of its findings. They provided input on the study design, helped facilitate the data collection process, and acted as consultants during data analysis. Key stakeholders, including FIPAH staff members, are co-authors on the manuscripts presented in this thesis, illustrating their role as co-owners of the research process and products. This collaborative approach aligns with the principles of practical participatory evaluation (P-PE), as described by Cousins & Whitmore (1998).

Language considerations

The data for this study were collected in Spanish, while the research findings are presented in English. Decisions regarding the nature and timing of data translation were informed by literature on inter-lingual research (including Jentsch, 1998; Kosny, Maceachen, Lifshen, & Smith, 2014; H. J. Smith, Chen, & Liu, 2008; Temple, 2002; van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010). Based on recommendations by van Nes et al. (2010) data were preserved in their original language throughout the analysis process in order to maximize the accuracy and validity of interpretation. Thus, transcriptions were completed in Spanish by a native Spanish speaker. I designed the codebooks in English, unless the distinct meaning of a key word or phrase in a data-driven code was obscured through translation, in which case the Spanish phrasing was preserved as per recommendations from Smith et al. (2008). I completed coding with the Spanish texts and conducted thematic analyses with continuous reference to the original Spanish quotations. Key quotations were translated into English for insertion into the manuscripts. Since analysis was approached thematically rather than being discourse-driven, it was deemed appropriate to use conceptually-equivalent rather than literal translation strategies (Smith et al., 2008). Where relevant, I included additional explanations of quotations within each manuscript in order to facilitate interpretation of translated data (Smith et al., 2008; van Nes et al., 2010).

Research ethics and funding

Ethics approvals were obtained from the Research Ethics Boards at the Universities of Guelph (Appendix A) and Waterloo (Appendix B). Funding for the first phase of data collection and analysis was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) through a Partnership Engage Grant. Funding for the second phase of data collection and

analysis was provided through a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canadian Graduate Scholarship (SSHRC) and a Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement (SSHRC).

Phase one design and data collection

Study design and tool development

In May 2018, Dr. Warren Dodd and Dr. Sally Humphries collaborated with Honduran researchers, FIPAH staff, and youth leaders from Jesús de Otoro and Yorito to design a study that would explore the short- and long-term outcomes from FIPAH's youth-targeted programming between 2000 and 2018. Guided by the following research question, this research team[8] developed demographic categories for quantitative data collection (Appendix C) and an interview guide for qualitative data collection (Appendix D):

> How does participation in [FIPAH's youth programming][9] influence issues such as youth violence, decisions around internal and international migration, youth engagement in further education, family, community, and national development, and health and well-being?

Phase one data collection was performed in 2018 by two teams of youth leaders, each based in one of the study locations. These youth had previous experience with FIPAH's programming and were trained in relevant data collection methods by senior members of the research team.

Quantitative data collection

The purpose of quantitative data collection was to gather demographic information on all former participants in FIPAH's youth programming in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito. FIPAH staff listed these participants based on organizational records and information from partner institutions. Youth leaders verified existing information and collected additional data by contacting listed participants directly. When former participants were unavailable (e.g. had moved from the community and/or could not be contacted), the researchers verified Excel spreadsheet data with reliable family members or community informants. If information could not be verified, the

[8] Including manuscript co-authors Veronica Zelaya Portillo (program director, Jesús de Otoro), Paola Orellana (program director, Yorito), and Esmeralda Lobo Tosta (youth leader and phase two research assistant)
[9] FIPAH's youth programming is structured around youth-led *Comités de Investigación Agrícola Local* (Local Agricultural Research Committees; Spanish acronym: CIAL), which are described in Chapter 1.

participant was excluded from the Excel spreadsheet. In total, 1596 former participants were listed, representing 83.3% of all participants involved in FIPAH's youth programming between 2000 and 2018.

Qualitative data collection

The purpose of phase one semi-structured interviews was to explore former participants' motivation for program involvement, the key outcomes they experienced, and their recommendations for the future of FIPAH's youth programming. FIPAH staff and youth leaders collaborated to purposively select potential interviewees from the quantitative spreadsheet. Consideration was given to each young person's capacity to provide high quality responses to the interview questions, described by Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora (2016) as the "information power" of the potential respondent. Further consideration was given as to whether it would be logistically and economically feasible to complete the interview based on the former participant's current profession and location.

The researchers aimed to establish a balance of female and male voices from each research site, as well as a diversity of program experiences and career trajectories. They targeted a sample size of 30 respondents from each location and sought to include five internal or international migrants within each group, for a total of 60 respondents, including ten migrants. Potential interview candidates were invited to participate in the study through an explanation of the nature and purpose of the research. Some individuals declined to be interviewed, primarily citing reasons related to job responsibilities and volunteer activities, while select individuals were too shy to participate. Participants provided informed consent, including permission for audio-recording. All interviews were conducted in the participants' first language (Spanish) by a native speaker. The interviews lasted an average of 12 minutes.

In Jesús de Otoro, youth researchers completed 29 phase one interviews, including 20 interviews with females and nine with males. Of these respondents, nine were internal migrants[10] and four were international migrants. In Yorito, the research team expanded the targeted sample size to

[10] Internal migrants were defined as individuals living outside of their community of origin. Some individuals represented in this cohort had migrated to Honduran cities for urban employment opportunities, while others had simply moved to another rural community due to marriage, land availability, or other employment opportunities.

reflect a historically larger youth program in this location. They identified 60 potential respondents and completed a total of 52 phase one interviews, including 28 females and 24 males. Of these respondents, six were internal migrants and two were international migrants. The research team reported encountering more females than males who were available and willing to participate in the research, and associated this pattern with seasonal employment opportunities in agriculture, which are typically more prevalent for men than women (Ivanoff, 2012). Across both locations, 12 respondents were current or former FIPAH staff members who had previously been program participants[11].

Phase two design and data collection

Preliminary analysis and study expansion

In October 2018, I traveled to Jesús de Otoro with Dr. Warren Dodd and Dr. Sally Humphries to meet the Honduran research team and receive the phase one data. Alongside the demographic database and audio-recorded interviews, the Honduran research team provided a written summary of each interview. Based on these summaries, I designed a second phase of the study that would use in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to deepen program evaluation findings and explore broader livelihood decision-making processes among rural youth. I used Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach (CA) (Sen, 1999), as operationalized through Kleine's Choice Framework (CF) (Kleine, 2010, 2011; Kleine et al., 2012), to guide the phase two research questions and design the research tools. My research proposal was guided by the following questions:

1) How do societal structures and individual resources affect the existence, sense, use, and achievement of livelihood choices and outcomes experienced by rural Honduran youth from Jesús de Otoro and Yorito?
2) How does FIPAH's youth CIAL program influence these structures, resources, choices, and subsequent outcomes?
3) Are there gaps between FIPAH's youth CIAL program theory and their program implementation process or observed outcome(s)?

[11] This reflects FIPAH's propensity to provide rural employment opportunities to young people who show interest in rural livelihood development and demonstrate excellence in activities such as agricultural experimentation, project management, and group leadership.

4) Are there opportunities for program improvement, including scaling up or scaling out?
5) What can other organizations learn from FIPAH's work with rural Honduran youth in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito?

In June 2019, I successfully defended this proposal to committee members Dr. Warren Dodd, Dr. Sally Humphries, and Dr. Kelly Skinner. I sent a translated summary of my research proposal to FIPAH's leadership team for their input and approval.

Stakeholder and community engagement

In September 2019, Dr. Sally Humphries and I met with FIPAH's leadership team in order to further refine and adapt the phase two study design. In alignment with P-PE strategies (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998), we formulated a research plan with consideration of FIPAH's organizational priorities in order to enhance the relevance and usefulness of the findings. We also took into consideration the socio-political climate in the study locations[12], as well as seasonal opportunities and constraints that would affect the data collection period[13]. I conducted phase two data collection in partnership with Esmeralda Lobo Tosta, who was one of the youth leaders from phase one of this study. Throughout the data collection period, I received ongoing guidance from senior members of the phase one research team in both Canada and Honduras.

Esmeralda and I worked alongside FIPAH staff members for approximately eleven weeks between September and November, 2019. We ensured the ongoing involvement of FIPAH staff members in this evaluative research by soliciting their recommendations, ideas, and input throughout the data collection process (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). We observed and participated in organizational activities at the FIPAH offices in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito, and took advantage of opportunities to accompany staff members to visit projects and participants in remote communities. FIPAH's organizational commitment to community-engaged research

[12] Civil unrest related to the unwanted activity of a mining company in Yorito raised concerns about safety for lengthy periods of data collection. As a result, I spent most of my time in Jesús de Otoro and visited Yorito for two separate one-week intervals, accompanied by my research assistant, Esmeralda Lobo Tosta. Local staff members helped us complete these intensive data collection periods and provided supplementary documents and interviews to enrich my data analysis.
[13] The coffee harvest that begins in November offers a major employment opportunity for rural youth. Data collection plans were made with consideration of this time constraint.

enriched my data collection strategies, and their thoughtful presence in the study communities expanded my perspectives, addressed my assumptions, contextualized my observations, and provided nuance to my ideals.

While my association with FIPAH was critical to the success of this study, I recognized that their own perspectives, assumptions, and ideals would inevitably shape what I could learn about the research setting. Therefore, I sought to broaden my opportunities to be present and engaged in the study communities. I lived with a family that works in agriculture in Jesús de Otoro, but does not work directly with FIPAH. This family offered insight into agricultural livelihood options, seasonal fluctuation in activities, and employment opportunities or constraints within the region. They shared their own stories and impressions of migration, offered perspectives on FIPAH's role and status in the community, and disclosed their perceptions of other organizations and institutions at work in the region.

Throughout my fieldwork, I also frequented local cafes, restaurants, shops, churches, and gyms. I visited farms run by local youth, attended community festivals and events, and read both local and national news sources. These activities provided opportunities to converse with community members and gain further insight into the research setting. What I learned through observation, experience, and informal conversation (also known as ethnographic interviews, as per Patton, 2015) helped enrich my understanding of the research setting, which enhanced my capacity to collect good quality data. I documented new insights in detailed field notes, which proved useful in contextualizing the study findings throughout data analysis. These field notes also served as a reflective journal (described by Ortlipp, 2008), in which I documented research decisions and identified positional factors influencing my work (see my positionality statement above).

Interviews with current and former program participants

The purpose of phase two in-depth interviews was to explore respondents' experiences in navigating the livelihood options available to them, including factors that have facilitated or constrained their livelihood decisions. I used strategies described by Malterud et al. (2016) to determine a sample size that would provide adequate "information power" to produce meaningful research findings. Since the study had a broad aim, was conducted by a novice researcher, and was designed for cross-case analysis, I anticipated recruiting a relatively large

sample size in order to establish adequate information power (Malterud et al., 2016). However, recognizing that my data collection requirements would be somewhat burdensome to my host organization and study participants, I employed three specific techniques to enhance the quality of information that interviewees would be able to provide. As Malterud et al. (2016) argue, greater quality of information from individual respondents increases the information power of the overall sample, thus reducing the total number of participants required for meaningful results.

The first strategy I used to maximize information power was to apply theory throughout the research design, data collection, and analysis process. As noted by Malterud et al. (2016), the application of theory "serves to synthesize existing knowledge [and extend] the source of knowledge beyond empirical interview data" (p. 1755). As previously noted, I used the CA as operationalized through the CF to develop the semi-structured interview guide. This guide explored structural factors (e.g. institutions and infrastructure), resource-related factors (e.g. finances, social networks, education), and personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender) that influenced participants' livelihood decisions related to education, career, and migration (Appendix E). I engaged this theory in further depth to interpret the research findings.

The second strategy I used was to employ purposive sampling techniques for participant recruitment. According to Malterud et al. (2016), condensing the sample specificity through strategic purposive selection, rather than using other strategies like convenience sampling, can help enhance the information power of the final sample. I collaborated with FIPAH staff and youth leaders in each study community to select potential interview candidates. We prioritized "information rich cases" (Patton, 1990) who independently showed strong communication skills (Hycner, 1985). We ensured representation from female and male voices, agricultural and non-agricultural workers, as well as individuals living in the study communities and youth who had migrated internally or internationally. Consideration was given to the potential economic or logistical burden of participation prior to contacting interview candidates for recruitment.

The third strategy I used to increase the information power of the sample was to maximize the quality of dialogue with interviewees. Respondents had the opportunity to ask questions about the research prior to providing informed consent to participate and to be audio-recorded. All

interviews were co-facilitated with my research assistant, Esmeralda Lobo Tosta. Her status as a native Spanish speaker ensured strong communication with participants and her positionality as a local woman who was not employed by FIPAH helped facilitate participants' free expression of perspectives and experiences in livelihood navigation and program participation. The first four interview recordings were reviewed by Dr. Warren Dodd and Dr. Sally Humphries, each of whom have extensive experience conducting qualitative research within and beyond Honduras. With their guidance, the interview guide was revised and clarified to address common challenges in participant responses. Prompts and probes were used in all interviews in order to encourage further insight into participants' unique experiences and perspectives (Patton, 2015). Ongoing adaptations were made to the interview guide throughout data collection in order to reflect new insights or questions of interest to the study. This iterative process was employed to continually maximize the information power of subsequent interviews.

Most purposively-selected interview candidates were eager to share their lived experiences and immediately agreed to be interviewed. One male verbally consented to interview arrangements, but did not attend the scheduled interview and did not respond to follow-up communication. FIPAH staff indicated that the individual's non-verbal communication during the recruitment conversation had indicated a lack of interest or willingness to participate. Although the reason for decline was unclear, staff members suggested a connection to seasonal labour demands in agriculture: the interview was scheduled at the beginning of the coffee harvest. In total, 32 interviews were completed with current and former participants in FIPAH's youth programming from the two study communities for phase two data collection (16 participants from each community). This sample included follow-up interviews with 20 phase one interviewees (10 from each study location) and interviews with 12 current program participants who provided responses to both phase one and phase two questions (6 from each study location). Overall, 19 of the respondents were female (11 from Otoro, eight from Yorito), 13 were male (five from Otoro, eight from Yorito), and seven had migrated to Honduran cities or to other countries. The interviews lasted an average of 48 minutes.

Supplementary data sources

In addition to phase two interviews with rural youth who were involved in FIPAH's programming, Esmeralda and I facilitated focus groups with youth who were not associated with

FIPAH (n=4). We also collected key program documents (n=14), conducted formal and informal interviews with FIPAH staff members (n=10), and completed formal interviews with representatives from other organizations serving youth in the study communities (n=6). These supplemental data sources do not appear in the manuscripts included in this thesis; however, they were valuable in broadening my knowledge of the study contexts and deepening my understanding of the research topics. Knowledge gleaned from these data enhanced my confidence in independently interpreting and contextualizing the study findings.

Focus groups with rural youth

The purpose of the focus groups with rural youth was to assess whether preliminary insights from phase two interviews were representative of broader experiences among young people from the study communities. Since phase two interview respondents were all associated with FIPAH's youth programming, it is possible that their livelihood experiences were shaped uniquely in comparison with other youth from their communities. Focus group participants were selected from local schools, churches, and youth-targeted programs, but were not associated with FIPAH's youth programming. The focus group guide explored agricultural and non-agricultural livelihood opportunities for youth, the main reasons for migration among youth, and key institutions that were involved in supporting youth (Appendix F).

Focus groups were arranged by community contacts on behalf of the research team. These contacts were given information on the nature and purpose of the research as well as the intention of the focus groups. They were coached on ethical recruitment procedures and were asked to recruit between four and eight young people for participation (Krueger & Casey, 2008). Each focus group included both females and males. Esmeralda and I co-led the focus groups, reviewing the nature and purpose of the study prior to each focus group discussion, inviting questions, and attaining informed consent for participation and audio recording. In total, four focus groups were conducted in Spanish across the two study locations with a total of 21 participants, including nine females and 12 males.

Program documents and interviews with FIPAH staff

During initial meetings in each study location, FIPAH staff members were made aware of my role as a researcher and the nature and purpose of my research. Based on the principles of P-PE (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998), I invited all staff members to contribute ideas and perspectives that could help improve the quality of the study design throughout the data collection period. I also invited their insights and experiences to add clarity to the study findings. In order to encourage honest and balanced insights, I emphasized the intention to use this research to highlight the organization's successes in youth-related programming while also understanding opportunities to improve their youth-related initiatives.

FIPAH staff provided access to program documents from their youth-targeted initiatives, allowing me to piece together their programming history and corroborate or clarify organizational discourse around programming strategies. Esmeralda and I also conducted interviews with six key staff members involved in FIPAH's youth-related work. Formal interviews were facilitated by a semi-structured interview guide, which was designed to explore the respondent's perspectives on the livelihood situation for rural youth in the study communities and to elucidate FIPAH's youth-targeted program implementation strategies over time (Appendix G). These six interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent. Four key informants also participated in informal interviews, which occurred as opportunity arose during field visits or between organizational activities. I documented information and insights from these informal interviews in my field notes.

Interviews with representatives from local organizations

Throughout phase two data collection, with insight from interviews and focus groups, I identified six key organizations and government programs that were known for their involvement with youth in the study communities. Esmeralda and I visited the local offices of these institutions or contacted them through FIPAH staff. After explaining the nature of the research, we invited a representative from each institution to participate in a formal interview, providing insight into their own youth programming and their perspectives on the livelihood situation for youth in these communities. Each representative we contacted agreed to be interviewed and consented to audio recording of the semi-structured interview (Appendix H). Interviewees represented three

international non-governmental organizations (two in Otoro, one in Yorito), one religious institution (Catholic church, Yorito), as well as the municipal offices in both study communities.

Analysis: preparation and approach

Transcriptions

Formal interviews from phases one and two were transcribed from audio recordings by research assistants who signed confidentiality agreements prior to accessing the data. Both transcriptionists are native Spanish speakers from Jesús de Otoro who were familiar with FIPAH's work and had been trained in qualitative transcription by a member of the research team. With contextual and linguistic expertise, they were able to provide accurate transcriptions that correctly identified organizational acronyms as well as cultural and community references.

Approach to coding

In order to thoroughly review and organize each qualitative dataset, I employed a "hybrid approach to inductive and deductive coding", as described by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). *A priori* codes ensured consistency between the analyses and original research tools (i.e. research questions, interview/focus group guide, methodological approach). Data-driven codes ensured that the analyses were grounded in the subjective expressions of study participants, with attention to the context from which they were sharing (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Combining these two strategies facilitated rich thematic analyses, helping focus my attention on the original research goals while leaving room to examine unexpected findings that could enrich the results, enhance the interpretation, and highlight new avenues for research.

I used three strategies to systematize my approach to inductive coding within each dataset:

1. Content that did not fit well into existing codes was placed in a general code within its relevant category;
2. Content that related to an existing code, but might be better represented in a new code was noted separately, along with its current placement in the deductive framework;
3. Content that did not seem to fit well into any code or category was placed in a 'meaningful miscellaneous' category for further revision.

All content under consideration for inductive coding was reviewed after initial deductive coding to determine whether a data-driven code would be added or whether the *a priori* categories sufficiently and accurately captured the interview content.

Data analysis for Chapter 3

Program Evaluation Strategies

To facilitate a high quality program evaluation as an external researcher, I approached the research on FIPAH's youth programming with what Stern et al. (2012) have described as a process-oriented approach to theory-led impact evaluation. Theory-based impact evaluations use program theory to logically and conceptually connect program components with the outcomes they have generated (Stern et al., 2012). Process-oriented evaluations more tangibly trace the causal pathways between program implementation processes and program outcomes (Fox, Grimm, & Caldeira, 2017). Both approaches employ causal inference to help explain *why* and *how* a program has worked; they use evidence-based justifications to make plausible connections between program mechanisms and observed outcomes (Stern et al., 2012). By combining process-oriented and theory-based approaches to impact evaluation, I was able to elucidate both practical and conceptual mechanisms through which key program outcomes were facilitated.

I used program documents and interviews with program staff to retrospectively construct FIPAH's youth-targeted program theory and to describe their implementation process over time. I illustrated this information through a detailed logic model (Appendix I), the components of which were confirmed by FIPAH staff members, who were also members of the research team and are co-authors on the manuscripts. While the logic model and other aspects of my evaluative work are not formally presented in the first manuscript, the information I gleaned from developing the logic model supported the accuracy and validity of my final analysis (as per Table 1 in Porteous, Sheldrick, & Stewart, 2002). With these insights, I was able to contextualize the findings from demographic data and interviews with program participants in light of FIPAH's programming history prior to sharing findings with local stakeholders and members of the research team.

