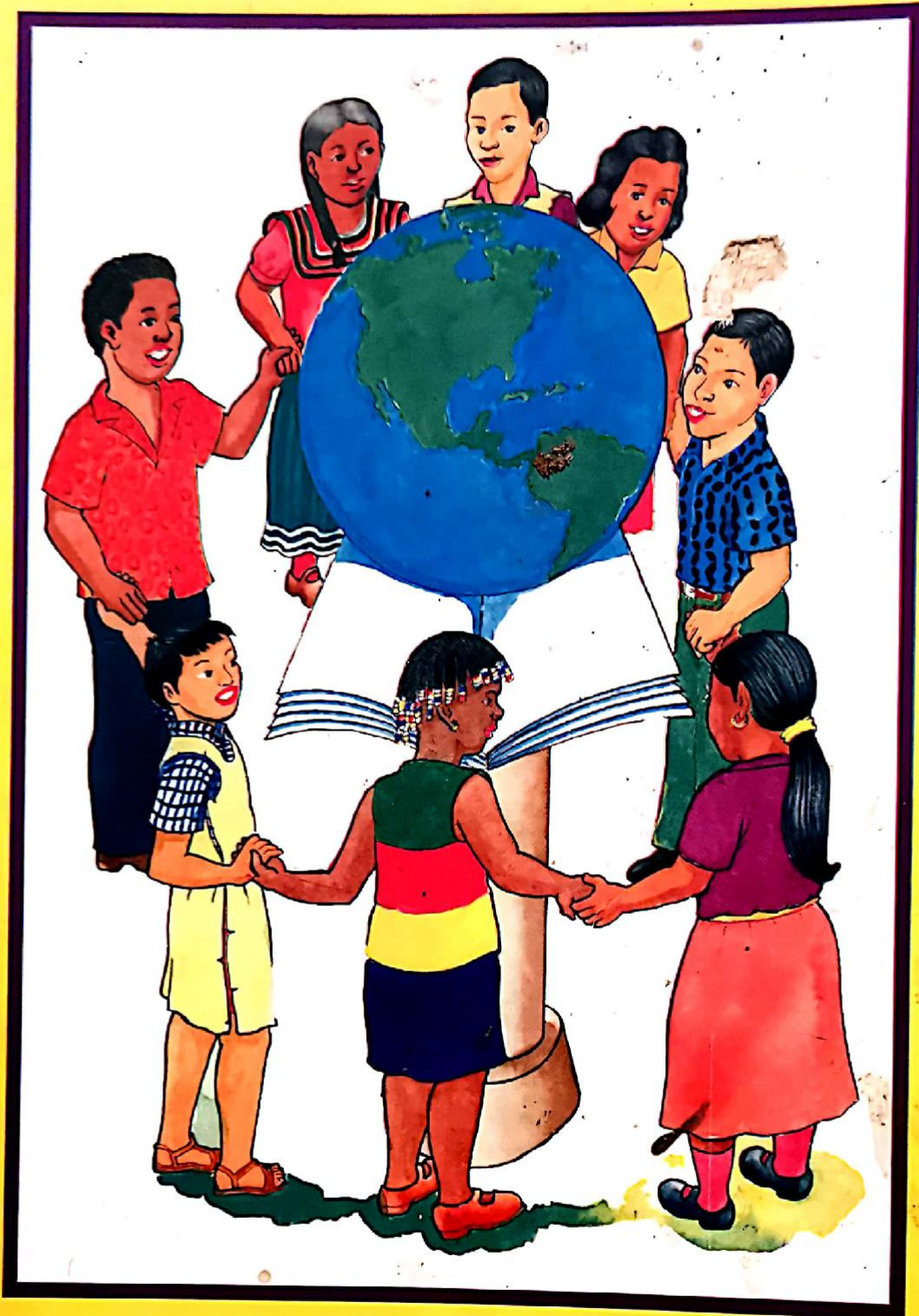


The marvellous world of our language

El maravilloso mundo de nuestra lengua



6

Sexto Grado

Pueblo Nativo de Islas de la Bahía

Colección Cipotes de Nuestros Pueblos, No. 6

Meanness and the origin of the lobsters



There was an old lady that went to her son's house everyday to ask for corn. Her son wasn't mean but his wife was. The husband had ordered his wife to give his mother corn whenever she asked for it.