Demographic data from current and former participants

For Chapter 3, I identified three key phases of FIPAH's youth programming: the early years (2000 – 2007); the project *Con Derecho a un Futuro* (With the Right to a Future, 2008 – 2012) funded by the Development Fund of Norway; and then FIPAH's ongoing youth programming (2013 – present). I categorized research participants by the phase during which they were primarily involved, recognizing that their phase of involvement may have shaped the short- and long-term outcomes of their program experience uniquely. Using Excel, I performed descriptive statistics on demographic data for all former participants and phase one interview respondents based on these categorizations.

Phase one interviews with program participants

To analyze phase one interviews with current and former program participants, I structured an *a priori* codebook around the phase one interview guide. After a preliminary analysis of the interviews using Ose's method for organizing qualitative data in Excel (Ose, 2016), I adapted the codebook structure to better reflect the interview content. This process resulted in ten main categories[14]. I defined and justified each component of the deductive codebook by connecting the categories and codes to the original research question and providing example quotations in both Spanish (original) and English (conceptually-equivalent translation). This codebook was reviewed and approved by a Dr. Warren Dodd prior to its application to all transcripts. Based on the strategies previously noted, I allowed data-driven codes to emerge throughout coding.

Using NVivo qualitative analysis software, I applied the codebook separately to interviews with participants from each of the above-noted programming phases. This process allowed me to identify themes within and across each phase. As a novice researcher, I followed Elliot's recommendation to code all interview content and make assessments regarding the utility of each code and category in further stages of analysis (Elliott, 2018). After coding the transcripts and reviewing the coded content, four codes were removed due to a small number of quotations and meaningful overlap with other codes. Their content was re-coded accordingly. I then summarized

[14] Categories included motivations and expectations, program activities, community involvement, economic development, educational opportunities, gender relations, personal and professional networks, personal growth, other aspects of livelihoods, and program recommendations

the content from each category and paired each summary with key quotations to represent the code's components.

Using these summaries, I identified key themes related to short- and long-term outcomes that participants across the three phases associated with their program involvement. I applied a realist lens in order to trace the pathways between these outcomes and the program components with which they had been associated (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Floate, Durham, & Marks, 2019; Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012). Contextual and mechanistic dimensions of the pathways were differentiated in order to identify the influence of program theory, implementation processes, and situational factors contributing to program successes. A full analysis and discussion of these data are presented in Chapter 3.

Data analysis for Chapter 4

The Capabilities Approach and Kleine's Choice Framework

To explore the livelihood opportunities and (im)mobility decisions of study participants in-depth, I approached the second phase of this study using the CF, which was designed to operationalize the CA for practical application in evaluating development interventions (Kleine, 2010, 2011; Kleine et al., 2012). By integrating conceptual aspects of Sen's work with insights from the empowerment literature (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005) and components of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (DFID, 1999), Kleine produced a framework through which the livelihood decisions of research participants could be systematically deconstructed and analyzed. This framework was particularly beneficial to me as a novice researcher because it provided a tangible guide for applying the concepts associated with the CA to my research.

In alignment with the CA, the CF positions *choice* as the primary outcome of development interventions. A person's capabilities are characterized by four *degrees of empowerment*: existence of choice (are various options available that the individual has reason to value?); sense of choice (is the individual aware of the options available to them?), use of choice (does the individual exercise their agency regarding those options?) and achievement of choice (is the option that the individual chooses actually realized?). The latter dimension leads to an understanding of secondary development outcomes, which relate to the lived experiences

resulting from a person's livelihood choices. The CF identifies structural factors that influence a person's capabilities, names 11 resources that may shape their agency in decision-making[15], and acknowledges the role of personal characteristics, such as age and gender, in facilitating or constraining one's opportunities. The CA has been criticized for being overly conceptual and failing to offer practical guidance for operationalization (Kleine, 2010). In my own research, the CF proved a useful tool in addressing this gap. This comprehensive framework helped me maintain a tangible focus on the CA throughout study design, data collection, and data analysis, ensuring the consistent alignment of my research with this development theory.

Demographic data from current and former participants

For Chapter 4, I focused on participants' migration choices as a key dimension of their livelihood decision-making. Using Excel, I performed descriptive statistics on demographic data from interview respondents, based on their municipality of origin. I opted for this categorization, rather than categorization by programming phase as done in Chapter 3, because I recognized that the unique characteristics of the two municipalities represented in these data may influence migration patterns differently.

Phase two interviews with rural youth

To analyze phase two interviews with current and former program participants, I used the CF to structure an *a priori* codebook. This approach resulted in four main coding categories, including structure, agency, choice as the primary development outcome, and a general category for secondary development outcomes. I added codes within each category in light of the interview content and research context[16]. For example, under *structures,* I included codes for government and politics, businesses, organizations and programs, human security, as well as infrastructure and technology. This codebook was reviewed and approved by Dr. Warren Dodd prior to its application to all transcripts. Again, I used NVivo qualitative analysis software, and coded all interview content, as per Elliott (2018).

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[15] Including material, financial, natural, geographic, human (education and health), psychological, information, time, cultural, and social resources (Kleine et al., 2012)

[16] The CF has been described as a "living tool" (Kleine et al., 2012). Although it was originally designed for Information and Communication Technology for Development (Kleine, 2010), it is intended to be "further developed, conceptualized, and altered" (Kleine et al., 2012). I adapted the CF to reflect the specific structures, resources, and personal characteristics that were most relevant to youth in the study locations.

After initial deductive coding based on the framework, I reviewed the content within each code to add data-driven sub-codes that would reflect the responses from interviewees more precisely. As with the coding of phase one interview data, this combination of deductive and inductive coding strategies reflects the work of Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). I summarized the content from each sub-code and paired these summaries with representative quotations.

I used these summaries to identify common perspectives and experiences across the interviews that related to migration and immobility decisions. This cross-case analysis allowed me to move beyond the individual experiences of interview respondents and generate themes from the interviews. I organized these themes based on the components of the aspiration-capability framework, as presented and discussed by Schewel (2020). The original framework was designed to apply the CA to migration and (im)mobility studies. Schewel's elaboration draws particular attention to immobility preferences, thus aligning astutely with the research findings. A full analysis and discussion of these data are presented in Chapter 4.

Table 1: Summary of data sources and analysis methods used to explore the livelihood opportunities and choices of youth from Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro in Honduras, collected in two phases (May-October, 2018; September-November, 2019) and presented in two manuscripts (Chapters 3 and 4).

Data source	Phase		Contribution	Sample characteristics				Chapter		Methods of analysis
	1	2			Otoro (n)	Yorito (n)	Total (n)	3	4	
Primary										
Demographics: *Former program participants*	✓		Characteristics of participants from 18 years of FIPAH's youth programming		335	1261	1596	✓		Descriptive statistics using Excel
				Female	*192*	*726*	*918*			
				Male	*143*	*535*	*678*			
Phase one interviews: ***Semi-structured,*** *Current/former program participants*	✓		Nature of program participation and experiences, personal and livelihood outcomes		36	58	94	✓		Codebook guided by interview questions, coding in NVIVO, thematic analysis through a realist lens
				Female	*25*	*31*	*56*			
				Male	*11*	*27*	*38*			
Phase two interviews: ***In-depth, semi-structured,*** *Current/former program participants*		✓	Livelihood aspirations, factors influencing livelihood choices, supports/barriers to desired outcomes		16	16	32		✓	Codebook guided by Choice Framework, coding in NVIVO, thematic analysis using aspiration-capabilities framework
				Female	*11*	*8*	*19*			
				Male	*5*	*8*	*13*			
Supplementary										
Focus groups: *Rural youth, not associated with FIPAH*		✓	Livelihood options for youth in rural areas, supportive institutions, reasons for migration		2 groups	2 groups	4 groups			Reference material to contextualize findings for Chapters 3 and 4
				Group 1	4 (2F, 2M)	4 (3F, 1M)	21 youth (9F, 12M)			
				Group 2	6 (2F, 4M)	7 (2F, 5M)				
Organizational interviews: *Representative from local youth-targeted programs*		✓	Livelihood situation for rural youth, nature of youth-targeted interventions (priorities and goals, barriers and facilitators)		3	3	6			
				Int'l NGOs	2	1	3			
				Churches	0	1	1			
				Municipal offices	1	1	2			
Formal and informal, *FIPAH staff*		✓	Livelihood situation for rural youth, nature of youth-targeted interventions (priorities and goals, barriers and facilitators), evolution and iterations of programming		10		10			
				Director	1M					
				Program coordinators	2F					
				Field staff	7 (2F, 5M)					
Program documents *FIPAH's youth programming*		✓	Evolution of youth programming over time, documented priorities, goals, and outcomes		14		14			
Field notes		✓	Contextual details regarding organizational culture and activities, study communities		9 weeks (home base)	2 weeks (intensive)	11 weeks			

"The process of development should *at least* create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests."

UNDP, 1990, p1, emphasis added

Union Praga, Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá, Honduras

November, 2019

Chapter 3 – Sustainable livelihoods and youth well-being:

Lessons from a participatory impact evaluation assessing over 18 years of development programming in rural Honduras

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Introduction

Of the 1.2 billion youth in the world in 2019, 90% were living in low- and middle-income countries, with projections of a 7% expansion by 2030 (UNDESA, 2019)[17]. This circumstance presents both an opportunity and a challenge for global development efforts. On one hand, young people can prove to be incredible assets in community development initiatives; therefore, investing in their formative development can have positive implications for broader society (Alvarado et al., 2017; Damon, 2004; Olenik, 2019). On the other hand, the capacity for youth-targeted investment is often lacking in low resource settings, with negative implications for individuals, communities, and societies in the present and future.

In Honduras, the opportunities and challenges of youth development are particularly pronounced. More than half of the country's 9.6 million people are under the age of 25 (UNDP, 2019c; UNFPA, 2019). Almost 28% of youth, including 42% of young women, are neither employed nor pursuing further education nor training (UNDP, 2019c). Livelihood instability is exacerbated by high levels of crime, including drug trafficking, gang-related violence, and one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world (World Bank, 2017). Youth who are experiencing marginalization are particularly vulnerable to gang recruitment (Williams & Castellanos, 2020). Meanwhile, the government's *Mano Dura* (Heavy Hand or Iron First) response to gang activity has alienated youth from law enforcement personnel, exacerbating mistrust of legal and political authorities and widening the gap between political institutions and the younger demographic (Brenneman, 2014; Bruneau, 2014; Cruz, 2015).

[17] The United Nations defines "youth" as young people between the ages of 15 and 24.

Rural-dwelling youth face additional livelihood constraints. Approximately 43% of Hondurans live in rural areas, where over 60% of households subsist below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2020). The primary career option is small-scale, low-resource, hillside farming; however, inheritance practices often result in land fragmentation, and acquisition of additional land holdings can be financially unattainable for young people (Roquas, 2002). Furthermore, agrarian households are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, extreme weather events, and seasonal food insecurity (Classen et al., 2008; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2012; Ivanoff, 2012). While national statistics suggest that young Hondurans receive an average of 10.2 years of schooling (UNDP, 2019c)[18], youth living in remote communities experience economic and geographic barriers to accessing even basic education, thus limited their alternative livelihood options. Migration is a common response to livelihood instability, limited opportunities, and insufficient resource access in rural areas. This trend has grown among rural youth, with patterns of distress migration raising concerns around well-being and quality of life (Villegas, 2019).

The aim of this study was to complete a participatory impact evaluation of over 18 years of youth-targeted rural development programming implemented in Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro by *La Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (The Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers, Spanish acronym: FIPAH). Analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data through a realist lens, the study describes *how*, *why*, *when,* and *for whom* FIPAH's youth programming has had a positive impact throughout the years. More specifically, the study identifies key program mechanisms that participants described as having facilitated meaningful livelihood outcomes in the short- and long-term. These mechanisms are organized into three impact pathways, which are interpreted through the lens of the Human Development and Capabilities Approach (HDCA).

Context for the study

La Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras (The Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers, Spanish acronym: FIPAH) has offered youth-targeted livelihood development programming in rural areas of Honduras since

[18] Honduras has the lowest level of education in Central America (República de Honduras, 2019). The expected years of schooling in Honduras can be compared to Guatemala at 10.6 (UNDP, 2019b), El Salvador at 12.0 (UNDP, 2019a), and Nicaragua at 12.2 (UNDP, 2019d).

2000. Expanding on their existing adult-targeted initiatives[19], FIPAH established youth-led *Comités de Investigación Agrícola Local* (Local Agricultural Research Committees, Spanish acronym: CIALs). CIAL activities center on agricultural field trials that are designed to improve local seed varieties and test agro-ecological production strategies (Ashby et al., 2000). FIPAH has incorporated other forms of capacity development into their youth-targeted programming as well, including vocational training in the trades, support for formal educational pursuits, business skill development, gender sensitization training, leadership development, as well as civic and moral formation. In the initial phase of youth-targeted programming (2000 – 2007), FIPAH focused on engaging youth in creative problem-solving tasks regarding food and nutrition security, agricultural productivity, and natural resource management (Project plan - FIPAH, 2000).

In 2007, FIPAH became the main Honduran implementing agency for a large-scale youth-targeted rural development intervention known as *Con Derecho a un Futuro* (With the Right to a Future, Spanish acronym: CDF)[20]. This second phase of FIPAH's youth-targeted programming expanded on their established network of youth CIALs (Project plan - CDF, 2007). FIPAH specialized in agricultural and environmental education while overseeing programming logistics for other specialist organizations (see Figure 1). Stable funding and strong inter-organizational partnerships enabled FIPAH to scale their existing program both up and out, reaching more rural youth with more formative development opportunities. The CDF project was launched in 2008, targeting youth ages 15-23. The project ran for five years (2008 – 2012, inclusive).

When the CDF project ended, FIPAH's youth CIALs continued, but with a smaller operating budget. During this third phase of programming, FIPAH's implementation style resembled programming strategies from the early years (2000-2007, pre-CDF). Staff members creatively leveraged resources and opportunistically forming partnerships in order to maximize the quality, scale, and scope of their work. Overall, FIPAH's commitment to supporting rural youth has persisted and even strengthened throughout the years. Their goal is to help rural youth establish sustainable rural livelihoods in order to mitigate experiences of distress-driven outmigration.

[19] See Classen et al., 2008; Gomez et al., 2018; Humphries et al., 2012; Humphries, Gallardo, Jimenez, & Sierra, 2005; Humphries, Gonzales, Jimenez, & Sierra, 2000; Humphries et al., 2015 for insights into FIPAH's adult CIALs
[20] The CDF project was funded by the Development Fund of Norway in Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

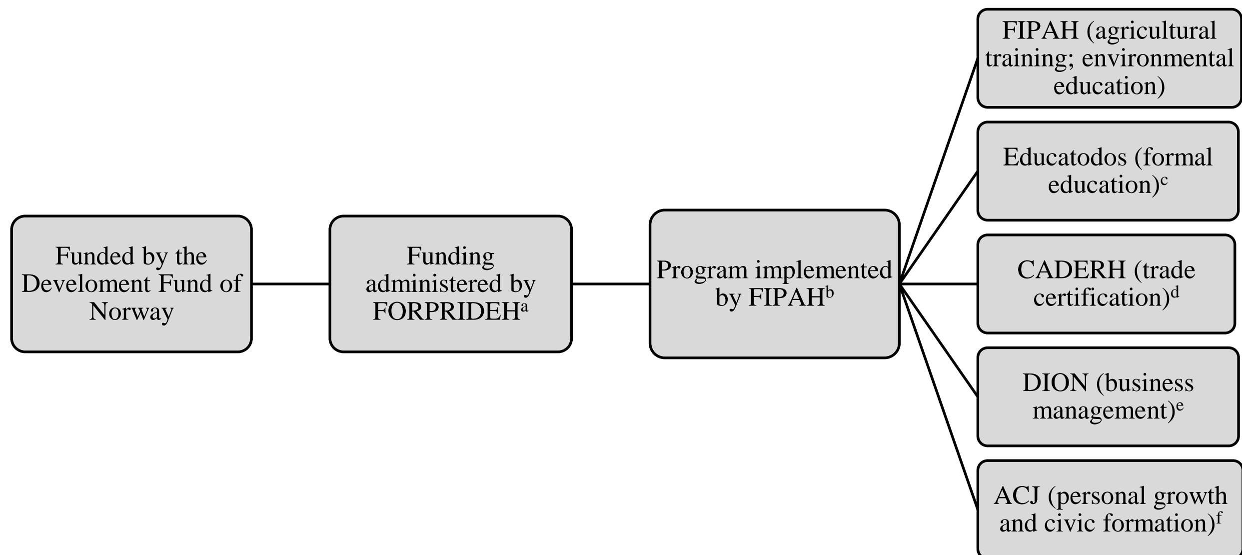

Figure 1: Structure of the *Con Derecho a un Futuro* (With the Right to a Future) project, implemented by FIPAH from 2008-2012 (inclusive), targeting youth (ages 15-23) from remote communities in the municipalities of Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro.

*[a]**FORPRIDEH** (Spanish acronym) is the Federation of Organizations for the Development of Honduras; [b]**FIPAH** (Spanish acronym) is the Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; [c]**Educatodos**, meaning "educate all", is a Honduran government-based initiative run by volunteers; [d]**CADERH** (Spanish acronym) is the Advisory Center for Human Resource Development; [e]**DION** is a branch of the Youth Center; [f]**ACJ** (Spanish acronym) is the Association of Christian Youth.*

Figure 2: A timeline of FIPAH's youth programming phases between 2000 and 2019.

[a] Key partner organizations included CIAT (Center for Tropical Agriculture), USC Canada (Unitarian Service Committee of Canada), the University of British Columbia and the University of Guelph (both in Canada). In particular, USC Canada began supporting FIPAH in 2000, covering salaries for FIPAH staff and providing funding for vehicles, facilities, etc. throughout the youth programming phases.
[b] Key partner organizations included FORPRIDEH (Spanish acronym: Federation of Organizations for the Development of Honduras), Educatodos (meaning "educate all"; a Honduran government-based initiative run by volunteers), CADERH (Spanish acronym: Advisory Center for Human Resource Development), DION (branch of the Youth Center), and ACJ (Spanish acronym: Association of Christian Youth).
[c]USC Canada (now SeedChange) has continued to support FIPAH's youth programming to the present.
[d] Key partner organizations included the University of Waterloo and the University of Guelph (both in Canada).

Capabilities, Human Development, and Youth Empowerment

The findings from this study are discussed through the lens of the HDCA[21], which is designed to promote human flourishing at all ages and in all settings (UNDP, 2020). Finding its roots in Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach (CA) (Sen, 1999), the HDCA focuses on increasing opportunities that people have reason to value, and expanding the freedom of choice that people experience in navigating those opportunities. Through the lens of the HDCA, "the process of development should *at least* create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests" (UNDP, 1990, p1, emphasis added).

Intrinsic to the HDCA is the concept of agency. An individual must "exercise their reasoned agency" (Sen, 1999, pg xii) in order to navigate the factors that facilitate or constrain their capabilities so that they can achieve the human functionings that they value. This act requires that individuals *have* agency, are *aware* of their agency, and that they *make use* of their agency to achieve these ends (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Kleine, 2010). In this way, the HDCA is linked with the empowerment literature. Empowerment theories integrate human development concepts at both the individual and collective levels (Zimmerman, 1990). Acknowledging that optimal human development is facilitated through a reciprocal relationship between individual and collective agency, empowerment theories address both personal and structural factors that affect agency, and thus influence human flourishing. The integration of empowerment theories with the HDCA helps facilitate discussions around creating conducive environments for growth.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a youth empowerment model that applies human development concepts directly to young people. This prosocial, strengths-based approach to youth-targeted programming focuses on the positive potential of young people to contribute meaningfully toward their communities and societies (Damon, 2004; Olenik, 2019). It is backed by the literature on youth empowerment, positive psychology, and adolescent development (Alvarado et al., 2017; Damon, 2004; Zimmerman, 1990). PYD describes various conditions that help to create a conducive environment for the expansion of young peoples' capabilities, thus

[21] The Capabilities Approach and the Human Development Approach are intrinsically linked and the terms are often used interchangeably (Nussbaum, 2011). For the purposes of this paper, "the HDCA" will be used with recognition that it encompasses the CA.

actively promoting the development of their full potential. Some of these conditions include engagement in positive relationships with adults, access to knowledge and resources, participation in constructive learning environments, and development of leadership skills (Damon, 2004; Olenik, 2019).

Concepts associated with the HDCA, as related to empowerment theories like PYD, prove useful in understanding and interpreting the successes of FIPAH's youth-targeted interventions. Connections with these theoretical approaches to development help link the study findings to other bodies of research that can be used to inform successful rural development interventions for youth. Most notably, connections to the HDCA position this study within emerging literature regarding applications of the CA to youth-targeted programming in low resource settings (for example, Lopez-Fogues & Melis Cin, 2017). Furthermore, connections to PYD allow this study to address a literature gap regarding the efficacy of PYD principles and programming strategies in low- and middle-income countries (Alvarado et al., 2017). Evaluating more than 18 years of programming experience in remote communities, this study provides particularly rich insight to contribute to these areas of literature.

Methods

Study location

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá in Central Honduras and the Municipality of Yorito, Yoro in Northern Honduras. Both municipalities are made up of a town in a valley, surrounded by remote, hillside communities. Maize and beans are staple crops and coffee is the main cash crop (Beaudette, 2000; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; Ivanoff, 2012), but droughts and other impacts of climate change have threatened agricultural productivity, food security, and the sustainability of rural livelihoods (Classen et al., 2008; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; FAO, 2016; Kocsis, 2011). Agriculture labour is traditionally dominated by men, while women take on household roles and caretaking tasks (Humphries et al., 2012; Ivanoff, 2012). Educational opportunities are limited, and many youth start working at a young age, helping on the family farm or earning wages through day labour on other local farms. The coffee harvest is a key source of income for day labourers and a driver of short-term migration between rural communities (Kocsis, 2011). Migration to Honduran cities or

other countries is a focal point in community discourses around livelihood strategizing (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Ivanoff, 2012) (also, see Chapter 4).

Practical participatory approach

This study was informed by the principles of practical participatory evaluation (P-PE) (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). A key objective of P-PE is to use participatory methods in order to ensure the relevance of study findings and enhance their utility for organizational decision-making and broader community development. To these ends, FIPAH staff members and youth leaders from both study locations played active roles in identifying research questions, planning the study design, developing data collection tools, collecting data, and supporting analysis. These stakeholders worked alongside Canadian and Honduran researchers to form the research team. Youth leaders shared valuable perspectives from the program's target population. FIPAH staff members gave important contextual and historical background on program theory and implementation processes. Staff members also provided access to organizational documents in order to clarify the program design and further explicate program delivery experiences throughout all three phases of implementation. These perspectives were used to situate the research findings in their broader context, in alignment with realist approaches to evaluation (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Floate et al., 2019; Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012).

Quantitative data collection and analysis

In 2018, the research team compiled demographic information on former youth CIAL members from the two study locations. Initial data were drawn from organizational records. Information was verified and additional data were collected through direct contact with former program participants, reliable family members, or community informants. The final spreadsheet included basic demographic information (e.g. sex, home community), details of program involvement (e.g. years of participation, leadership roles), and subsequent livelihood trajectories (e.g. location and occupation). Descriptive statistics were calculated across all phases of program implementation using Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

Between 2018 and 2019, the research team conducted semi-structured interviews with current and former participants in FIPAH's youth programming across the two study locations. An open-ended interview guide was used to explore motivations for program participation, key outcomes

related to learning and growth, and recommendations for FIPAH's future youth-related work. Respondents were purposively selected in order to maximize the information power of the sample (Malterud et al., 2016). The research team collaborated to select individuals who represented a diversity of program experiences and subsequent livelihood trajectories, with particular consideration given to educational and career pursuits, as well as migration decisions, which are explored in greater depth elsewhere (see Chapter 4). The sample included a representative proportion of female and male respondents from all phases of FIPAH's youth programming history. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and were audio recorded.

Interviews were transcribed into Spanish from audio recordings. Taking an interpretive approach, transcriptions were coded using a combination of deductive and inductive strategies, as described by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). *A priori* coding categories were structured around an adaptation of the interview guide, and deductive codes were developed based on familiarization with the interview content. Data-driven (inductive) codes were noted separately during the first round of coding and were added to the codebook after initial review. A secondary coding process ensured that all data were considered in light of all codes. Coding was completed in NVivo 12.6 qualitative analysis software.

In order to understand how the program facilitated different livelihood outcomes among participants, coded data were analyzed through a realist lens (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Floate et al., 2019; Rycroft-Malone et al., 2012). Based on respondents' descriptions of their program experiences, key program mechanisms were identified as being associated with positive short- and long-term livelihood outcomes. Mechanisms were understood as components of the program that brought about meaningful change in the lives of participants (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Individual mechanisms were organized into three impact pathways in order to illustrate how program components worked in tandem to generate positive short- and long-term outcomes. Impact pathways are presented in the results section. Supportive quotations were translated prior to insertion into the manuscript using conceptually-equivalent translation strategies (Smith et al., 2008; van Nes et al., 2010). Contextual factors associated with the mechanisms, pathways, and outcomes are used to situate and interpret the findings in the discussion. The study is positioned in existing literature on the HDCA and youth empowerment strategies such as PYD.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics approvals were obtained from the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo in Canada. Prior to data collection, an explanation of the study was provided and informed consent was obtained from each research participant.

Results

Demographic trends

Demographic information was validated for 1596 former program participants, representing 83.3% of all youth CIAL members who were involved in the program between 2000 and 2018. These data are presented in Table 2. Program participants came from 36 rural communities across the two study locations: 25 communities in Yorito and 11 communities in Jesús de Otoro. During the CDF project (2008-2012), the scope of FIPAH's youth programming peaked, with 34 different rural communities running youth CIALs.

Women made up 57.5% of all participants, consistently representing more than half of participants in each programming phase. When these data were collected, the majority of youth were living in Honduras, with 63.7% residing in their home communities. This proportion was higher among more recent program participants, the youngest cohort of youth CIAL members. Intuitively, this cohort also had the highest proportion of students and the lowest proportion of international migrants. Of former participants, 6.7% had migrated internationally, with the highest proportion among the oldest cohort.

Among those living in Honduras, 19.6% indicated that agriculture was their primary profession[22]. Furthermore, 29.2% of participants identified as *amas de casa* (housewives), with these 462 women representing 50.3% of all female participants. The proportion of farmers and *amas de casa* (homemakers) was highest among participants in the CDF project, which may reflect the broader reach of FIPAH's programming at that time, since agricultural occupations

[22] When indicating their occupation, study participants tended to report the activity that generated the most income or took the most time, even if they had multiple jobs. Of note, many people produce staple crops in addition to their primary career, and many women engage in income-generating activities, but identify as "*amas de casa*".

and traditional gender roles are more deeply entrenched in remote communities. In total, 12.1% of former participants were working in *maquilas* (factories)[23] at the time of data collection.

Table 2: Demographic data on youth from Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro in Honduras who participated in FIPAH's youth CIAL program across three phases implemented between 2000 and 2018 (n=1,596)

	Phase 1: Early years[1] (2000-2007)	Phase 2: CDF project[2,3] (2008-2012)	Phase 3: Ongoing[4] (2013-2018)	Total
General	*n=198*	*n=1078*	*n=320*	*n=1596*
Females (%)	103 (52.02)	634 (58.81)	181 (56.56)	918 (57.52)
Average years involved (SD)[5]	4.08 (1.40)	3.39 (1.84)	2.96 (0.78)	3.39 (1.66)
Deceased (%)	5 (2.52)	8 (0.74)	0 (0.00)	13 (0.81)
Total # of communities represented[6]	6	34	9	36
Current location[7]	*n=193*	*n=1070*	*n=320*	*n=1583*
Home community (%)	114 (59.07)	649 (60.65)	246 (76.86)	1009 (63.74)
Internal migrants (%)	51 (26.42)	349 (32.62)	67 (20.94)	467 (29.50)
International migrants (%)	28 (14.51)	72 (6.73)	7 (2.19)	107 (6.76)
Primary occupation[8]	*n=165*	*n=998*	*n=313*	*n=1476*
Agriculture (%)	32 (19.39)	226 (22.65)	52 (16.61)	310 (21.00)
Amas de casa (%)	33 (20.00)	353 (35.37)	76 (24.28)	462 (31.30)
Students (%)	1 (0.61)	54 (5.41)	114 (36.42)	169 (11.45)
Maquila (%)	32 (19.39)	124 (12.42)	35 (11.18)	191 (12.94)
Others (%)[9]	67 (40.61)	241 (24.15)	36 (11.50)	344 (23.31)

1) Includes individuals whose membership ended in 2008, but did not extend into the CDF project
2) Includes participants who started their membership before the CDF project and ended afterwards, as well as those who started or ended during the project
3) All participants from Jesús de Otoro were listed under the CDF project
4) Includes individuals whose membership started in 2012, but extended beyond the CDF project
5) SD = standard deviation
6) Shows the number of communities in each phase. Some communities overlapped across phases; therefore, the total number of communities is smaller than the sum of the number of communities in each phase.
7) Excludes deceased individuals
8) Excludes deceased individuals and international migrants
9) Includes careers in beauty, clergy, communication, education, business, government, trades, non-governmental organizations, professional careers, health, public services, domestic work, and transportation

Table 3 presents demographic data on 94 respondents from interviews conducted between 2018 and 2019. These respondents represented youth CIALs from 30 rural communities across the two study locations. Over 75.5% had completed at least one year of secondary-level education[24],

[23] *Maquilas* are foreign-owned factories that produce goods destined for export. Honduras has one of the largest *maquila* industries in the world (Asociación Hondureña de Maquiladoras, n.d.)

[24] The Honduran school system is divided into 3-year cycles: the primary cycle (years 1-3); the basic cycle (until year 6); the common cycle (until year 9); and *colegio* (years 10-12). In *colegio,* students begin to specialize into academic or vocational fields (See also Marshall et al., 2014).

including almost 43.6% holding the equivalent to a high school diploma and over 12.7% holding a university degree[25].

Table 3: Demographic data of youth from Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro in Honduras who participated in semi-structured interviews between 2018 and 2019 regarding their involvement in FIPAH's youth CIAL program (n=94)

	Phase 1: Early years (2000-2007)	Phase 2: CDF project[1,2] (2008-2012)	Phase 3: Ongoing[3] (2013-2019)	Total
General	*n=13*	*n=62*	*n=19*	*n=94*
Females (%)	10 (76.92)	36 (58.06)	10 (52.63)	56 (59.57)
Average age (SD)[4]	33.23 (4.09)	26.61 (5.34)	23.53 (6.53)	26.90 (6.09)
Ninth grade or above (%)	13 (100)	47 (75.81)	11 (57.89)	71 (75.53)
Average years involved (SD)	4.23 (1.74)	5.06 (3.60)	3.89 (3.16)	4.71 (3.33)
Total # of communities represented[5]	2	23	11	30
Current location	*n=13*	*n=62*	*n=19*	*n=94*
Home community (%)	11 (84.62)	43 (69.35)	19 (100)	73 (77.66)
Internal migrants (%)	1 (7.69)	14 (22.58)	0	15 (15.96)
International migrants (%)	1 (7.69)	5 (8.06)	0	6 (6.38)
Primary occupation[6]	*n=12*	*n=57*	*n=19*	*n=88*
Agriculture (%)	2 (15.38)	12 (19.35)	9 (47.37)	23 (24.47)
Amas de casa (%)	2 (15.38)	15 (24.19)	3 (15.79)	20 (21.28)
Students (%)	0	6 (9.68)	3 (15.79)	9 (9.57)
Maquila (%)	1 (7.69)	1 (1.61)	0	2 (2.13)
Other (%)[7]	7 (53.85)	23 (37.10)	4 (21.05)	34 (36.17)

1) Includes participants who started their membership before the CDF project and ended afterwards, as well as those who started or ended during the project
2) All participants from Jesús de Otoro were listed under the CDF project
3) Includes individuals whose membership started in 2012, but extended beyond the CDF project
4) SD = standard deviation
5) Shows the number of communities in each phase. Some communities overlapped across phases; therefore, the total number of communities is smaller than the sum of the number of communities in each phase.
6) Excludes international migrants
7) Includes careers in beauty, communication, education, business, government, trades, non-governmental organizations, professional careers, health, public services, and domestic work

The proportions of interview respondents from each phase of programming corresponded with the proportions of former participants represented in Table 2. Approximately 13.8% of interview respondents were involved during the early years of programming (12.4% of all participants);

[25] Forty-one interview respondents indicated that they had completed *colegio* and twelve participants indicated that they had a university degree. It should be noted that support for formal education was a component of FIPAH's program, contributing to higher education level than would be typical for youth in rural Honduran communities. Furthermore, part of FIPAH's programming strategy was to implement youth CIALs through local *colegios,* so a considerable proportion of youth who are represented in the quantitative data (n=960), as well as some interview respondents (n=29), had engaged with the program in the context of their secondary school courses.

almost 66.0% of interviewees were involved during the CDF project (67.5% of all participants); and 20.2% of respondents were involved post-CDF (20.1% of all participants). There were similar proportions of females (57.5% Table 2; 62.8% Table 3), agriculturalists (19.6%; 24.5%), students (10.6%; 9.6%), and emigrants (6.7%; 6.4%) in both groups as well. Interviewees represented a smaller proportion of *maquila* workers (2.1%; 12.1%), and *amas de casa* (21.3%; 29.2%) than participants represented in Table 2.

Impact pathways: connecting mechanisms and outcomes

Interview respondents expressed overwhelmingly positive experiences in FIPAH's youth programming and consistently attributed positive livelihood outcomes to their participation. For example, one female respondent described the program as follows:

> The essential part is that CIALs are an opportunity, an opportunity for young people who have a desire to embark on a new life today. The situation in which we are living is very difficult, but with these groups we not only learn, but we learn to become leaders, to have the motivation to start up our own businesses, to find a solution, an alternative, to generate income for our own families. CIALs have been one of the groups that have given us the most at a key moment to be able to change our lives, and to change our way of life, and the way we see things (F24, Y46)

Three impact pathways are described in this section, including *transformative participation*, *meaningful collaboration*, and *low-risk experimentation*. These pathways trace the connections between key mechanisms described by respondents, and the short- and long-term outcomes that respondents associated with their program involvement. These associations were identified across programming phases, and were particularly strong among CDF participants (phase 2).

Transformative participation

Transformative participation refers to the personal growth that respondents experienced through program involvement, helping them become more active participants in program activities and more active members of the broader community. FIPAH's programming gave rural youth a reason to get out of the house and interact with different kinds of people. Many respondents indicated that they were shy and timid before participating. Young women, in particular, described spending a limited amount of time outside of their family home, where many held traditional roles as home makers and care providers. Both women and men identified FIPAH's

youth programming as a supportive space in which to practice social skills and build social networks. One male respondent described his experience of overcoming shyness through involvement in the CDF project:

> Before the CDF project arrived, I was a young person who was very shy. I looked at the FIPAH agronomists and could not socialize because I was afraid of them. Similarly, I looked at other young people from other communities or from the same community and… I didn't have the confidence to speak or say hello to anyone. While I was in the CDF project, we learned how to work in a group […]. We received training from the technicians, we started not to be afraid, not to have shame in public. […] Since [the project], I have participated as an event moderator in open forum councils, so in this regard, I think it is something that has helped me personally (M25, O13).

Notably, interviewees indicated that it was not simply the *opportunity* to interact that contributed to a loss of fear and shyness, but the *manner* of those interactions. Young people shared that they felt accepted and valued as program participants, regardless of their gender, social status, faith practice, or education level. Some respondents even described their CIAL group as a "family". In this way, the inclusive space that FIPAH created in their youth program served as an important mechanism for program involvement and personal development among participants. Non-discriminatory inclusion was particularly important in shifting from dichotomous gender roles toward group solidarity. In this setting, traditional gender roles are normative, and a culture of *machismo* (an exaggerated form of masculinity) contributes to ongoing gender discrimination (Humphries et al., 2012; Kar, Pascual, & Chickering, 1999; Ortega Hegg et al., 2005). As shown in the demographic information, however, across all phases of FIPAH's program, more than half of participants were female. Respondents indicated that the program promoted gender equality in both explicit and implicit ways. First, as one woman explained, participants were instructed on the rights of women and youth through program workshops:

> Before we… well, personally I thought that we as young people did not have rights or opportunities, and as women also, because sometimes we felt discriminated against. But no, from the workshops and all that, they have helped us as youth and as women. Well, we also have all the same rights… values and rights that we all have as people and as brothers and sisters (F27, O26)

In addition to formal teaching, gender equality was both demonstrated and practiced through the program design. Participants worked side-by-side in all program activities, regardless of whether

the work was traditionally considered “men’s” or “women’s”. Interviewees were especially impacted by the realization that women could perform agricultural labour and men could complete household tasks. Female respondents, in particular, associated these shifts in perspective with an elevation of their self-esteem and an increase in their confidence to make contributions beyond traditional gender roles. For example, one young woman identified how her perspective shifted in relation to societal norms:

> Well, I learned [about] my self-worth as a woman because, really, for a long time women were not given opportunities either within community-level organizations or at the national level. Women had to be, as they say, only doing housework (F32, Y21)

Both male and female interviewees expressed surprise at realizing their own capabilities, and the capabilities of their peers, through these shared tasks. One young man reflected on his observations from working alongside the women in his group:

> Regarding gender, I must say that what changed me the most was to learn, well, to realize that in the matter of gender, men and women have the same capacities. And that there are some who have capacities that stand out in one respect or another. Then I learned that, first of all, men and women are equal in their possibilities and that when you accept that, you can discover the talents that each person has (M25, Y23)

By practicing gender equality directly through program activities, this respondent indicated that he was able to move beyond gender divisions. Instead of defining his female peers by their sex, he could consider their skills, interests, and potential as individuals. In this way, establishing gender equality within the groups was a key mechanism in unifying rural youth. By moving beyond dichotomous gender roles, program participants were able to engage one another as true peers, pursuing interests, developing skills, and making community contributions together[26]. Notably, one female respondent distinguished FIPAH’s approach to gender equality from other forms of gender empowerment that she had observed:

> Some of my peers felt less than the opposite sex, but they realized that they were capable, thanks to the training we received in FIPAH. In this regard, I would like to highlight the part of gender equity that FIPAH developed differently [to other organizations]. There are many organizations that put so much emphasis on

[26] During the CDF project in particular, FIPAH’s programming built on this solidarity to empower youth in their civic rights and motivate them in their responsibilities as citizens.

> *machismo* and feminism, that each of the sexes comes to hate the other. But at FIPAH they taught us [to be open to positive gender attributes] [and] it was amazing, really, because we became a beautiful family (F27, O28)

This respondent distinguished between gender empowerment programs that divide the sexes and gender empowerment strategies that build supportive community. Overall, many respondents described their experience in FIPAH's program as "formative" and discussed the ways that it shaped them as people. They connected enhanced social skills, improved gender relations, heightened confidence, and elevated self-esteem with their ability to engage meaningfully in program activities and to pursue livelihood opportunities beyond the program. Therefore, the mechanisms associated with *transformative participation*, created a foundation of solidarity, active engagement, and personal growth on which participants built.

Meaningful collaboration

Meaningful collaboration encompasses the opportunities that program participants experienced to collaborate and contribute toward community development initiatives. There were few institutions and organizations offering youth-targeted programming in the study communities. As a result, there were limited opportunities for youth to come together in a formal and organized way. Respondents identified FIPAH's youth program as a key exception, expressing that unity and organization with other youth was a fundamentally valuable aspect of their program experience. In this way, the structure offered in FIPAH's youth CIALs acted as a motivating mechanism for youth involvement. Some individuals associated their program participation with the avoidance of "vices". They contrasted program activities with social issues in their communities, such as drug and alcohol use as well as early pregnancy. In this regard, one young woman described a shift in her perspective through participation:

> Yes, there have been many changes, because, for example, let's say that when you are young, […] let's say you go down the bad roads. On the other hand, when you are working in groups of young people, you try to support each other, and then this helps you see life differently. That one cannot only go the easy way, but rather, you have to go looking for solutions in life (F22, O23)

Rather than "[going] down bad roads", as this young woman states, program participants valued the opportunity to collaborate with their peers on constructive projects with positive goals.