-Give my mother a hand of corn of every colour. The daughter-in-law however only gave her mother-in-law three corncobs. One corncob of red corn, with which you make tamale and pap, one corncob of yellow corn, with which you prepare a fermented drink called "compuna" and one corncob of white corn called bofo, with which you make chocolate pinol.

The old lady went to her son's house every three days but only when her son was at home, because when her daughter-in-law was there she only gave her a little bit of corn. Three days went by before the old lady went to her son's house to ask for corn and upon seeing this, the woman said to her husband:

-You really love that old beggar. You're going to give her corn again? Ask his wife.

This situation repeated itself constantly and so the man told his wife not to be mean.

On one occasion the man had a hut full of corn.

That afternoon the old lady was suppose to arrive to beg for corn.

Look here comes that old lady to beg for corn, commented the wife.

And effectively the old lady got to her son's house, - son, I came so you could give me some corn, she said.

-Aha, you came yesterday and I gave you corn. I don't have anymore to give you.

No, I didn't come, answered the old lady as she sat down and cried. -If you deny me this today, do you know what could happen to you? The old lady asked her son.

-No, that's not true. I've always given you and now the corn is not enough even for me.



The old lady left crying while asking. Son, do you know what's going to happen to you? To what her son answered: -no, what's going to happen?

His mother left walking slowly, slowly, until she disappeared.

In that same moment he heard a mild sound that started in the hut. The sound kept getting louder and louder. The corn had turn into an enormous cloud of lobster. Each grain was a locust. The couple had to leave the house because they couldn't stand the insects.

The next day the mother found out that the hut was filled with locusts. The son went to visit his mother asking her: -Mama, what did you do? -Nothing. I told you something would happen. To what her son responded:

-Ay mama, the woman I have made me mean.

They say that the man went back to his house. The locusts had disappeared but once they saw the man return to his house they came back like whirlpool and killed him, then ate him.

From then on the corn always has a little bite on it and doesn't always grow healthy anymore.

What does this story teach us?

The importance of generosity.

Being mean is punishable.

It explains the origin of the plague, due to a selfish act or conduct.



In every indigenous community the myths, legends and fables teach us how to behave in our family and the community. We should reflect on the meaning and respect the positive values of our cultures.

Nicho the disobedient mouse

There was a rat that lived in a cave with her three kids. She had to leave early every morning to look for food for her children.

One of them called Nicho, was the most disobedient of all, as soon as his mother left he would steal out to go play with other mice.

The mother rat had warned her kids not to stray too far from the house for fear that they would run into the cat and be eaten.

Effectively one day Nicho ran into the cat that after a lot of sweet talk convinced him to take him to his house to meet his family. While this was going on Nicho's mother and brothers were very worried seeing as how Nicho couldn't be found anywhere.