Whether working together in agriculture, microenterprise, or social work (e.g. environmental cleaning campaigns, community construction projects, fundraising for scholarship provision, etc.), interviewees expressed satisfaction in being able to align their efforts with community needs and follow through to see meaningful results. For example, one young woman described sharing her CIAL's agricultural products at a seed fair with other groups of producers:

> We had the opportunity to share between all the CIALs. And the seed fairs were really interesting because they comprised all the products that we had succeeded [in growing] and it was like the pride of taking the years [of work] and presenting them. And feeling proud of what we had done (F20, O27)

Team initiatives were a mechanism through which young people made meaningful community contributions during the program. Particularly during the CDF project, young people launched cleaning campaigns, fundraising initiatives, and resource management activities within their communities. Some groups contributed to community building projects, others produced and sold agricultural products, various youth taught modules on health and wellness to other young people, and others advocated for the establishment of an Office for Youth in their municipality. Youth in all programming phases designed their team projects collaboratively, and engaged in group problem-solving and decision-making. Respondents expressed self-assurance to share their own ideas and opinions during group discussions, and had the humility to give others space to do the same. They discussed how practical experiences, such as dividing tasks and sharing responsibilities, acted as a mechanism to prepare them to engage in similar endeavours in the future. For example, this young woman expressed confidence to take initiative in future projects:

> I am no longer the same shy person that I was […] I am not afraid to undertake [a project] because now I see it from another point of view. If I could do it before why can't I do it now? It is like the hand that gave me a push toward the light to allow me to see and to help me realize that nothing was impossible. Having the will and the knowledge that I acquired, really, today I am not afraid to undertake a project by myself (F24, Y46)

Interviewees described learning skills in teamwork, leadership, and project management through program activities. They indicated that rotating through leadership roles in the CIALs helped to expand their skills and experience, giving them the confidence to take on leadership roles in community organizations. In this way, leadership development within the program was a

mechanism for ongoing community engagement. One young man described the long-term implications of this skill development:

> Well, we have been recognized as leaders. And other colleagues who were in the CIAL group […], they are also part of the leadership group that exists in the communities. I have seen how there are people from the communities, from the youth, who are involved on the water boards *(juntas de agua)*, on the administrative boards of drinking water projects, on community councils (*patronatos)*, and in the other social groups that exist in the community such as church groups, soccer groups, youth groups. I have seen that there is good leadership and that it has brought development through that. (M32, O10)

Respondents felt that their community involvement during the program elevated their status among community members, so that they were recognized and accepted as leaders in the short- and long-term. They attributed this shift in status to the fact that other community members observed their capabilities through program activities. Interviewees felt that they had a positive impact on community development, perceiving that their CIAL activities inspired other community members toward positive change. Participants themselves were inspired by their experiences of *meaningful collaboration* within the CIAL teams. As one young woman stated:

> [I learned] that young people who are organized, well, there is nothing that is difficult for them, and with the support of organizations such as the CDF project it is very useful. It helps young people formulate long-term visions, and also to look toward a future, to help them improve… to have a better quality of life (F32, O29).

Overall, respondents valued the program as "an opportunity to be organized". Working in solidarity, they learned to appreciate the power of teamwork by applying themselves to make positive contributions to their communities. Furthermore, they practiced leadership skills which they could continue applying beyond the program. Through the mechanisms associated with *meaningful collaboration*, therefore, rural youth not only made contributions in and through the CIAL groups, but they also developed the confidence and drive to actively engage in broader community development in the long-term.

Low-risk experimentation

Low-risk experimentation refers to the ways that FIPAH's program enabled youth to engage in broad exploration of educational and vocational interests. In communities with few livelihood

options and highly risk-averse populations, FIPAH offered interpersonal and resource support for formal educational pursuits, training in technical agriculture and various trades, as well as business skill formation. The youth CIAL program, therefore, provided a low-risk environment to try new activities and practice various skillsets. Respondents highlighted the diversity of experiences itself as a valuable dimension of their program involvement, with positive implications for their short- and long-term livelihood stability. For example, one male respondent associated knowledge expansion with improvements to his economic situation:

> From the moment I joined the CIAL, I started acquiring different types of knowledge and that has given me many opportunities to generate income. Because the learning we have had through the project was extensive and we had ample opportunity to acquire resources in many ways. […] I have seen that I have improved a lot and the financial need that was there before is more limited. Similarly, there are many families who, like me, use the same practices and have adopted technology. I have seen that it is very important to be organized (M38, Y39)

As this respondent explains, breadth of program experience acted as a mechanism to facilitate livelihood opportunities for rural youth. These opportunities facilitated livelihood diversification strategies and contributed to perceived improvements in livelihood stability. Programming diversity was particularly pronounced during the CDF project. The following sub-sections provide examples of *low-risk experimentation* in the context of formal educational pursuits, agricultural training, and financial and business management.

Educational pursuits

For youth in remote communities, accessing formal education was both economically and geographically complex. Interviewees indicated that, prior to program involvement, many young people walked for hours to attend the nearest education center while others lacked the finances to study at all. In all phases of FIPAH's programming, young people were able to access scholarships and loans to support their educational aspirations. One young man described the program as a hub for such resources:

> With the CIAL, getting involved is very important because from there opportunities are generated regarding how to study, how to continue studies or win scholarships to go study abroad or right here within the country at universities. Always, if you want to study, then you should never waste the opportunity if you get it. There are young people who have known how to make use of such opportunities and who have completed their studies and who are now great figures in the communities and who

> have truly come to help community development (M25, Y35)

During the CDF project, formal education was made particularly accessible and equitable through a specialist organization that had partnered with FIPAH[27]. Even in the most remote areas, young people involved in the youth CIALs during this programming phase were able to reach secondary-level education within their home communities for free. One young woman described the impact of this opportunity on her migration decisions:

> I was thinking of going out to work because more than anything I wanted to study. And thanks to FIPAH who supported us, I could study here and complete the ninth grade and there was no need to go to another place. More than anything, in the community, I could achieve what I wanted. (F28, O15)

While this young woman would have pursued employment through migration in order to support her studies, FIPAH's programming enabled her to achieve educational goals from home. Other respondents described similar shifts in their mobility requirements through local provision of educational opportunities. Participants aspiring toward higher levels of education, such as the male respondent quoted above, described leveraging program resources to facilitate those pursuits. In both circumstances, FIPAH's program lowered the investment requirements for rural youth to explore their educational interests, thus lowering the risk of their formal educational pursuits. With these educational supports as mechanisms, young people were able to pursue academic interests both within and beyond rural communities.

Agricultural production

Using the CIAL methodology (Ashby et al., 2000), participants in FIPAH's youth CIAL program established experimental plots to identify crops and production strategies that were most effective in local growing conditions. In the context of these field trials, interviewees described learning new planting techniques, diversifying crop varieties, employing organic practices, and engaging in agroforestry. Notably, they referred to this work as "technical agriculture". Respondents associated this agricultural training with adapting to climate change, mitigating food insecurity, and improving household income. For example, one young woman

[27] *Educatodos* is a Honduran government-based initiative run by volunteers (Marshall et al., 2014). During the CDF project, the Development Fund of Norway funded the purchase of curricula and provided a stipend to volunteer teachers. Volunteers were organized into regional networks. Their work was overseen by a regional coordinator and they received training periodically.

used her program knowledge to introduce new crops into her family's food production system:

> They taught us how to make a nursery, and from there they provided us with the seed to grow vegetables. So you could really help the household economy, planting vegetables, because some were sold or used for personal consumption. […] We had the basis to… really cultivate, to work. We received the knowledge of how to do it, so we could now do it alone, and we could say to our parents, "look what I did" (F20, O27).

As shown in the demographic information, 19.6% of program participants went on to establish careers in agriculture. Many others engaged in agriculture as a secondary profession, grew staple crops to support their family, or maintained a kitchen garden. Respondents discussed their ongoing use of CIAL-related knowledge and skills to enhance long-term agricultural productivity both for household use and market production. For example, one young man described his crop management strategies in the face of recent droughts:

> With the *canicular* (annual dry spell between July and August), that we just saw […] [there is] a variety called *Dicta Sequia* (Drought Dicta), that we had been producing for various years in the community, which had also been identified and improved throughout the [experiment] process of youth CIALs. […] Now I know this variety is a solution to drought because all the producers lost a large part of their crops, but my little parcel (planted to *Dicta Sequia*) was not lost. This indicates that the variety was adapted [to drought], as I only watered it once so as not to lose everything. I had found a variety that is more resistant. And I felt that I had learned from this (M31, O8).

This respondent observed how seed varieties developed in the youth CIAL could contribute to long-term yield stabilization. He emphasized the importance of this stability in the face of ongoing production challenges, particularly related to climate change. Small scale field trials are a core aspect of the FIPAH's CIAL program, acting as a mechanism for risk-averse farmers to test different crop varieties and planting strategies. For youth involved in FIPAH's programming, this mechanism not only expanded their immediate agricultural skills and outputs, but prepared future farmers to engage continually in this form of *low-risk experimentation* in order to improve the long-term productivity and resilience of their crops.

Financial and business management

Through FIPAH's youth programming, participants were also trained in financial and business management, including personal savings, business planning, loan acquisition, and accounting.

Respondents described putting these skills into practice as part of their program involvement. For example, one young woman explained the application of financial management skills within her CIAL group:

> We learned to manage economic resources. I learned how to save. We also learned that when you take out a loan what the method of payment will be. Or if we give a loan, what the method of payment will be. As a CIAL, we could have a fund, but it was very important that we know how to manage it because if we only spent it, we would be left with nothing. So yes, we had to spend, but also do other activities to recover the fund that we had spent (F30, Y16)

During the CDF project, support from specialist organizations ensured that business-related training and resources were particularly accessible[28]. Various CIALs obtained loans to start micro-enterprises, and respondents indicated that these teams received support and guidance from program staff as they engaged with this low-risk opportunity to practice business strategizing and financial management. Some respondents, such as the young woman quoted below, associated these program experiences with future success in financial endeavours:

> I learned to develop personally… after the CIAL I think I was an entrepreneur. I set goals to get ahead and leave poverty behind. In the CIAL, they train you… they give workshops that help you develop as a person. Since I was really a novice, I didn't know anything. And then, thank God and thanks to the CIAL, thanks to CDF, I studied, got my family ahead and, well, I really appreciate this CDF project (F34, O25)

For this young woman, *low-risk experimentation* during the program instilled an entrepreneurial spirit that helped her push past cycles of poverty. Other respondents built on their program experiences to initiate community projects, start local businesses, and work as treasurers on organizational boards. FIPAH's provision of mentorship and resource support in small business ventures acted as a skill-development mechanism, through which youth built the confidence to undertake financial endeavours in the longer-term.

Overall, respondents described FIPAH's program as an opportunity through which they were "prepared" with skillsets that "opened doors" for them in the future. Through the mechanisms associated with *low-risk experimentation,* youth identified desirable

[28] DION, a branch of the Youth Center, provided business management training during the CDF project.

livelihood pursuits and developed professional skills to facilitate livelihood sustainability.

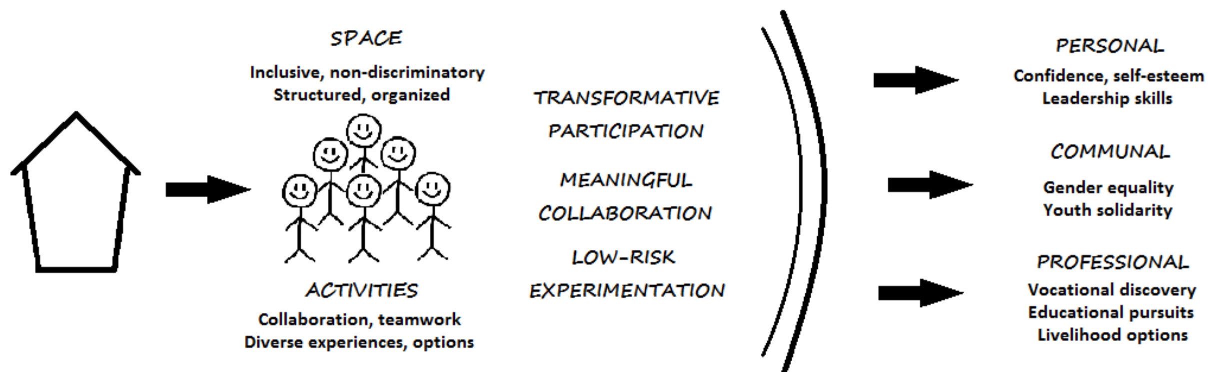

Figure 3: A visual representation of the three impact pathways through which key program mechanisms associated with FIPAH's youth CIAL program were connected to positive short- and long-term outcomes by interview respondents.

Interview respondents described mechanisms specific to the space that FIPAH created and the activities that were included within the program. Program outcomes related to personal, communal, and professional growth with short- and long-term livelihood outcomes, as described by respondents.

Discussion

The impact pathways identified in this study reflect objectives of the HDCA, to "*at least* create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests" (UNDP, 1990, p1, emphasis added). Although FIPAH's youth programming was not designed with direct influence from the HDCA, nor from PYD, these development theories and programming approaches are useful for interpreting the study findings. In the subsections below, concepts associated with these theories are used to further elucidate *how* and *why* FIPAH's program theory and implementation strategy were successful. Additionally, context specific to the program, study locations, and the socio-cultural environment is used to provide commentary on *when* FIPAH's youth programming was most successful and *for whom* the youth CIALs were particularly impactful.

A conducive environment for youth development

The communities in which FIPAH's youth CIALs were implemented were ripe for youth-targeted investment. As noted, prior to FIPAH's youth CIAL program, shared and inclusive spaces for young people were uncommon in the geographic and socio-cultural contexts of the study communities. These remote, mountainous areas are difficult to access from urban centers,

and although there were other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offering programming in some of these communities, there were few institutions offering youth-specific activities. Youth in the study communities lacked social power and young women, in particular, lacked formative development opportunities. Although these socio-cultural circumstances could have hindered program acceptance in the target communities, the study findings indicated that an absence of local opportunities for youth facilitated program uptake. With minimal competition for the time and attention of rural youth, FIPAH's youth CIAL program readily drew notice from their target population. Some interviewees described an eagerness to join FIPAH's program from the beginning. Other respondents were invited into the program by peers, or were drawn to participate after observing program impacts on other young people.

FIPAH's reputation in the target communities may have enhanced program acceptance among community members and uptake among participants. FIPAH was known and respected for their longstanding work with adult farmers (Gomez et al., 2020; Humphries et al., 2015). Their adult CIALs showed similar successes in terms of shifting gender relations and incorporating women into decision-making spaces (ASOHCIAL & Classen, 2008; Humphries et al., 2012). Furthermore, these adult-targeted groups were shown to elevate the status of marginalized community members (Classen et al., 2008). As a leader in long-term rural development, FIPAH was well-positioned to draw attention to the distinct forms of marginalization experienced by rural youth, as age intersects with socio-economic status and gender. Furthermore, FIPAH's history of effective rural development programming and their existing rapport in the target communities may have enhanced their authority to challenge traditional gender roles and age-based hierarchies endemic to the target communities, thus helping facilitate a more conducive environment for youth development.

FIPAH's programming strategies aligned with principles of the HDCA by prioritizing the empowerment of participants so that they could take ownership of decision-making processes in their lives. Through the lens of the HDCA, a sense of agency enables individuals to make reasoned choices in response to the opportunities available to them (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999; UNDP, 1990). Interview respondents described enhancements to both their individual and collective agency through program participation. Individual-level empowerment featured

prominently in the mechanisms associated with *transformative participation*, with FIPAH staff particularly supporting the self-esteem, prosocial engagement, and equal participation of all youth CIAL members. This groundwork facilitated opportunities for collective empowerment, as seen most prominently in the mechanisms associated with *meaningful collaboration.* Meanwhile, confidence-building experiences, described clearly through the mechanisms driving *low-risk experimentation,* gave youth opportunities to exercise their agency in personal educational and vocational pursuits.

FIPAH's emancipatory approach to youth programming was particularly important for elevating the status of young women, who represented 57.5% of all participants. In a meta-analysis of women's empowerment for health promotion, Kar, Pascual, & Chickering (1999) discussed "the empowerment effect of involvement" as a key factor in addressing male chauvinism and moving toward gender equality. While the review itself is dated, this concept continues to hold relevance and is certainly reflective of the experiences described by female interview respondents. In a dominant *machista* culture, the equal participation of women in FIPAH's youth CIALs was particularly notable, and female respondents indicated that participation in and of itself expanded their sense of agency.

The strategies that FIPAH employed to empower youth also align with principles of PYD. FIPAH's program theory and PYD both focus on affirming the capabilities and potential of young people in order to create a conducive environment for their growth and development. PYD is frequently contrasted with problem-centered or risk-reduction approaches to youth development, especially the criminal justice system in the United States (Damon, 2004; Olenik, 2019). In a similar way, FIPAH's positive approach to youth programming can be contrasted with the *Mano Dura* or "Heavy Hand" approach that Honduran law enforcement personnel have taken toward youth as suspects for gang involvement (Brenneman, 2014; Bruneau, 2014; Cruz, 2015). While FIPAH staff members were acutely aware of the risks and challenges faced by rural youth in navigating livelihood options, they focused on providing "developmentally appropriate structure, emotional support, positive adult interaction, and skill development" (Olenik, 2019, p. 5) to both high- and low-risk individuals.

FIPAH's commitment to serving rural youth in this way aligned with commitments in the HDCA to promote human flourishing in all settings, among all socio-economic groups (Stewart, 2019). In a socio-cultural and political environment where many young people experienced marginalization, FIPAH affirmed the value of young people and highlighted their positive attributes within the broader community. Youth CIALs, therefore, offered a structured environment that was conducive to formative development and empowered participants to pursue their potential both within and beyond the program.

Developing the full potential of young people

A key goal of the HDCA is to expand the availability of high quality opportunities so that people can pursue livelihoods that they consider meaningful and valuable (UNDP, 2020). While the HDCA focuses on freedom of choice, the ultimate goal is that individuals would use their freedom to pursue well-being and experience human flourishing (Stewart, 2019). Through the HDCA, knowledge formation is understood as a foundational capability that people can and should be afforded (Nussbaum, 2011; Stewart, 2019). However, according to baseline data from the CDF project, many youth from the study locations had completed less than a primary education prior to program involvement (FIPAH, 2008). Some were commuting to continue their studies, others were working within or outside of the community, and still others were neither working nor in education nor training. Increasing both formal and informal educational opportunities for rural youth, therefore, was one of the key ways in which FIPAH's programming helped rural youth pursue their potential.

In developmental psychology, the life stage associated with late adolescence and early adulthood (overlapping the target age range for FIPAH's youth CIALs) is commonly referred to as "emerging adulthood". Emerging adulthood is understood as an extended period of identity formation, accumulation of experiences, and development of one's personal worldview (Arnett, 2000). Although critics identify potentially negative developmental repercussions of this extended time and space (Hendry & Kloep, 2007), proponents identify ways that it can contribute to positive developmental outcomes, including the exploration and pursuit of one's potential (Arnett, 2007; Arnett & Eisenberg, 2007). The phenomenon of emerging adulthood is recognized as being most accessible to the upper middle class, who have resources and support systems that enable extensive discernment of identity and direction (Arnett, 2000; Facio &

Micocci, 2003; Galambos & Martínez, 2007; Hendry & Kloep, 2007). Among those of low socio-economic status, on the other hand, adolescence and early adulthood has been described as a time to figure out how to earn a living (Galambos & Martínez, 2007). This perspective is certainly relevant in the study locations, where many young people made decisions about livelihood trajectory based on immediate family needs as well as social expectations and resource constraints (see Chapter 4). And while FIPAH's youth programming was oriented around the establishment of sustainable rural livelihoods, it could also be argued that FIPAH offered an "emerging adulthood" experience in a setting where young people were rarely afforded such opportunities. Since formal education, vocational training, and personal development opportunities were all channeled through one program, FIPAH's youth CIALs became a nexus of formative development opportunities for rural youth. The organization acted as a hub through which youth were connected with diverse training opportunities, resources, and social networks that could facilitate their self-actualization.

FIPAH's role as a hub of information and resources was particularly evident during the CDF project. In this programming phase, FIPAH staff members coordinated the efforts of various organizations, thus offering a greater breadth of opportunities in a more streamlined way. As noted earlier, the project leveraged FIPAH's existing CIAL network in order to scale youth-targeted programming both up and out. At the time, FIPAH had around fifteen years of experience coordinating CIAL teams with adult farmers, and more than seven years of experience using the CIAL structure specifically with youth. They were well-positioned for program expansion. With stable funding and strong partnerships, the CDF project team capitalized on FIPAH's existing organizational capacity to prudently and efficiently implement an experience of high quality formative development for rural youth.

What is particularly exceptional and interesting about the "emerging adulthood" experience offered through FIPAH's youth program is that it was contextualized to rural areas. White (2012) noted that school curricula often position agrarian livelihoods as traditional and outdated. He advocated for the promotion of technical agriculture, or "smart farming," in order to help young people envision agriculture as a viable and attractive career option. FIPAH's youth CIALs effectively promoted "smart farming" by enabling youth to understand agriculture as a scientific

process that can be improved through thoughtful engagement, technical skill, and strategic experimentation. Integrating this perspective on agriculture with other forms of vocational training relevant to rural areas created a unique opportunity for young people from low resource settings to explore their interests and capabilities quite broadly, and thus realize their potential. The low risk environment offered through the program was particularly critical for this form of growth. By encouraging and facilitating experimentation in individual pursuits and in team initiatives, FIPAH enabled youth explore their potential in an environment where failure would not devastate a livelihood and success could be built upon in productive and creative ways.

Enabling young people to lead productive and creative lives

As previously noted, FIPAH's youth CIALs emerged from their adult CIAL program. FIPAH staff members observed that youth participants in adult CIALs exhibited considerable open-mindedness, energy, and creativity compared to their adult counterparts. Staff members saw that young people with fewer immediate livelihood responsibilities showed greater capacity and excitement to explore ideas and conduct experiments than adults who were supporting families. Recognizing these traits as assets, FIPAH adapted their programming approach to build on these strengths in order to expand the freedoms that participants experienced to choose what they wanted to do and be (Sen, 1999; UNDP, 2020).

Rather than treating rural youth as a homogenous population, FIPAH staff members designed a program that could be adapted to the needs and interests of different youth in different community settings. That said, FIPAH also sought to align participants' capability expansion with the gaps and needs within rural communities so that youth would experience meaningful applications of their unique energy and creativity. Staff members assessed which skill development opportunities could translate into sustainable rural livelihoods, would be desirable for program participants, and would enable youth to contribute to community development. Some capability expansion occurred within agriculture: the introduction of "technical" and experimental agriculture as an alternative to the traditional subsistence-style farming that is typical within these remote, hillside communities presented new possibilities for agricultural careers. The freedoms that youth experienced were also expanded beyond agriculture: other rural livelihood options were made accessible through vocational training and formal educational

qualifications. These provisions demonstrate FIPAH's attention to the capabilities that rural youth had *reason* to value, based on their context (Sen, 1999).

To gain further insight into the livelihood aspirations of rural youth, FIPAH staff members used participatory methods in program design and implementation, such as surveying youth to identify desirable vocational training opportunities, and allowing youth CIAL teams to choose their own collaborative projects. These strategies align with youth empowerment theories and emancipatory approaches to youth development, which emphasize ownership of development processes on the part of program participants (Ledford, Lucas, Dairaghi, & Ravelli, 2013). PYD in particular prioritizes youth-led initiatives, with the idea that young people who exercise some control over their own formative development will not only experience greater individual empowerment, but will also be more likely to take initiative in community development processes, thus contributing to collective empowerment as well (Olenik, 2019; Zimmerman, 1990). These participatory strategies provided space for youth to explore their creativity while engaging in constructive activities.

Respondents indicated that the diverse opportunities offered through the program broadened their capacity to envision livelihood possibilities, while also refining their vocational discovery and pursuit. Indeed, the demographic data presented in this study show considerable diversity in career trajectory among former program participants. Breadth of skill development may have also facilitated livelihood diversification strategies, which are crucial to the sustainability of many rural livelihoods (Bernard et al., 2017; Nygren & Myatt-Hirvonen, 2009a). However, demographic data only show primary occupations reported by participants, without providing insight into secondary or tertiary livelihood activities among these youth or within their households. While some interview respondents discussed diversification needs and strategies, this did not emerge as a major theme in the data. Importantly, however, interview respondents indicated that capability expansion through the program helped them feel equipped to take initiative in their lives and in their communities. By encouraging youth to apply their creativity in constructive ways, FIPAH's program facilitating creative approaches to sustainable rural livelihoods and community development.

Conclusion

This participatory impact evaluation identified three impact pathways associated with positive short- and long-term livelihood outcomes from over 18 years of FIPAH's youth CIAL program. Across three phases of youth-targeted rural development programming, FIPAH effectively facilitated *transformative participation*, *meaningful collaboration*, and *low risk experimentation* among rural youth from the municipalities of Jesús de Otoro and Yorito. A thorough analysis of the program mechanisms underlying these impact pathways, paired with contextual insight from the study locations and program implementation history, elucidated *how*, *why*, *when,* and *for whom* the program was particularly successful. The findings from this study can be used by policymakers and development practitioners to inform high quality, youth-targeted program theories in other low resource, rural communities.

The underlying program theory for FIPAH's youth CIAL program was found to parallel recognized development theories and programming approaches, including the HDCA and PYD. Although FIPAH did not explicitly use these theories to design their youth-targeted programming, the research findings support the efficacy of these programming approaches in the study communities. The study, therefore, contributes to emerging literature on the relevance of the HDCA in youth-targeted programs designed for low resource settings. The study also addresses a call for evidence supporting the application of PYD programming approaches in remote areas of low- and middle- income countries. Overall, FIPAH's youth CIAL program provides a rich example of development programming that goes beyond meeting basic needs to supporting the well-being and human flourishing of rural-dwelling youth.

"The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth."

Mahbub Ul Haq, 1990

Los Higueros, Yorito, Yoro, Honduras

November, 2019

Chapter 4 – *"You can settle here"*: immobility aspirations and capabilities among youth from rural Honduras

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Introduction

Beginning in 2018, the most recent "migrant crisis" at the U.S.-Mexico border has highlighted the transnational implications of social, economic, political, and environmental instability in Central American countries. A strong and polarizing political response played out between the Trump administration and Central American governments (Meyer, 2020; Ortagus, 2019). Meanwhile, international media drew attention to the stories of migrants themselves, shedding light on the barriers that these individuals faced to establishing sustainable livelihoods and experiencing health and well-being in their home communities (Campanella, 2019; Jervis et al., 2019; Lind, 2019). The focal point of this crisis was people who had left and why they had chosen to do so, with a particular emphasis on distress migration[29]. However, these discussions lacked insight into the perspectives of individuals who had chosen to stay in Central American countries, why they had chosen to do so, how they were navigating livelihood options, and whether they were experiencing well-being at home.

There is recognition of a "mobility bias" in the migration literature, meaning that researchers have focused on the drivers of migration while neglecting the factors that lead people to remain immobile (Schewel, 2020). While it is certainly logical for migration and mobility research to focus on people who *move*, some scholars have argued that examining why people do *not* move is also critical to understanding patterns of human mobility (Arango, 2000; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). Existing research has tended to frame immobility as a default choice, or has framed it in relation to mobility, with individuals who remain immobile being referred to as

[29] Distress migration has been defined as: "Movements from the usual place of residence, undertaken when the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options open to them to survive with dignity, except to migrate." (Mander & Sahgal, 2012, p. 2)

those "left behind" or "stuck" (Gaibazzi, 2010; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). There remains a dearth of literature examining immobility as an agentic livelihood choice (Schewel, 2020).

This qualitative study explores (im)mobility aspirations and decisions among youth from two rural municipalities of Honduras – including Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro – through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Using the aspiration-capability framework, as discussed by Schewel (2020), we elucidate how respondents' immobility aspirations were shaped through *retain* and *repel factors*. We go on to explain how some respondents' *capabilities to stay* were facilitated by mentors and institutions that supported the development of their *internal capabilities* and enabled the expansion of their *combined capabilities* (Nussbaum, 2011). Our findings culminate with insights into specific *internal capabilities* that youth who were practicing immobility associated with their capacity to successfully establish and sustain rural livelihoods. Overall, the study illustrates how youth in remote areas of Honduras positioned themselves as agents of their immobility decisions and contested what we refer to as the *scarcity narratives* (i.e. discourses emphasizing a lack of opportunities, resources, and livelihood options) that drive outmigration amongst their peers.

Drivers of migration in and from Honduras

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Approximately 48% of the country's 9.6 million people live below the national poverty line and 16.5% survive on less than $1.90 per day (UNDP, 2019c; World Bank, 2018c, 2018b). Despite high economic growth rates in recent years, spurred by neoliberal policies such as the privatization of natural resource management, the unequal distribution of wealth has perpetuated significant disparities in Honduras (Shipley, 2016). The country has a Gini coefficient of 52.1 (World Bank, 2018a), and while the richest 10% hold nearly 38% of the wealth in the country, the poorest 40% hold merely 11% of this wealth (UNDP, 2019c).

Livelihood instability is an important driver of migration in and from Honduras, as individuals seek more sustainable and profitable employment opportunities (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Petrozziello, 2011). In the 1970s and 1980s, when many Central Americans were migrating internationally to escape regional conflict and civil war, Hondurans were more inclined to practice internal labour migration (Gagnon, 2011). Internal migration patterns in

Honduras are closely linked with the seasonal demand for agricultural labour, as well as the *maquilas* (factories), which have provided a significant source of employment for more than four decades[30]. These migration patterns have also been shaped by social factors. Violence and insecurity have been shown to cause internal displacement, pushing Hondurans to relocate (CIPPDV, 2015; Nelson-Pollard, 2017). Meanwhile, marriage or family reunification pulls people from different regions of Honduras together.

When Honduras was hit by Hurricane Mitch (a category five hurricane) in 1998, there was a surge in international migration. By 2000, the number of Hondurans living in the United States had more than doubled from the previous decade, and was more than seven times higher than two decade earlier (Gagnon, 2011). Notably, this extreme weather event also led to a demographic shift in migration trends, with the proportion of international migrants from rural areas increasing from 40% to 53% (Quijada & Sierra, 2018). Subsequently, between 2000 and 2015, the number of Hondurans living in the United States increased an additional 88%, to over 500,000, with an estimated 70% residing without documentation (Quijada & Sierra, 2018). Within this time period, Honduras saw a series of political upheavals and an influx of violent crime, contributing to socio-political insecurity within the country. Of particular note, the 2009 arrest and exile of President Manuel Zelaya interrupted 27 years of constitutional democratic rule (Meyer, 2010; Walsh, 2010). Additionally, the country's homicide rate peaked in 2011, with 83.7 intentional deaths per 100,000 people (World Bank, 2017)[31].

Protesters have continuously called on the Honduran government to address issues with crime and impunity, environmental degradation, women's rights, access to education for children and youth, market access for smallholder farmers, and healthcare access for all demographics (Jokela-Pansini, 2016). Civil unrest has been particularly pronounced since the re-election of President Juan Orlando Hernández in 2017 through what was widely considered a rigged electoral process (The Economist, December 9, 2017; OAS, 2017). Researchers have noted another surge in outmigration since 2017 (Meyer, 2020). Most prominently, the migrant caravan

[30] *Maquilas* are foreign-owned factories that produce goods destined for export. In Honduras, the first *maquila* industrial center was established in Puerto Cortés in 1976. Honduras now has one of the largest *maquila* industries in the world (Asociación Hondureña de Maquiladoras, n.d.; República de Honduras, 1976)
[31] This was the highest rate in the world at the time.

that left San Pedro Sula in October 2018 (known colloquially as *La Caravana*), quickly grew into one of the largest Central American migrant caravans recorded, with thousands of migrants making the journey (Semple, 2018; Sieff & Partlow, 2018). This caravan triggered a crackdown on undocumented migration at the U.S.-Mexico border[32]. The Trump administration withdrew millions of dollars of foreign aid from the Northern Triangle and closed numerous long-term rural development projects implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Meyer, 2020; Ortagus, 2019). This "migrant crisis", therefore, had implications not only for Hondurans with mobility aspirations, but also for those with aspirations to remain immobile and to sustain rural livelihoods in remote communities.

Youth from rural areas of Honduras are among the most likely to migrate internally or internationally (Blanchard, Hamilton, Rodríguez, & Yoshioka, 2011; Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Quijada & Sierra, 2018). Many rural households use migration as a livelihood diversification strategy, with migrants sending remittances to their families (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al., 2020; Nygren & Myatt-Hirvonen, 2009b). Youth may also migrate to support their personal visions for a desirable standard of living. Of note, Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellana, et al. (2020) found that 97% of rural high school students surveyed (n=60) in the municipality of Yorito planned to migrate from their home communities after graduation, with 88.3% considering internal migration (n=53) and 6.7% considering international migration (n=4). Furthermore, Quijada and Sierra (2018) found that the archetype for an undocumented international migrant was a young male with low education status from a low-income household in a rural community. In light of these trends, research into the (im)mobility aspirations and capabilities of rural youth, specifically, is pertinent to understanding migration flows in and from Honduras.

Aspirations and capabilities: a framework for understanding (im)mobility

The findings from this study are interpreted through the lens of the aspiration-capabilities framework, which delineates (im)mobility preferences (aspirations) from outcomes (capabilities). In its original form, the aspiration-*ability* framework was built around three

[32] Of note, in 2019, the U.S. Border Patrol reported apprehending 253,795 Honduran migrants, classified as "deportable aliens," at their border with Mexico (CPB, 2019). This apprehension rate was more than three times higher than in 2018 (CPB, 2019).

(im)mobility experiences: *mobility*, representing both the aspiration and ability to migrate; *involuntary immobility*, representing the aspiration to migrate, without the ability; and *voluntary immobility*, representing the ability to migrate, without the aspiration (Carling, 2002). More recently, Schewel (2020) elaborated on Carling's work to add the concept of *acquiescent immobility*, representing individuals who have neither the aspiration nor the ability to migrate.

The transition from *ability* to *capability* occurred as the aspiration-ability framework gained theoretical grounding in the Capabilities Approach (CA) to development (de Haas, 2003, 2010). According to the CA, a person's *capabilities* refer to the human "doings and beings" that they are able to actualize within their social, environmental, economic, and political contexts (Sen, 1999). An individual may aspire toward any number of "doings and beings", and their circumstances may either facilitate or impede their capability to realize those aspirations. In the context of the mobility literature, aspirations and capabilities have often been characterized by the *push* and *pull factors* for migration. Therefore, research in this field has prioritized individuals who are on the move and those who wish to move, but experience constraints on their capabilities to do so. As scholars have pointed out, however, this emphasis neglects individuals who have remained immobile by *choice*, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of (im)mobility patterns and practices (Schewel, 2020; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). As previously noted, this paper helps address that gap by examining *retain* and *repel* factors that lead rural youth to express aspirations to stay in their home communities. *Retain* factors are understood as characteristics of one's home community that stimulate the desire to stay, while *repel* factors are perceptions or realities about migration that deter people from wanting to leave (Schewel, 2020).

The concept of agency is intrinsic to the CA. Amartya Sen, who first established the CA, argued that development processes should expand the freedoms that people experience to make choices about their lives (Sen, 1999). Martha Nussbaum, who expanded the CA, emphasized the importance of constructing societies in which people can choose a life worthy of human dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). In the context of this study, Nussbaum's concept of *internal* and *combined capabilities* provides valuable grounding from which to understand the factors that have shaped respondents' *capabilities to stay* in rural areas and establish sustainable livelihoods. *Internal*

capabilities refer to a person's characteristics, including their personality traits, interests, intellect, physical and emotional well-being, as well as the knowledge they have gained and the skills they have developed. *Combined capabilities* refer to the outcomes derived when *internal capabilities* are lived out in a person's social, political, economic, and environmental circumstances. In designing the CA, both Sen and Nussbaum focused on human flourishing at all ages and in all settings, through agentic livelihood choices within enabling environments. Thus, the CA is appropriate and useful in exploring the (im)mobility decisions of youth living in rural areas of Honduras.

Methods

Research partnership

This study was conducted in partnership with *la Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; Spanish acronym: FIPAH). Since 2000, this Honduran non-governmental organization (NGO) has run youth-targeted development programming that incorporates technical agricultural skill formation with other forms of education and vocational training. Through this programming, FIPAH has directly supported the personal and professional development of more than 1600 rural youth across two municipalities. In particular, participants associated program involvement with enhanced confidence and self-esteem, gender equality, leadership development, and an expansion of livelihood opportunities (see Chapter 3). As their youth-targeted programming continues, FIPAH has a vested interest in understanding the livelihood aspirations and decision-making processes of rural Honduran youth in order to effectively support their capabilities to pursue and achieve well-being[33]. Our research team was comprised of Canadian and Honduran researchers, FIPAH staff members, and youth leaders from the study communities.

Study locations

The study was conducted in the municipality of Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá in Central Honduras and the municipality of Yorito, Yoro in Northern Honduras. Both municipal centers are small, urbanized areas located in valleys. The municipalities themselves extend into the surrounding

[33] A key objective of FIPAH's youth-targeted programming is to mitigate distress migration by empowering youth to establish sustainable livelihoods in rural communities. Overall, however, FIPAH focuses on expanding the freedoms that youth experience to make choices about their lives and livelihoods, including their (im)mobility decisions.

mountains, where there are many remote villages. In rural Honduras, smallholder agriculture is the primary livelihood option; however, the Honduran hillsides offer marginal land where the risk of erosion is high and crop productivity is low (Díaz-Ambrona et al., 2013). Food insecurity is widespread, and climate change threatens the viability of agrarian livelihoods (Dodd, Gómez Cerna, Orellena, et al., 2020; Harvey et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2018). Youth from these communities experience unique disadvantages in navigating livelihood options. While a traditional approach to smallholder agriculture may not offer a desirable level of stability or sustainability, rural youth experience geographic and financial barriers to accessing educational and vocational opportunities that could offer alternative career options. Thus, there are many *push* and *pull factors* motivating youth to migrate from these communities.

Data collection and analysis

Aiming to understand the lived experiences of rural youth, our research team took a phenomenological approach to the study design (Desjarlais & Throop, 2011; Reeves et al., 2008; D. W. Smith, 2018). A semi-structured interview guide was developed using Kleine's Choice Framework, which was created to operationalize the CA as a tool in *research for development* (R4D) (Kleine, 2010, 2011; Kleine et al., 2012). Interview questions explored factors that facilitated or impeded respondents from pursuing their livelihood aspirations. In particular, the interview guide was designed to probe into structures (e.g. institutions and infrastructure), resources (e.g. finances, social networks, education), and personal characteristics that youth perceived as having influenced or impacted their livelihood decision-making.

Study participants were originally recruited to contribute to a participatory impact evaluation of FIPAH's youth-targeted programming. Findings from this evaluative research are presented elsewhere (see Chapter 3). Between September and November of 2019, youth were invited to participate in follow-up interviews exploring their livelihood opportunities and decision-making processes more broadly. We purposively selected "information rich cases" (Patton, 1990), including a range of livelihood experiences (i.e. different educational pursuits, career trajectories, and (im)mobility decisions) in order to enhance the "information power" of the sample (Malterud et al., 2016). In total, 32 open-ended interviews were conducted with young people from the two study locations. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and were audio recorded.

Interviews were transcribed from audio recordings by a member of the research team. Transcriptions were coded using a combination of deductive and inductive strategies, as described by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006). *A priori* coding categories were developed based on the principles of the CA, as operationalized through Kleine's Choice Framework. Data-driven codes were identified during a primary round of coding and were added to the codebook prior to a secondary round of coding in order to ensure that all data were considered in light of all codes. Coding was completed using NVivo 12.6. Themes related to (im)mobility decisions were identified and were organized using concepts associated with the aspiration-capability framework, as described above. Supportive quotations were translated into English using conceptually-equivalent translation strategies, prior to insertion into the manuscript (Smith et al., 2008; van Nes et al., 2010).The findings are interpreted through the lens of the CA as it has been applied in migration and mobility studies.

Description of the study population

Table 4 presents demographic information on the study participants. Respondents represented 16 rural communities across the two study locations. Nineteen respondents (59.4%) were female and twenty respondents (62.5%) had completed at least one year of secondary-level education[34]. Seventy-five percent of respondents were living in their home communities at the time of the interviews, while others had migrated internally or internationally.

Ethical considerations

Research ethics approvals were obtained from the Universities of Guelph and Waterloo in Canada. Prior to data collection, an explanation of the study was provided and informed consent was obtained from each research participant.

[34] Referring to the completion of year 9 in the Honduran school system; this corresponds with the end of the "common cycle". The Honduran school system is divided into 3-year cycles: the primary cycle includes years 1-3; the basic cycle extends to the end of year 6; the common cycle extends to end of year 9; and "*colegio*" includes years 10-12.

Table 4: Demographic information on youth from Jesús de Otoro and Yorito in Honduras who participated in semi-structured interviews between September and November 2019 exploring their livelihood options and (im)mobility decisions (n=32)

	Jesús de Otoro	Yorito	Total
General	*n=16*	*n=16*	*n=32*
Females (%)	11 (68.75)	8 (50.00)	19 (59.38)
Average age (SD)[a]	26.44 (5.05)	25.87 (7.73)	26.20 (6.38)
Ninth grade or above (%)	9 (56.25)	11 (68.75)	20 (62.50)
Number of communities represented	8	8	16
Current location	*n=16*	*n=16*	*n=32*
Home community (%)	10 (62.50)	14 (87.50)	24 (75.00)
Internal migrants (%)	1 (6.25)	2 (12.50)	3 (9.38)
Total international migrants (%)[b]	5 (31.25)	0	5 (15.63)
Primary occupation[c]	*n=11*	*n=16*	*n=27*
Agriculture (%)	3 (27.27)	8 (50.00)	11 (40.74)
Amas de casa (%)	2 (18.18)	1 (6.25)	3 (11.11)
Students (%)	2 (18.18)	1 (6.25)	3 (11.11)
Maquila (%)	0	1 (6.25)	1 (3.70)
Other (%)[d]	4 (36.36)	5 (31.25)	9 (33.33)

a) SD = standard deviation.
b) International migrants were located in the United States (2), Spain (2), and Mexico (1).
c) Excludes international migrants.
d) Includes careers in beauty, communication, education, business, government, trades, non-governmental organizations, professional careers, health, public services, and domestic work.