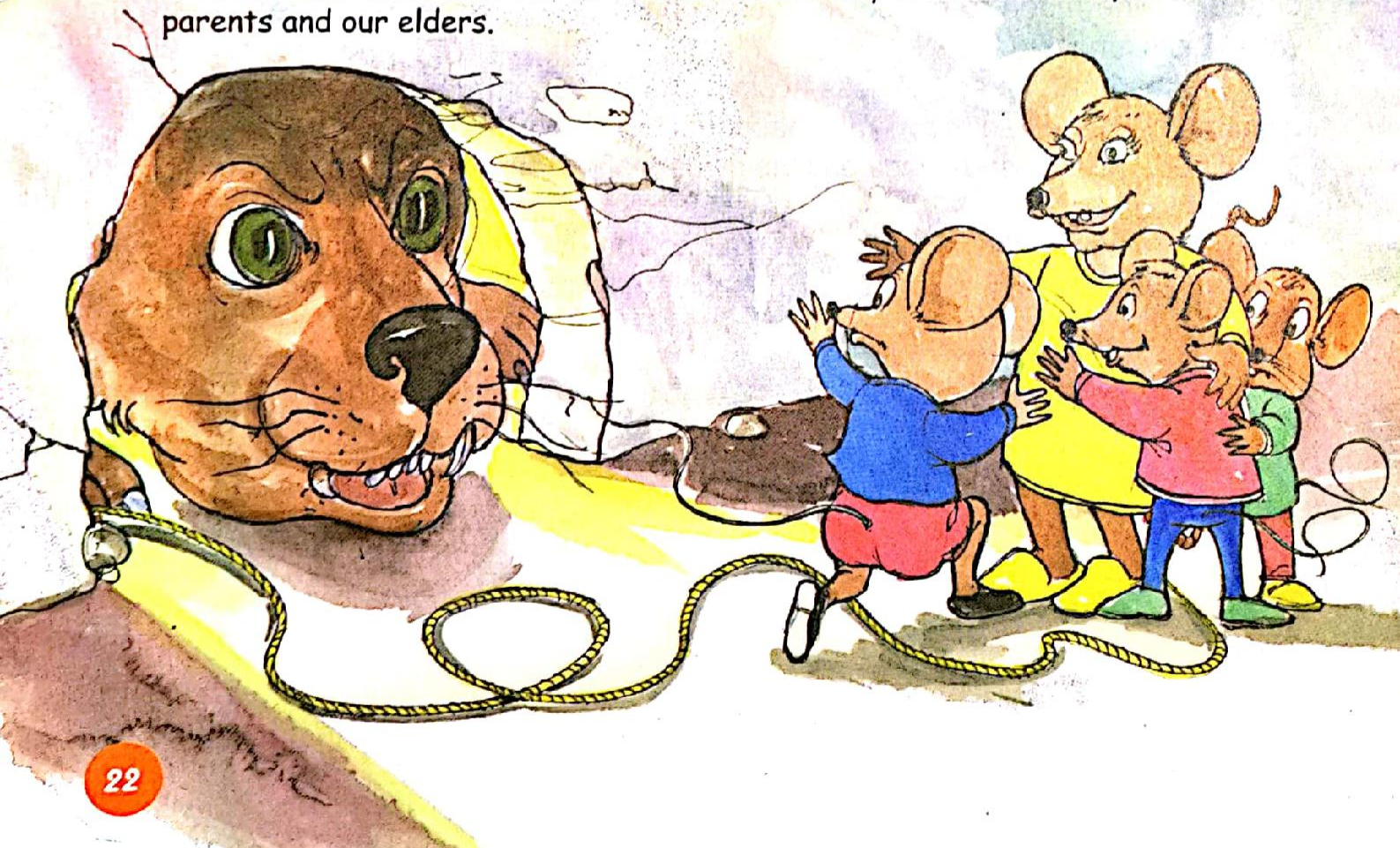
Finally Nicho and the cat arrived at the cave. The cat was too big to fit through the entrance of the cave so he waited outside. But upon finding himself stuck and couldn't get through the cat told Nicho to dig a little near the entrance so he could pass through and get to know his lovely home. And Nicho did what he was told. As soon as the cat felt that he was free, he jumped toward the little mouse with the intentions to eat him whole. Luckily for Nicho the cat only succeeded in ripping piece of his ear off.

Hearing all the noise Nicho's mother and brother went outside to see what was going on and when they realized that Nicho was in trouble they threw him a rope and drag him into the interior of the cave, until the cat couldn't go any further. That's how Nicho and his family were saved.

-Now you see why you must be obedient- said Nicho's mother

Yes, Mother, we've learned that we should always think before we do anything.

Disobedience does well for no one and that's why we should always listen to our parents and our elders.



The dance of the serpent

The Chorti we have the dance of the serpents that we dance in the month of May, the serpent is the queen of the water that is why with this dance we ask it to send us to rain.

Women and men prepare a big strip of cloth made of nylon of many colours, with which we form the body of the serpent. The colours that appear are: black, that represents mother earth and night; red that represents the wind, the sun, the lightning and thunder and a person's blood; yellow that represents the air; also with the colour yellow we make a petition to the owner of the wind so that it can redirect the hurricane winds; white represents the clouds and the rains; green and blue represents the centre and the flora of the earth. Blue also represents space.

The women that participate in the dance are placed in lines beneath the enormous piece of cloth, to simulate the body of the serpent.

In front of the serpent there are four musicians: two with the drums and two on the maracas. The sounds that is made by the drum represents the sound that are made by the quakes of the earth and the sound made by the maracas represents the sound of the rain as it falls to the earth.