Results

The study findings are presented in three main sections. First, we provide evidence for a culture of outmigration among youth from the study communities, spurred by scarcity narratives (i.e. discourses emphasizing a lack of opportunities, resources, and livelihood options). Second, we introduce immobility aspirations, starting with repel factors, followed by retain factors, that respondents described as shaping their immobility preferences. Third, we examine factors that enabled some respondents to actualize their immobility aspirations, providing insight into how internal capabilities were translated into combined capabilities.

The drive to go: a culture of migration among rural youth

Narratives surrounding outmigration: "There is nothing in this town"

Interviewees represented a variety of mobility experiences and decisions. In addition to the eight individuals who were living as migrants at the time of the interviews, four interviewees had previously migrated and had returned to their home communities. Furthermore, three

interviewees described previous migration attempts and two others indicated viable migration opportunities that they had turned down. Two respondents identified as voluntary migrants who perceived migration as a form of adventure, and two others indicated intentions to migrate to pursue higher education or professional qualifications that could not be attained locally. Overall, however, distress migration was discussed most frequently and extensively. Respondents such as this young woman emphasized scarcity of local opportunities as a key driver:

> I know of various cases of young people [who have left], some for the United States and others for Spain. Because as I said, there is nothing in this town, so whoever leaves is going to stay there. […] In the case of men, [migration] is the first thing they think of. Because tell me, if there is no work [here, or] if they offer you 300 pesos a month […], you're better off working on your own, and growing your own food [than getting a local job] (O10).

Despite successfully producing food to sustain her family, this female farmer characterized her community as empty; lacking viable livelihood options apart from subsistence agriculture. When asked about drivers of outmigration, other interviewees also discussed livelihood constraints and limited resource access in rural communities, with particular emphasis on the challenges to adequate land tenure for youth[35]. Many respondents discussed these constraints in the context of family support obligations[36]. Respondents used this emphasis on scarcity to justify the migration decisions of themselves or their peers. For example, one young woman who had migrated from Yorito to San Pedro Sula for domestic work stated the following:

> Well, the truth is that […] to stay in the village, it is a lie that we are going to generate something that will help us get ahead. So that's why we migrate, that's why we come here [to San Pedro Sula]. And it's true, in this job we earn very little, but we are grateful (Y8)

By framing sustainable rural livelihoods as a *lie*, this respondent also framed her migration decision as somewhat inevitable. Indeed, many migrants described their mobility decisions as predictable and necessary outcomes of the livelihood realities in rural areas. Respondents were unsurprised when youth from their communities left; they considered it normal for their peers to be present one day and gone the next. In this way, both mobile and immobile respondents

[35] Respondents also discussed crime, violence, and insecurity as drivers of migration, but these tended to be in reference to national level trends, rather than key drivers at the local level. That said, one migrant had left due to conflict within his family.

[36] One respondent also emphasized the impacts of climate change as a challenge for sustaining agrarian livelihoods.

perceived a *culture of migration* among rural youth, with outmigration being commonly considered, discussed, and practiced. With narratives of scarcity (i.e. lack of opportunities and resources) driving this culture of migration, and genuine livelihood challenges impeding the viability of rural livelihoods, the aspiration to practice immobility in the study communities is quite striking.

Aspirations to stay: repel and retain factors

Repel factors for outmigration: "And that's why it's better to work here"

In discussing immobility decisions, some respondents indicated lacking a desire to migrate due to the challenges and risks that they associated with outmigration. These respondents particularly emphasized the physical dangers of undocumented international migration, fearing the possibility of assault or death in transit. Furthermore, if deported, the resources that were invested in their journey would be lost without the gain of higher wage employment from the intended destination. Interviewees described weighing these potential risks in their (im)mobility decisions. As one young woman explained:

> Some [young people] who migrate to the United States are lucky, and some are not. [Of the unlucky ones], some get deported back here, and others, who knows what? The family never sees them again. They don't know anything about them. And that's why it's better to work here, to find ways to work in order to get through. That's what I think (Y13).

By describing successful international migration as a matter of luck, this participant emphasized the uncertainties associated with outmigration. Some interviewees who were practicing immobility also indicated feelings of uncertainty around finding employment and meeting their basic needs in a new setting, whether within Honduras or abroad. This form of instability was highlighted as another factor dissuading youth from engaging in outmigration. One male respondent shared his story of migrating to the country's second largest city:

> I went to San Pedro and did not encounter work. It was night then. There are many risks, I said, so no, it's better to analyze, go back to my house again, continue with my work. I had neglected my work. […] So I analyzed it well, and I said no, I feel good here [in my home community], with my family, and I am looking out for them, for my [agricultural] work, that is the best thing for me […] The truth is that going outside of my home is not for me, I see that it is not so easy (Y1).

Many of the risks and challenges that immobile respondents associated with migration were affirmed by migrants themselves. Though all had been successful in reaching their destinations, and most had secured employment at the time of the interviews, both internal and international migrants acknowledged the difficulties they faced in finding appropriate accommodations and stable employment upon arrival. In particular, international migrants described unanticipated challenges they had faced in transitioning to their new environment including racism, sexism, language barriers, and loneliness. Although migrants did share positive experiences associated with migration, they tended to focus on the risks, challenges, and disappointments during these interviews. For example, a young woman who had been living in the United States for eight years shared about ongoing difficulties living abroad:

> Life here is not easy at all. In particular, one suffers from racism. Here in New York, life is very expensive […], and also, one suffers when far away from family […]. In my case, I have my father, my brother, I miss them a lot and without them I do not have complete happiness. I had to emigrate because I did not have many opportunities in my country. […] What I want to share is that […] sometimes in photographs it seems [that all is] well. You see [migrants] living comfortably, [but] the truth is that they are unhappy, not having their whole family, having to leave their country. Because you grow up loving what you have around you (O5)

Some migrants expressed explicit intentions to dissuade their peers from migrating by sharing negative migration experiences through their social networks. Thus, although outmigration held a prominent position in discussions on livelihood strategizing and there were scarcity narratives supporting this practice, respondents also described and participated in negative discourses surrounding outmigration from their communities. Interviewees identified a collective sense of sadness, loss, or disappointment when a young person left their community. Furthermore, some interviewees had been actively discouraged from mobility aspirations by local adults. A male respondent described being reprimanded by an adult mentor for a migration attempt:

> [She] passed by scolding me, "*Puchica*, what happened to you? You're a leader here, why are you leaving? Why do you give that [kind of] example?" I said, yes, but I want better opportunities. That's what I want, that's what I'm looking for, that's what I would like: a future. Now that I have a family, [I want] to have them [live with] dignity, that they may live [as is their due, or as they deserve] (O4)

In the context of negative discourses surrounding migration, respondents explained that youth often hide their migration aspirations and plans in order to avoid being dissuaded from practicing

mobility. Participants explained that extended family, friends, peers, and other community members were often oblivious to a migration plan until an individual had already left. Only immediate family members were likely to be aware of the decision. Negativity and secrecy suggest some level of stigma around migration. Indeed, some migrants used explicitly negative language to discuss their migration decisions, such as a male migrant who used the verb *abandonar* (to leave or abandon) when discussing his decision to leave Honduras. Similarly, the young man who had tried migrating to San Pedro Sula, indicated feeling like he was neglecting *(descuidar:* to neglect or abandon) his agricultural work by leaving the community. Additionally, a female migrant contrasted her voluntary mobility decision with those who left out of distress:

> [Young people migrate] because there is no work, in order to be able to work. We young people in Honduras do not have paid work, the majority, and the salary earned is very little to live on. […] Other young people, [their reasons to migrate] are different from mine, because I had the opportunity to work in my community and, I don't know, I wasted it (O7)

This young woman had left Honduras shortly before the interviews, and the quotation suggests that she was still negotiating her identity as a migrant. She expressed uncertainty around the rationale for her decision and used negative language *(desperdiciar:* to waste or throw away) to suggest that her choice was less than judicious. These linguistic tendencies align with more implicit and socially-driven *repel factors* for migration, which can be paired with the explicit deterrents regarding physical dangers and livelihood uncertainties to offer many reasons for rural youth to aspire toward immobility.

Retain factors in rural communities: "You have to fight for your homeland"

While repel factors played an important role in the immobility decisions of study participants, respondents also identified retain factors shaping their aspirations to stay. Most prominently, participants discussed the desire to live close to family members in order to attend to family obligations while also giving and receiving support from family networks. For example, one young woman expressed her sense of duty to provide in-person support to ageing parents. Another respondent discussed the benefit of being able to rely on income from other family members while searching for employment in her home community. This opportunity was contrasted with the circumstances of migrants, who often lacked such support networks in their

new environments. A female respondent talked about weighing economic prospects with family obligations in deciding whether or not to migrate:

> I come from a mother with six children, so there was a time that we felt as if we were drowning […] But [I was] searching and searching until I found a job, and then [I thought] no, let's stay and see what happens. So I decided not to go, not to migrate, for my family. Although the economic situation is a little difficult, but to leave her [my mother] alone with my little siblings seemed very risky, so I decided to stay (Y3)

As the eldest in her family, and the daughter of a single mother, this young woman felt some responsibility for ensuring that her younger siblings could thrive. Among those whose aspirations to stay were shaped by caretaking roles, the most commonly discussed familial retain factor was having one's own children. Respondents with children considered it undesirable to migrate *with* them due to risks associated with migration, but they also considered it intolerable to migrate independently and leave their children behind. As one female respondent explained:

> If I migrate, what would I do with my children? They are boys, both of them, and then what would become of them in the future? Later, when I return, they will no longer have love for me, but for someone else. Though I would help them with what little I could, I would lose them. I would lose land and I would lose them (O14).

In addition to care and concern for her children, this respondent alluded to another prominent retain factor that interviewees discussed: appreciation for their land. Indeed, some respondents expressed a strong relationship with their land. As one female farmer stated, "If you pay attention to [your] land, that same land gives you strength" (O9). Since agriculture was the dominant livelihood option in these communities, it had shaped the childhood experiences of study participants and had influenced the aspirations of some respondents. These youth expressed comfort and familiarity with living in the countryside and engaging in agriculture. For example, one young woman explained her connection to the land as follows:

> For me it is a happiness, always my happiness, to [work in] agriculture, to go around doing anything [in the field], learning and teaching it to others […] (Prompt: When you started working in agriculture, was it similar or different than what you imagined?) At the beginning, when I knew what I wanted, it was what motivated me to be something in life, to have something. And I always imagined having my own plot on my farm. I would have my own little things, not a lot, but a little (O1).

At the time of the interview, this respondent had migrated voluntarily to the United States, perceiving migration as an adventure. She had found agricultural work in her new location as well, but continued to express strong connections to her land and community in Honduras. Importantly, all study participants had participated in FIPAH's agricultural development programming (see Chapter 3), and some interviewees associated this involvement with their home-centric aspirations and their agricultural inclinations.

Among some respondents a moral discourse emerged around (im)mobility decisions. While interviewees generally expressed empathy and understanding toward individuals who experienced distress migration, some also articulated explicit disagreement with the choice to migrate. These respondents placed moral value in the decision to stay, despite (or perhaps because of) the struggles they faced to establish and sustain a viable livelihood in rural communities. For example, the young woman with five younger siblings explained her immobility decision in further detail:

> I had the opportunity to leave, but… it's a little complicated. I didn't have the… no, I told my mom, I don't have the heart to leave you alone. I think that it is wrong. Our country is our country. You have to look for ways to survive, to be able to… you have to create, you have to be creative to be here. But you have to respect the decisions of each person (Y3)

After asserting immobility as a moral imperative, this respondent quickly tempered her perspective to be more deferential toward individuals who had migrated. Her accommodative attitude may be linked to her admission that the majority of her peers had left the community, making mobility choices a tangible reality. Indeed, respondents who discussed immobility in moral terms also seemed to grapple with assessing when distress migration was authentic and therefore justifiable, versus when it was merely a pretext for personal migration aspirations, which these youth considered improper. A male respondent asserted that outmigration, specifically international migration, should only be pursued as a last resort:

> I think that, to emigrate, you first have to try in your own country, to see, to fight *(luchar)*. Today [migration] has become so conventional that the people [no longer do that]. It is not unusual for someone to say, "I am leaving for the United States". And even more now that they make caravans and things like that. Today people, well, they say "I am leaving" and they go, but there are times when I think that

> people should try, because there are people who go and [yet] they have land and have everything [they need] to work [here], but nevertheless they leave, without first trying for a positive result (Y5)

This respondent was particularly emphatic about the need to fight, struggle, or strive for one's homeland *("hay que luchar por su patria")*. Youth who engaged in this type of moral discourse took pride in remaining with their families, working collaboratively, making sacrifices, and progressing through their own efforts.

Capabilities to stay: internal and combined

The capacity to envision rural livelihoods: "They do not visualize the opportunities"

Study participants discussed various social, political, economic, and environmental circumstances that challenged the viability of rural livelihoods for youth. Respondents who were experiencing distress migration saw these challenges as impediments to their capabilities to stay in rural communities. While these individuals aspired toward voluntary immobility, they were unable to envision practical ways in which this option could be made viable. In other words, they lacked the capacity to envision sustainable rural livelihood options and, as a result, felt compelled to leave rural communities. As one female migrant explained:

> It was never my dream to emigrate. On the contrary, I always wanted to live in Honduras where I had all my happiness, but the truth was that I did not see a future for myself. I did not see having a future in Honduras. I did not see a space where I could have prospered (O5).

Respondents like this young woman tended to employ narratives of scarcity to support their migration decisions. Youth who were practicing immobility empathized with perceptions and experiences of scarcity in rural areas; however, they also contested scarcity narratives. For example, a female respondent highlighted the failure to visualize possibilities in rural areas as a factor driving the culture of migration among rural youth:

> People continue to think that [migration] is the solution, that this is the way. They do not visualize the opportunities, many of [the people] here. But I believe that this aspiration has simply filled their heads so much that this is what they want. So, for everyone, not just for new projects that might come here, but rather for our community, a great challenge is to get our young people to remain. Because there must be something that retains them, that really makes them want [to stay]. I think that is the challenge: we have to find what will make them want to be here (Y6)

The capacity to envision a viable future in rural communities emerged as an important bridge between the retain and repel factors driving respondents' abstract aspirations and tangible capabilities to stay. As this respondent noted, facilitating the capacity to envision and the capability to stay is the task of a whole community. Other interviewees highlighted the importance of good counsel to make rural youth aware of rural livelihood options, and strong mentors to provide ongoing encouragement as youth formulate and pursue their aspirations. In this regard, respondents identified institutions that had supported their growth and development in ways that facilitated their *combined capabilities* (i.e. the ability to live out their internal capabilities in their social, political, economic, and environmental contexts).

Facilitating combined capabilities: "I felt that opportunities arose here"

In general, study participants perceived a deficit of youth-targeted programs in rural communities. Some respondents problematized this trend by highlighting the unique characteristics of youth in comparison to other demographics. As one female respondent stated:

> Youthful thinking is not the same as adult thinking, because we have a cultural pattern that marks us. The adult thinks that they act wisely and that the adolescent acts wrongly, but he is doing well in his own way. I believe that the interaction of both, their orientations in a way, works differently because the adolescent wants to experiment in other things, whereas the adult wants to improve what they [already] do. (Y6)

With these types of distinctions, respondents like this young woman emphasized the importance of youth-specific rural livelihood programming. They explained that many development interventions in their communities were directed toward adults or children, while there were few institutions specifically supporting youth in expanding their capabilities to stay in rural areas. Notably, respondents did not characterize the Honduran government as one of these supportive institutions. It was evident across interviews that participants lacked confidence in their country's political and legal institutions to actively support their livelihood formation. This lack of confidence was not associated with the government's resource capacity, but rather, with the will of government leaders at various levels to distribute resources equitably. As one female respondent stated:

> The role of the government is to support [us], but they do not do it. Or perhaps they support other young people who are not in need; the people who are not in need, they support them one way or another. That's where we see the division that exists. So now we, as young people, if we want to move forward, we are forced to change (Y8)

This respondent described the agentic power of youth as a necessity for moving forward. Independent of government support, she indicated that youth had to take control of their own circumstances in order to work toward desirable and sustainable livelihoods. Youth felt that political leaders actively *chose* to neglect them, while giving preferential treatment to other members of society. Indeed, the perception of political favouritism was a strong theme throughout the interviews. As one female respondent explained:

> Well, here it is because of politics. If he is a *cachureco* [nationalist or conservative, then] he has a job and the one who is a liberal is out. Or if the mayor we have is a liberal, then [liberal supporters] have a job and the *cachurecos* [are out]. That's how they handle it; that's the problem here. Here, a person is not given work because of their capacity, but rather, because of their political [affiliation] (Y7).

Overall, respondents associated their government with inequality of opportunity and employment insecurity. On the other hand, respondents praised the impartial support that some institutions, including churches and NGOs, provided to youth. Interviewees expressed particular appreciation for programs that allowed them to explore vocational interests and pursue livelihood options that they valued. They indicated that FIPAH's youth-targeted programming[37] was one of the only youth-specific interventions that facilitated these types of opportunities in their home communities, thus motivating their participation. One male respondent explained:

> [Before FIPAH's youth program started], the only [opportunity for youth] was the coffee harvest […]. [Young people] did not have the opportunity to do any other kind of activity, and with [FIPAH's youth project], thanks to the training and many things we learned, we managed to realize how we [as young people] could be heard, how we could have more opportunities, and we could see livelihoods for each one of us (O3)

[37] FIPAH's program was grounded in small scale agricultural experimentation, which provided technical agricultural training to youth. FIPAH also facilitated access to formal education by implementing the government's *Educatodos* program in remote communities and providing scholarships or loans for students who had to commute for further studies. Furthermore, FIPAH coordinated vocational training in the trades through both governmental and non-governmental organizations. They supported business skill formation, provided gender sensitization training, built leadership capacity, and fostered civic and moral development. A thorough analysis of FIPAH's youth-targeted programming is presented elsewhere (Chapter 3)

This respondent went on to say that by participating in FIPAH's youth project, his mind was "awakened" and he "gained more capacities." Similarly, other respondents highlighted how their involvement with FIPAH helped them envision rural livelihood opportunities, develop associated skillsets, and access resources that could help them translate those aspirations and capabilities into sustainable rural livelihoods. Respondents who had chosen immobility emphasized the value of these interventions in supporting their capabilities to stay. As one male respondent shared:

> When the project came, then the need to [migrate] was taken away. I felt that opportunities arose here and I did not want to go away because of that. And I have no desire to leave now. I am doing well here. Now I have a family, I have my two children, thank God. With the vocation I learned in the project and with the agriculture that I continue to practice. Although climate change is always affecting us, I am surviving here. I think [the project] was an experience that [helped] many young people. […] I was [taking] bad steps before the project, and the project changed me (O6).

Other interviewees, similarly, made positive associations between FIPAH's youth programming and their capabilities to stay in rural communities. In contrast to government agencies, therefore, respondents perceived FIPAH as an important enabling institution that empowered youth to establish viable livelihoods in their home communities. Participants indicated that FIPAH's youth-targeted program not only helped them actualize combined capabilities during involvement, but also helped them develop their internal capabilities – including their knowledge, skills, and capacity to envision – in ways that would expand their combined capabilities in the future.

Agency through internal capabilities: "Sacrifice is important"

While acknowledging mentors and supportive institutions that facilitated their capabilities to stay, interviewees who were practicing immobility also positioned themselves as active agents in establishing and sustaining rural livelihoods. They highlighted personal characteristics that enabled them to succeed in actualizing their aspirations to stay. For example, a female teacher emphasized the importance of intellect, an internal capability, in realizing combined capabilities in rural areas:

> It's interesting, because you feel like that an advantage is achieved, like a goal has been reached, when you teach someone that they can work here. You can settle here.

> You just have to have a brain. We must demonstrate the capacities that exist in young people, and we must teach young people that older people believe in them. […] [and] that in young people not only is the future, but that it begins, it starts from the present with good development (O8).

Similarly, other immobile respondents identified the need for creative problem-solving in order to successfully sustain rural livelihoods. In particular, interviewees emphasized the importance of taking advantage of opportunities and being judicious with one's resources. For example, a female land owner provided critical commentary on land vending practices amongst her peers:

> There are some young people who sell the land, but they don't use the [profit] to establish themselves in another place or to buy something which will [allow them to survive]. But no, rather, sometimes they sell the land, but they waste money. They don't know how to take advantage of it (O9)

In contrast, respondents practicing voluntary immobility discussed the importance of investing *(invertir)* and reinvesting in order to move forward *(salir adelante)*. For example, a female farmer explained how she sold some land, saved wages from a local job, and used her earnings to start a chicken business. At the time of the interview, this business was sustaining her full-time and she described plans to reinvest her profits in order to expand further. By identifying themselves as active agents, these interviewees distinguished themselves from other youth in their communities, whom they tended to characterize as passive and disengaged. For instance, a female respondent perceived her peers to lack impetus and interest to invest time in their agricultural livelihood formation:

> I do not know why [FIPAH's program] does not motivate [other youth from my community], why there are young people who do not want to be organized. Because being in the groups, we have to have time, and there are young people who do not want to give that time (O11)

This young woman highlighted her own willingness to dedicate time and attention to improving her livelihood situation. Other respondents who were practicing voluntary immobility also discussed ways in which they were dedicating resources and energy to making rural livelihoods work. Some described spending long workdays in the field. Some discussed walking for hours to attend school or to receive training in the trades, while others had set aside their own education and career aspirations in order to support family members. Respondents were open about the challenges they experienced in adequately providing for themselves and their families. They

acknowledged the financial incentives of migration and candidly discussed the trade-offs of immobility, thus emphasizing their fortitude and resilience in choosing to stay. One male respondent, in particular, framed rural livelihood choices through the lens of sacrifice:

> When we want to obtain something in life, for example, a degree, a person dreams and knows that they need to sacrifice a little, dedicate that time. Imagine what I was telling you about walking [to school], going [down the mountain] and coming back up. When [we want to], […] we can really achieve something in life, [but] sacrifice is important (Y1).

The notion of sacrifice aligns with the moral discourses associated with aspirations to stay. Overall, by emphasizing their internal capabilities as important factors in their capabilities to stay, youth who were practicing immobility positioned themselves as the primary agents of their immobility decisions. Their stories contested scarcity narratives, which suggest that rural communities have no opportunities and that livelihoods cannot be sustained in rural settings. Instead, these respondents presented an alternative narrative; that it takes intelligence, dedication, strength, and sacrifice to make a rural livelihood work, and not all rural youth are up to the task.

Discussion

Schewel (2020, p. 328) argued that "a systematic neglect of the causes and consequences of immobility hinders attempts to explain why, when, and how people migrate." Indeed, the "mobility bias" in migration research has been problematized for creating a gap in our understanding of (im)mobility patterns and practices (Schewel, 2020; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). The findings from this study make three important contributions to addressing this gap. First, by providing insight into the retain and repel factors that shape immobility decisions among rural youth, this study contributes to a richer understanding of (im)mobility patterns among youth from remote Honduran communities. Second, by identifying ways that youth exercised agency in practicing immobility, this study highlights immobility as an agentic livelihood choice. Third, by elucidating factors that facilitated respondents' *capabilities to stay* in rural areas, this study identifies important areas where rural youth can benefit from external support in actualizing their immobility preferences.

Understanding (im)mobility patterns through retain and repel factors

The repel factors identified in our study corroborate findings from other studies that have examined (im)mobility patterns among rural Honduran populations. For example, Sladkova (2007, 2013) discussed how the risks of robbery, assault, and death in migrating undocumented to the United States may dissuade some individuals from making the journey, or compel them to find alternative routes. Kirchbichler (2010) explored the stories of migrants who have gone missing in transit, highlighting familial losses that drive fears around migration. Studies have identified poor working conditions in *maquilas* as a repel factor for internal migration in Honduras, although this may create more of a push for international migration than compelling individuals to practice immobility (Kirchbichler, 2010; Reichman, 2011). Researchers have observed that these types of risks and challenges are often communicated through migrant networks, creating “negative feedback mechanisms” for mobility practices (de Haas, 2010). There is some uncertainty around the degree to which repel factors actually, or independently, deter outmigration (Hiskey, Córdova, Fran Malone, & Orcés, 2018; Sladkova, 2007), thus emphasizing the importance of understanding other factors that shape immobility preferences.

The retain factors identified in our study have also been acknowledged in other areas of mobility research. For instance, family networks consistently arise as a key factor shaping both migration and immobility decisions (Haug, 2008; Mata-Codesal, 2018; Piacenti, 2008). Scholars have formulated the *affinity hypothesis* to describe circumstances in which family networks act as a retain factor, shaping immobility preferences (Haug, 2008). Our findings support this hypothesis, with a stronger affinity for home expressed by respondents who played caretaking roles for ageing parents, younger siblings, or their own children. In light of our findings, we echo the call made by Wyn, Lantz, & Harris (2011) for further acknowledgement of family networks in research on youth (im)mobility decision-making. Our study participants also expressed an affinity for their homeland and home communities, which aligns with theoretical conceptions of “high community attachment” (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018), an innate “home bias” (Faini & Venturini, 2001), and an experience of “embeddedness” (Schewel, 2020).

The retain and repel factors discussed above can be used to enrich an understanding of (im)mobility patterns among rural Honduran youth. While other studies from rural Honduras

have tended to focus on understanding migration experiences and patterns of mobility, our study shifts the focus to individuals practicing immobility. In particular, by focusing on youth who *chose* to remain immobile (voluntary immobility), these retain and repel factors counter the push and pull factors that are commonly associated with distress migration (involuntary mobility). This study also introduced more implicit, socially-driven retain and repel factors shaping immobility aspirations. These are discussed in further detail below.

Agency and heterogeneity in constructing a dignified life

Our findings show that (im)mobility aspirations among youth from the study communities were shaped, in part, by competing narratives around the necessity and value of outmigration. Among some youth, migration was construed as a predictable aspiration and pursuit, based on the realities of living in remote Honduran communities. Through this lens, mobility was seen as a necessary pathway to a life worthy of human dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). On the other hand, respondents who were practicing immobility took pride in remaining with their families, working hard, and making sacrifices to establish viable rural livelihoods. Through this lens, they shifted definitions of human dignity away from the material aspects of their standard of living to the morality of their decisions, thus constructing an alternative pathway to leading a dignified life. Both mobile and immobile respondents defended their narratives around outmigration and (im)mobility; however, they also conceded that rural youth have diverse interests and goals shaping their aspirations. This finding highlights the heterogeneity in views among rural youth of what constitutes a valuable or dignified life.

It is notable that our sample included female farmers and land owners. Rural Honduran populations are known for a strong adherence to traditional gender roles (Ortega Hegg et al., 2005), with agriculture historically being dominated by men, while women typically take on household roles and caretaking tasks (Humphries et al., 2012; Ivanoff, 2012). Honduran women tend to lack decision-making power in their households and communities, and low female empowerment is perpetuated by an exaggerated form of masculinity known as *machismo* (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017; Humphries et al., 2012). The personal aspirations expressed by women in our sample, as well as the capabilities they demonstrated and the agency they asserted, may be attributable to their involvement with FIPAH's youth programming. As previously noted, all study participants were current or former participants in FIPAH's programming. FIPAH's

rural development initiatives have been shown to have emancipatory effects on participants (see Chapter 3 as well as Classen et al., 2008; Humphries et al., 2012). FIPAH's program will be discussed further in the following section.

Schewel (2020) suggested that some immobility preferences and practices may arise from low aspirations, poor informational resources, and a general "lack of imagined alternatives" (p. 343). Our study participants did not present their immobility experiences in this way. On the contrary, these respondents suggested that youth who were practicing *mobility* were the ones who lacked the capacity to envision alternative options. Meanwhile, by measuring the value of their own livelihood choices through a moral rather than an economic lens, youth characterized their immobility preferences as an indication of high, principled aspirations, strong internal capabilities, and access to the material and informational resources necessary to translate those into combined capabilities. In a context where remittances from migration provide a significant economic advantage to rural households, this moral standpoint may offer a competitive advantage for the social standing of individuals who cannot, or choose not to migrate due to various retain and repel factors. By framing immobility as the morally superior decision, these respondents claimed a sense of dignity in their choice to remain immobile, even though this option may have left them less affluent than their migrant neighbours. These assertions also suggest that immobile youth experienced a sense of empowerment and agency in their immobility decisions, aligning with conceptualizations of immobility as an agentic livelihood choice (Schewel, 2020; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018), and contrasting with the disempowerment and lack of choice expressed by respondents who were experiencing distress migration.

In light of the implicit, socially-driven retain and repel factors identified in our study, it should be acknowledged that socio-cultural pressures from the broader community may have shaped immobility preferences that were expressed throughout the interviews. Indeed, positive moral discourses around immobility may work in tandem with negative discourses around migration to reinforce aspirations to stay in rural communities. Thus, expressions of immobility preferences among study participants may have been reflective of an "internalization of social norms" (Schewel, 2020, p. 344), and a social aversion toward self-identifying as a migrant or prospective migrant due to stigma surrounding migration. Reichman (2011) identified similar social

dynamics in another region of Honduras, where community members tended to portray migration as a personal choice and then gossiped about migrants' motives for leaving, often characterizing voluntary migrants as being selfish or overly ambitious. Similar to our study, some of Reichman's participants indicated feelings of guilt in migration and Reichman associated the above-noted social dynamics with the tendency for migrants to emphasize financial distress and family obligations in explaining their mobility decisions. Similar to Reichman's (2011) study, our findings point to the complex interactions between socio-cultural influences and individual agency, raising questions regarding the degree to which (im)mobility preferences are individually-driven, agentic livelihood choices versus socially-derived, normative livelihood options.

Actualizing immobility aspirations by supporting *internal* and *combined capabilities*

While youth who were practicing immobility positioned themselves as active agents of their immobility outcomes, they also emphasized the role of enabling institutions in facilitating these outcomes. Respondents considered it important for institutions to offer youth-specific programming, indicating that these young people perceived themselves to be markedly different from both children and adults. They also emphasized the importance of providing impartial support to rural youth, focusing on competencies rather than political inclinations. By excluding the Honduran government as an enabling institution, our study participants showed a lack of confidence in their political system and its leaders. This finding is important in light of formal efforts by the Honduran government to curb international migration among its citizens (Meyer, 2020; Sladkova, 2007). Should these efforts be sincere[38], government leaders would gain from building rapport with rural youth by offering meaningful support to their formative development.

Notably, the efforts of enabling institutions that youth identified aligned with the principles of the CA. For example, rather than determining narrow program outcomes, FIPAH provided a breadth of opportunities that would expand the internal capabilities of youth and provide them with high quality livelihood options. This diversity of opportunity could account for some of the heterogeneity in the interests and aspirations of rural youth. Importantly, however, FIPAH specifically supported knowledge and skill development that was relevant to rural livelihood

[38] It should be acknowledged that remittances from Honduran migrants contribute significantly to the national economy, which creates an incentive for the Honduran government to support outmigration.

formation (e.g. technical agricultural skills training, trades, business skills, etc.), thus facilitating participants' combined capabilities to pursue rural livelihoods specifically. In this way, FIPAH supported participants' freedom to pursue immobility preferences in a context where migration is commonly practiced. Overall, FIPAH focused on empowering youth to "[exercise] their reasoned agency" (Sen, 1999, pg xii) in navigating livelihood choices and (im)mobility decisions. This organization provides a valuable example of a supportive institution that enables youth to actualize their immobility aspirations.

Conclusions

This qualitative study explored (im)mobility aspirations and capabilities among youth from Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro in Honduras. Our findings address the "mobility bias" in migration literature by focusing on immobility as an agentic livelihood choice. Respondents discussed the risks and uncertainties associated with migration, and the negative discourses surrounding migration, as key *repel factors* shaping their immobility preferences. They also expressed a desire to stay close to family networks, an appreciation for their land, and a moral imperative to sustain rural livelihoods as key *retain factors* shaping their aspirations to stay. Our results indicate that respondents who were practicing immobility did not perceive themselves to be "left behind" or "stuck" in rural areas. Instead, they asserted themselves as active agents of their immobility choices. Respondents identified the *capacity to envision* a viable livelihood in rural areas as an important bridge between their abstract aspirations and tangible *capabilities to stay.* They acknowledged the role of supportive institutions, such as FIPAH, in facilitating their *internal* and *combined capabilities* and enabling immobility outcomes. The stories of our study participants contest narratives that suggest that remote communities of Honduras are not a viable place to settle and lead a dignified life. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to the literature on (im)mobility, and can be used to inform discussions on migration patterns and rural development priorities in Honduras and other parts of Central America.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis explored the livelihood opportunities, aspirations, and choices of Honduran youth from the rural municipalities of Jesús de Otoro in Intibucá and Yorito in Yoro. Focusing on the lived experiences of study participants, I examined structural- and individual-level factors that respondents associated with their livelihood decision-making processes. My research was conducted in partnership with *la Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras* (Foundation for Participatory Research with Honduran Farmers; Spanish acronym: FIPAH). The study included a participatory impact evaluation of FIPAH's youth-targeted programming (Chapter 3) and an exploration of broader (im)mobility aspirations and capabilities among youth from the study communities (Chapter 4). I used the Capabilities Approach (CA) as a theoretical framework to guide study design and analysis. This theory was particularly instrumental in exploring respondents' *freedom to choose* livelihoods that they considered valuable and dignified.

Summary of main findings

The findings from this study were presented in two co-authored manuscripts (see Statement of Contributions for further information on co-authorship). The first manuscript (Chapter 3) described how FIPAH's youth-targeted programming provided a structured environment that was conducive to youth development and capability expansion. I drew on semi-structured interviews with 94 current and former program participants, as well as demographic data from 1596 former participants, to understand FIPAH's short- and long-term impacts on sustainable livelihoods and youth well-being. I traced three impact pathways, detailing key mechanisms by which youth reported experiencing meaningful outcomes from program participation:

1. *Transformative participation:* FIPAH created an inclusive, non-discriminatory space in which youth broke down gender divisions and built solidarity by working side by side in all program activities.
2. *Meaningful collaboration:* FIPAH created organized teams through which youth developed skills in teamwork and leadership by collaborating on community development initiatives.
3. *Low risk experimentation:* FIPAH acted as a hub of activities and resources, giving youth opportunities to discover and pursue their educational and vocational interests.

With contextual insight from the study locations and program implementation history, these impact pathways helped elucidate *how*, *why*, *when,* and *for whom* FIPAH's program was particularly successful. FIPAH's programming strategies aligned with the CA and with youth empowerment theories, such as Positive Youth Development (PYD). These findings enabled me to position FIPAH's program structure within more broadly recognized frameworks for development programming that support the well-being of youth.

The second manuscript (Chapter 4) explored how youth from the study communities exercised agency in navigating their livelihood options and (im)mobility decisions. I drew on in-depth interviews with 32 rural youth to understand aspirations and capabilities to stay in rural communities. I identified key *retain* and *repel factors* that respondents described as shaping their immobility preferences:

- *Repel factors:* Youth were deterred from outmigration due to associated risks and uncertainties, negative experiences communicated through migrant networks, and negative discourses around migration within their broader communities.
- *Retain factors:* Youth were motivated to stay in their home communities due to family obligations and support networks, appreciation for their land and community, and a moral imperative to sustain rural livelihoods.

I also highlighted key factors that respondents associated with their capabilities to stay in rural communities:

- *Capacity to envision:* Youth acknowledged the capacity to envision viable rural livelihood options as an important precursor to actualizing their immobility aspirations.
- *Enabling institutions:* Youth highlighted the role of enabling institutions, such as FIPAH, in supporting their capacity to envision, expanding their internal capabilities, and helping translate those into combined capabilities.
- *Internal capabilities:* Youth highlighted their intellectual capacities, creative problem-solving skills, knowledge, training, and willingness to sacrifice as facilitators of immobility outcomes.

Youth who were practicing immobility used their own experiences to challenge scarcity narratives that characterized rural communities as absent of opportunities, resources, and livelihood options. These respondents positioned themselves as active agents of their immobility decisions, creatively applying their skills and resources in order to make rural livelihoods work. They claimed dignity in their immobility decisions by defining a valuable and dignified life through a moral rather than a material lens.

Independently, each of these manuscripts provided meaningful insight into rural livelihood options from the perspectives of youth themselves. At the intersection of these two manuscripts, one finds FIPAH creating an enabling environment in which youth could actively engage in formative development and capability expansion. The efficacy of this space was dependent on both the quality of the institutional structure (i.e. FIPAH's youth program) and the agency of youth to take advantage of this rural opportunity. I presented a clear picture of what constituted an enabling environment from the perspectives of study participants by providing detailed descriptions of the impact pathways that youth associated with FIPAH's programming. I also offered rich insight into how youth conceptualized and exercised their agency through an in-depth analysis of their (im)mobility aspirations and capabilities. Together, these manuscripts delivered a well-rounded understanding of how youth were navigating their livelihood options. Thus, the manuscripts presented in this thesis complement one another in elucidating key factors that influence the substantive freedoms that youth experienced to make meaningful choices about their lives and livelihoods.

Strengths and limitations

A key strength of this thesis is that the findings were informed by a large dataset. Drawing on demographic information from 1596 former participants in FIPAH's youth program, alongside 94 semi-structured interviews and 32 in-depth follow-up interviews, the study offers both breadth and depth of insight on the lived experiences of youth in remote areas of Honduras. This sample size adds credibility to the findings. Representing a large cohort of rural youth, the qualitative contribution is particularly considerable.

Since an individual's livelihood decisions are shaped by their subjective perceptions of the livelihood opportunities available to them and the agency they have to pursue various options

(Kleine, 2010, 2011; Kleine et al., 2012), this topic was particularly conducive to qualitative investigation. In order to target development interventions toward rural youth, it is valuable to understand how these youth perceive the world around them and their own role within it. And yet, a limitation of taking a qualitative approach to this topic is that the findings were based on self-reported motivations and decision-making processes. Within the field of psychology, it is recognized that an individual's insights into their own motives and decision-making processes are limited in accuracy and consistency (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). This phenomenon has been termed "choice blindness" (Johansson, Hall, Sikström, Olsson, & Okson, 2016; Johansson, Hall, Sikström, Tärning, & Lind, 2006). Based on the data presented in this thesis, one cannot determine, for example, whether the immobility aspirations of participants were driven primarily by tangible retain and repel factors (i.e. family obligations, physical risks, etc.) or by internalized stigma associated with outmigration. Thus, the findings should be interpreted with caution: they provide insight into meaningful factors and processes in livelihood decision-making from the perspectives of study participants, but they do not present a causal framework for the decisions and outcomes that these youth experienced.

It should be acknowledged that each manuscript is based on data collected at a single point in time. For the first manuscript (Chapter 3), understanding the implications of this approach is important in understanding the strengths and limitations of these data, and gaining nuanced insight into the richness of the findings. The participatory impact evaluation spanned more than 18 years of program implementation across three main phases, or iterations, of FIPAH's youth-targeted program. When asked to describe their program involvement, respondents who represented the earliest years of the program were recalling experiences from more than a decade prior to the interview, while current or recent participants were sharing more immediate experiences within the program. On the other hand, when asked to reflect on program impact, participants from the earlier years of FIPAH's programming could consider longer term livelihood outcomes that they associated with program participation, while current or recent participants had more limited insight into the broader implications of their program involvement. Since themes were identified across interviews and programming phases, these strengths and limitations could complement one another and lead to a broader understanding of FIPAH's programming approach.

For the second manuscript (Chapter 4), the implications of data collection at a single point in time are important in understanding how to appropriately position these findings within the (im)mobility literature. Researchers have noted that (im)mobility aspirations, capabilities, and decisions can change across the lifespan (Schewel, 2020; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). This reality is partly reflected in my study. For example, some respondents discussed previous migration experiences or attempts, reflecting on what had influenced their decisions to leave and return. Furthermore, some respondents anticipated that their (im)mobility attitudes or practices would change in the future, sharing aspirations toward different (im)mobility outcomes. However, the findings presented in this manuscript provide limited insight into what factors may influence these changes at different points in time. Following individuals throughout the life course could provide more robust insight into the process of (im)mobility decision-making.

Another important factor in interpreting the study findings from this thesis is recognizing the implications of recruitment decisions. Firstly, all participants were recruited from FIPAH's youth programming and are therefore a subset of the broader population of rural youth in their communities. It is possible that youth who chose to participate in FIPAH's program are substantively different from other youth in their communities. Indeed, as shown in Chapter 4, study participants perceived distinctions between themselves and their peers. Furthermore, previous research on participants in FIPAH's *adult*-targeted programming has described character differences between program participants (deemed *futuristas)* and other community members (deemed *conformistas)* (Classen et al., 2008). A second important consideration is that respondents included in my thesis were purposively selected for study participation. While our research team endeavoured to select youth who represented a diversity of program experiences and livelihood trajectories, it is possible that the youth who we assessed as having good "information power" were also substantively different from the broader population of current and former participants in FIPAH's youth-targeted programming.

In light of these recruitment decisions, one should interpret the findings with care; the study may not represent the lived experiences of a broader population of rural Honduran youth. However, I capitalized on the strengths of these recruitment decisions by focusing on individual and structural factors that allowed my study participants, specifically, to experience positive

outcomes from local livelihood development programming (Chapter 3) and to effectively actualize their immobility aspirations (Chapter 4). Importantly, the experiences of my study participants demonstrate that there *are* youth in rural areas of Honduras who are willing to establish and sustain rural livelihoods. As my findings show, and as previous studies on FIPAH's work have corroborated (Classen et al., 2008; Humphries et al., 2012), individuals like these youth can challenge negative discourses and fatalistic narratives in their communities, working instead toward meaningful rural development. Therefore, offering enabling environments that support the personal development and capability expansion of these types of individuals can facilitate positive outcomes for entire communities.

Contributions to research and practice

This thesis makes important contributions to inform development practice. Most directly, of course, the findings are useful to FIPAH. Results from the program evaluation can help FIPAH understand the nature of their program's impact in the lives of participants. Findings related to (im)mobility preferences and practices can give FIPAH further insight into the aspirations and decision-making processes of youth in their target communities. Together, these findings can support FIPAH's decision-making processes regarding current and future youth-targeted programming within and beyond the study communities. The findings from this thesis can also be used by policymakers and development practitioners who are designing youth-targeted programming in other remote communities of low – and middle-income countries. Taking into account the contextual factors that contributed to these findings, practitioners can use the detailed insights into FIPAH's programming (Chapter 3) to shape enabling environments for other rural youth. Insights from Chapter 4 can also be used to inform the design of such development interventions, ensuring specific attention toward mitigating distress migration among youth with immobility aspirations, and thus supporting their livelihood preferences and well-being. All of these contributions are relevant to the field of global health.

Further to development practice, this study contributes to evaluation practice by providing an effective example of Practical Participatory Evaluation (P-PE) in action. Collaboration between Canadian and development researchers and development practitioners from FIPAH illustrates how strong partnerships can concurrently advance agendas in program evaluation and research. Additionally, the research team included local youth leaders, who had been adequately trained to

contribute to study design and to conduct data collection. By including these youth in the research and evaluation process, the study provides an example of meaningful stakeholder engagement and participation in the research process. These methods can be used to inform other collaborative work incorporating participatory methods into research and evaluation.

This thesis also contributes to the academic literature by providing detailed insight on livelihood navigation processes among youth from rural areas of Honduras. The first manuscript (Chapter 3) provides evidence for the efficacy of the CA and PYD in supporting the formative development and capability expansion of youth in remote areas of Honduras. These findings add to a growing body of literature on applications of the CA to youth development (e.g. Lopez-Fogues & Melis Cin, 2017) and respond to a call for empirical research into the efficacy of the PYD in remote areas of lower-middle income countries (Alvarado et al., 2017). More broadly, this manuscript contributes to academic discussions around taking a positive approach to the assets, skills, and potential of young people and supporting their freedom to make choices about their lives. The second manuscript (Chapter 4) positions youth as active agents, rather than passive actors, in the context of livelihood pursuits and (im)mobility decisions. These findings address the "mobility bias" in the migration literature (Schewel, 2020; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018), providing rich insight into immobility preferences and the capabilities that can actualize those preferences. Thus, this manuscript contributes to academic discussions around voluntary immobility and the freedom of choice that can support this practice.

Implications, future research, and concluding thoughts

These contributions to the academic literature, to development and evaluation practice, and to global health are particularly timely and important. In response to the 2018-2019 "migrant crisis", the Trump administration withdrew millions of dollars of foreign aid from Honduras and closed numerous long-term rural development projects implemented through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Rural communities have been further destabilized by the health risks and livelihood constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, in November 2020, Honduras was hit by Hurricane Eta (category 4) followed immediately by Hurricane Iota (category 5). These contemporary issues have exacerbated rural livelihood instability, further threatening well-being in remote communities and placing rural youth in a particularly precarious situation. Recognizing that the last category 5

hurricane to hit Honduras (Hurricane Mitch, 1998) triggered a surge in outmigration from rural communities, it will be critical to implement strong rural development programming in the wake of these extreme weather events. This thesis can be used to guide interventions that mitigate distress migration among rural youth by supporting the viability of rural livelihoods and helping young people envision possibilities in rural areas. Most importantly, this thesis can inform an approach to programming that supports youth in their *freedom to choose*, enabling them to pursue lives that they consider valuable, meaningful, and dignified.

Future research could be used both to deepen and broaden knowledge on the topics addressed in this thesis. To begin, evaluative research could further elucidate the factors contributing to FIPAH's programming successes by testing the mechanisms identified in Chapter 3. These mechanisms could be applied and tested in other settings as well, in order to assess the transferability of FIPAH's programming approach and the applicability of the CA and PYD in other rural communities of low- and middle-income countries. Additionally, researchers and development practitioners could apply the findings from Chapter 4 in designing and evaluating programs that endeavour to mitigate distress migration among rural youth. Research in these areas could provide greater detail to the retain and repel factors shaping young peoples' aspirations to stay in rural communities, and could test and elaborate the factors supporting their capabilities to stay. Overall, there are significant opportunities to contribute to the literature on sustainable rural livelihoods for youth in Honduras and beyond, as well as the (im)mobility preferences and pursuits among this demographic.

The young people of Honduras should be seen as an incredible asset to their country. Their well-being has positive implications for the flourishing of Honduras in both the present and future. Investment in their formative development, encouragement of their aspirations, and expansion of their capabilities is more than a worthwhile endeavour. May this thesis be used to those ends.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Research ethics approval for phase one data collection, University of Guelph

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARDS
Certification of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Human Participants

APPROVAL PERIOD:	June 8, 2018
EXPIRY DATE:	June 7, 2019
REB:	G
REB NUMBER:	18-04-008
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Delegated
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	Humphries, Sally (shumphri@uoguelph.ca)
DEPARTMENT:	Sociology and Anthropology
SPONSOR(S):	SSHRC
TITLE OF PROJECT:	Participatory Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Research Teams, Knowledge Mobilization, and Local Development in Honduras

The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human participants in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd Edition.

The REB requires that researchers:

- Adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and **approved** by the REB.
- Receive approval from the REB for any **modifications** before they can be implemented.
- Report any **change in the source of funding**.
- Report **unexpected events or incidental findings** to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.
- Are responsible for **ascertaining and complying with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements** with respect to consent and the protection of privacy of participants in the jurisdiction of the research project.

The Principal Investigator must:

- Ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of facilities or institutions involved in the research are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.
- Submit an **Annual Renewal** to the REB upon completion of the project. If the research is a multi-year project, a status report must be submitted annually prior to the expiry date. Failure to submit an annual status report will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.

The approval for this protocol terminates on the **EXPIRY DATE**, or the term of your appointment or employment at the University of Guelph whichever comes first.

Signature: Date: June 8, 2018

Stephen P. Lewis
Chair, Research Ethics Board-General

Appendix B

Research ethics approvals for phases one (#41222) and two (#40715) of data collection, University of Waterloo

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Notification of Ethics Clearance to Conduct Research with Human Participants

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Principal Investigator: Warren Dodd (School of Public Health and Health Systems)

Student investigator: Sara Wyngaarden (School of Public Health and Health Systems)

File #: 41222

Title: Participatory Evaluation of the Role of Youth Research Teams in Livelihood Choices and Development Outcomes in Rural Honduras

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The Human Research Ethics Committee is pleased to inform you this study has been reviewed and given ethics clearance.

Initial Approval Date: 08/07/19 (m/d/y)

University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committees are composed in accordance with, and carry out their functions and operate in a manner consistent with, the institution's guidelines for research with human participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2nd edition), International Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), the applicable laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. Both Committees are registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Federal Wide Assurance, FWA00021410, and IRB registration number IRB00002419 (HREC) and IRB00007409 (CREC).

This study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

Expiry Date: 08/08/20 (m/d/y)

Multi-year research must be renewed at least once every 12 months unless a more frequent review has otherwise been specified. Studies will only be renewed if the renewal report is received and approved before the expiry date. Failure to submit renewal reports will result in the investigators being notified ethics clearance has been suspended and Research Finance being notified the ethics clearance is no longer valid.

Level of review: Delegated Review

Signed on behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee

Joanna Eidse, Research Ethics Officer, jeidse@uwaterloo.ca, 519-888-4567, ext. 37163

This above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Notification of Ethics Clearance to Conduct Research with Human Participants

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Principal Investigator: Warren Dodd (School of Public Health and Health Systems)

Co-Investigator: Sara Wyngaarden (School of Public Health and Health Systems)

Co-Investigator: Sally Humphries (University of Guelph)

File #: 40715

Title: Participatory Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Research Teams on Rural Development and Livelihood Stability in Honduras

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The Human Research Ethics Committee is pleased to inform you this study has been reviewed and given ethics clearance.

Initial Approval Date: 02/24/19 (m/d/y)

University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committees are composed in accordance with, and carry out their functions and operate in a manner consistent with, the institution's guidelines for research with human participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2nd edition), International Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), the applicable laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. Both Committees are registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Federal Wide Assurance, FWA00021410, and IRB registration number IRB00002419 (HREC) and IRB00007409 (CREC).

This study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

Expiry Date: 02/25/20 (m/d/y)

Multi-year research must be renewed at least once every 12 months unless a more frequent review has otherwise been specified. Studies will only be renewed if the renewal report is received and approved before the expiry date. Failure to submit renewal reports will result in the investigators being notified ethics clearance has been suspended and Research Finance being notified the ethics clearance is no longer valid.

Level of review: Delegated Review

Signed on behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee

Vanessa Buote, Ethics Advisor, vbuote@uwaterloo.ca, 519-888-4567, ext. 30321

This above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application and the most recently approved versions of all supporting materials.

Appendix C

Demographic categories for quantitative data collection conducted in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito between May and October, 2018 (phase one)

Participant information
Name
Sex (female = 0, male = 1)
Location (Jesús de Otoro = 0, Yorito = 1)
Type of CIAL (School = 0, Community = 1)
Community name
First year in the CIAL
Last year in the CIAL
Role in the CIAL
Involvement in adult CIAL (No = 0, Yes = 1)

Current location
Home community (No = 0, Yes = 1)
Another city in Honduras (No = 0, Yes = 1)
United States (No = 0, Yes = 1)
Spain (No = 0, Yes = 1)
Another country (No = 0, Yes = 1)

Current occupation
Primary type of work

Appendix D

Interview Guide (English) for semi-structured interviews conducted in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito between May and October (phase one); Interviews were conducted in Spanish

Demographics:
I: Age
I: Gender (male/female)
I: Highest level of education completed
I: Year entered CIAL
I: Year left CIAL
I: Position in CIAL
I: Where do you currently live (name of city, town, village, country)?
I: What is your current work?

CIAL involvement:
I: What was your motivation for entering the CIAL?
I: What were the main activities in which you were involved in the CIAL?
I: What did you learn from those activities?

Impacts of participation:
I: What aspects of CIAL membership helped you in a personal way?
I: What aspects of CIAL membership allowed you to be involved in the development of your community?
I: What aspects of CIAL membership affected your attitudes or relationships regarding gender?
I: Did CIAL membership help you carry out activities that improved your economic situation?
I: Are there other impacts of your participation in the CIAL that you want to mention, apart from those that you have mentioned previously?
I: Have there been changes in the direction of your life as a result of your participation in the CIAL?

Program feedback:
I: Are there recommendations or activities that you would like the youth CIALs to carry out in the future?

Appendix E

Interview Guide (English) for semi-structured interviews performed in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito in Fall 2019 (phase two); Interviews were conducted in Spanish

What is your current occupation? Can you describe a bit about your occupation and your life right now?

- How did you choose your occupation? (Prompts and probes: Why did you have interest in this occupation? Did you always want to do this type of work, or were there circumstances and opportunities that influenced your decision?)
- Were there other occupational opportunities and options available to you when you chose this livelihood or form of work? (Prompts and probes: Were there other things that you wanted to do at that time? What factors did you take into account to decide, or what factors influenced your decision?)
- How would you describe your experiences in this occupation? (Prompts and probes: Have they been similar or different from what you imagined when you chose this option?)
- *If they have changed their occupation, explore how and why. If they are outside of the country, explore their occupations before and after leaving and whether/how their experiences of migration were similar or different from what they imagined.*

Do you know young people who have moved to other regions of Honduras or who have migrated to other countries?

- What reasons do your peers have for leaving? (Prompts and probes: What do you think about their reasons for leaving? Have you been surprised by anyone who has migrated, or did you anticipate that these individuals would leave?)
- *(If the interviewee has migrated)* Can you compare your reasons for migrating with those of your peers? (Prompts and probes: How are they similar or different? And how would you compare your experiences of migration and work outside of the country to those of your peers?)
- *(If they have not migrated)* Have you ever considered leaving your community or your country? (Probe: Why or why not?)
- How would you describe the thoughts and reactions of your family or your community when you chose, or when someone chooses, to migrate? (Prompts and probes: Do they support the decision? Do they question the decision? What do you think about their reactions?)

Do you still have contact with anyone from the youth CIAL?

- Do you think that the experiences that youth have with FIPAH have helped you and/or your peers stay in your home communities? (Probe: If so, how?)
- Do you think that the experiences that youth have with FIPAH have helped you and/or your peers leave your communities or country? (Probe: If so, how?)
- Are there ways in which what you learned in the youth CIALs is helping you in your life right now? How? And in the lives of your peers, in what way have these experiences helped?

Do you have experiences with adult CIALs or other groups/activities organized by FIPAH? (For example, rural savings groups, practicums, workshops, etc.)

- Can you compare your experiences in these other programs with your experiences in the youth CIAL? (Prompts and probes: How were they similar or different? What aspect was the most important of each group?)

What changes have you seen in the situation for youth that are looking for livelihood options in Honduras/in your community? Can you describe the situation for youth?

- How is the situation for youth similar or different from other groups in Honduras or in your community (for example, youth versus adults, women versus men, rural areas versus urban areas, different cultures)?
- What changes are necessary to improve the support for youth in your community so that they can choose livelihood options that they value? (Probe: why do you think that these changes are important?)
- What institutions and organizations support these types of changes? What factors restrict them? (For example, government, NGOs, public or private organizations and businesses)
- What structures support these types of changes? What factors restrict them? (For example, laws, politics, programs, technology, infrastructure like transportation and communication)
- What resources support these types of changes? What factors restrict these types of changes? (For example, economy, education and information, health, environment, social connections)

In general, what are your hopes and dreams for Honduras and for the young people that are living here? (Prompts and probes: How do you think it will be possible to realize those hopes and dreams? How can organizations like FIPAH help with these changes?)

And for yourself, what are your hopes and dreams for your own life? How do you think it is possible to realize those?

Appendix F

Focus Group Guide (English) for discussions conducted with youth from Jesús de Otoro and Yorito in Fall 2019; Focus groups were conducted in Spanish

Many people in the communities in this area are working in agriculture. We understand that these are the main agricultural products in this region:

1. Rice
2. Coffee
3. Corn
4. Beans
5. Vegetables
6. Animal products (e.g. beef, poultry, eggs, pork, etc.)

Are there opportunities for youth in your communities to cultivate these products?

- What opportunities are available to you and your peers to work with these plants or animals? (For example, helping on the family farm, working for neighbours or other businesses, starting your own businesses)
- What barriers do you and your peers experiences to working with these plants or animals?
- If you wanted to plant or raise livestock, how would you get the resources and support to do so? (For example, land, seeds, fertilizer, initial livestock, feed, information, etc.)
- Are there other forms of work or involvement of youth in agriculture in your communities?
- Apart from agriculture, what options for work are available for youth in your communities?

We have identified the following institutions, organizations, and programs that are involved in supporting youth in these communities:

1. PLAN Honduras
2. World Vision
3. FIPAH
4. INFOP
5. Schools
6. Educatodos
7. Churches
8. Municipality

Do you agree with this list? (Prompts and probes: Would you delete anyone from the list? If so, why? Would you add anyone to the list?)

- How are each of these institutions supporting and helping youth in your communities? What do you know of their work with youth?
- Do you think that these supports are effective and useful? What would you change in the work that these organizations and institutions do with youth in order to improve them?

Additionally, many youth have moved to other regions of Honduras or have migrated out of the country. We have learned this list of reasons for migrating:

1. Lack of opportunities to work in home communities
2. Lack of opportunities to study (e.g. good schools, higher education levels)
3. The need to support family (i.e. livelihood diversification, supporting siblings)
4. Migrating with family members
5. Adventure and curiosity (i.e. wanting to get to know other places)
6. Wanting to improve the quality of life (e.g. not wanting to purchase second hand clothes, wanting to purchase electronics, etc.)
7. Insecurity (i.e. violence, problems with gangs, etc.)
8. Personal problems (i.e. social problems, family problems, etc.)

Are you in agreement with this list? (Prompts and probes: Would you remove any of these reasons? If so, why? Are any reasons missing?)

- What reasons are the most common or the strongest for you and your peers?
- *For reason 1:* Do you think that the problem of work is that there is no work available for youth, that the work available for youth is not sustainable, or that young people do not value the livelihood options available to them and want to do other things?
- *For reason 2:* What options become available to youth who have higher education? (Prompts and probes: Does high education help youth from your communities attain their livelihood aspirations? If so, how? If not, why not?)
- *For reason 6:* Some people have said that youth leave their communities to find a better quality of life – for example, they want new clothes instead of second hand clothes, they want to buy electronics, cars, big houses, etc. What do you think about this claim? (Prompts and probes: Is it true or false? What quality of life are you and your peers seeking? How is that similar or different from what your parents or other adults in your community think?

In general, what are your hopes and dreams for Honduras and for the youth who are living here? (Probe: How do you think it will be possible to realize those hopes and dreams?)

Appendix G

Interview Guide (English) for semi-structured interviews with FIPAH staff members in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito, conducted in Fall 2019 in Spanish

How would you describe FIPAH's work with youth?

- What are the goals or intentions of this work?
- Why do you think that this work is important and useful?
- How is this work similar or different from FIPAH's work with adults?
- What successes have you experienced in this work?
- What problems or challenges have you experienced in this work?
- Have you seen ways in which FIPAH's work with youth has helped young people stay in their home communities? (Probe: If so, how?)
- Have you seen ways in which FIPAH's work with youth has helped young people migrate to other communities or countries? (Probe: If so, how?)

In your time working in this region, have you seen changes in the situation for young people who are looking to establish livelihoods? (Probe: If so, what kinds of changes have you seen?)

- How is the situation of searching for livelihood options similar or different for different groups in Honduras or in this community? (e.g. youth versus adults, women versus men, rural areas versus urban areas, different cultures)
- Are there ways in which FIPAH has changed their strategies of working with youth in order to adapt to these situations? (e.g. changes in the situation or differences in the situation of different groups)
- Are there ways in which FIPAH has wanted to adapt, or has tried to adapt, but encountered barriers or limitations?

Appendix H

Interview Guide (English) for semi-structured interviews with organizational representatives in Jesús de Otoro and Yorito, conducted in Fall 2019 in Spanish

For how many years has this organization worked in this region?

- When did you start working with youth specifically?
- Can you describe the work of this organization with youth? (Prompts and probes: What programs or projects do you have with youth? What are the goals and intentions of this work? How is this work similar or different from your work with other groups (e.g. adults, children, etc.))

Why do you think that working with youth is important and useful?

- What successes have you experienced with this work?
- What problems or challenges have you experience in this work?
- Have you seen ways in which your work with youth has helped young people stay in their home communities? (Probe: If so, how?)
- Have you seen ways in which your work with youth has helped young people migrate to other communities or countries? (Probe: If so, how?)

In your time working in this region, have you seen changes in the situation for youth who are looking for livelihood options? (Probe: If so, what types of changes?)

- How is the situation similar or different for different groups in Honduras/in this community? (e.g. youth and adults, women and men, rural areas and urban areas, different cultures)
- What capacity does your organization have to support these types of changes?
- What capacities do you not have, or what capacities are external to your organization? Are there organizations or government programs working in those areas?
- How are you working with partners, financial institutions, or organizations and institutions to satisfy these needs or to gain these capacities?
- How do you decide when a necessity is too external or too big for your organization to satisfy or accomplish your own work or achieve your goals? How do you respond in these situations?

In your opinion, what is the role of organizations like yours in supporting these changes and supporting youth in this community?

- What is the role of the government in these changes and supports? How can the government improve their help or facilitate the goals and intentions of your work with youth?
- What is the role of financial institutions, international NGOs, or other forms of external help? How can organizations improve their help or facilitate the goals and intentions of your work with youth?

What are your hopes for the ongoing work of your organization with youth? What are your doubts or concerns in this work?

Appendix I

Logic model detailing the program theory for FIPAH's youth-targeted programming

Program objective: To give youth in Jesús de Otoro, Intibucá and Yorito, Yoro, Honduras opportunities to realize sustainable livelihood options within their home communities that they consider valuable and meaningful and that contribute positively to their families and communities