When the Chorti finds a serpent near a well of water, we are glad because it means that we won't run out of water. This dance is performed on a very special date, but seeing as how it occurs in the month of May, which is the month of the first rains and planting, which has a relation with the agricultural calendar of the south of Honduras.



The Pastorals

The pastorals are theatrical scenes, they nearly always begin with two actors and later on are joined by the rest, until 10 to 12 actors are completed in the dialogue, where the songs and dances are inserted; due to the rhymes the verses make the transition from speech to song.

The pastorals are made up of the following parts:

A dialogue between two farmers (their topic is social)

A party with common people (where they speak about marriage and family)

The news of the birth of Jesus

The journey to the portal and adoration of the child

Happy to get up at dawn

To deal with the calves

Running into our sorrows

To cross over the ice

And after so much grief

After a long time

Breakfast is so little

Lunch is scarce

That only serves to

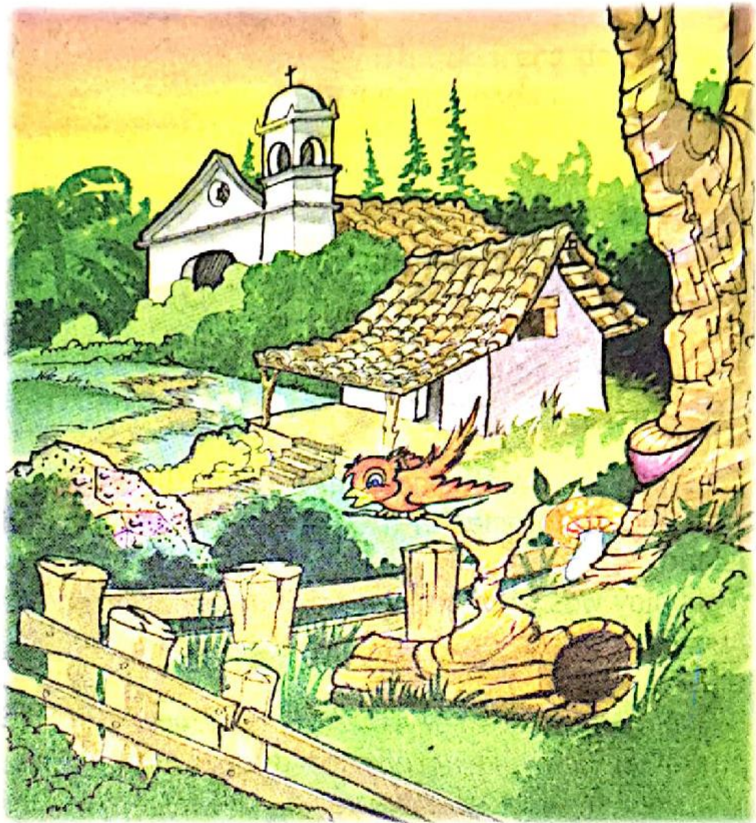
Spur on the desire.

"So i will leave these cliffs

And install myself in a city somewhere

And once there as a despicable pastor

Made great by a miracle



To emigrate from the country to the city is a problem that dates back to more than a century and the causes are still the same. The farmer wants to make a better life for himself economically and culturally. In the rural area there are no working conditions. But the farmer or the indigenous people doesn't solve anything by coming to the city because their low level of education and their economical situation is critical.

Caballero, alma, escritos sobre el teatro Centroamericano, Honduras until 2000, DICU, TEATRO(ed), Litcom, Tegucigalpa, 2002, p 57m 58-61, (vd., I).

The Declaration of the United Nations about the Rights of the Indigenous Communities

On September 2007 the General Assembly of the Nations approved the Declaration of the United Nations about the rights of the indigenous communities.

In the article No. 3 of the resolution says: the indigenous communities have a right to free determination. In light of this right they freely determine their political condition, and to freely pursue their economical, social and cultural development.

Art. 5.- The indigenous community have the right to preserve and reinforce their own political legal institutions.

Also economical, social and cultural, and keeping the right to fully participate in the political, economical, social and cultural life of the State if they so wish it.

Art. 11,- clause 1- The indigenous community have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural customs and traditions. That includes the right to keep, protect and develop past, present and future cultural manifestations like archeological and historical places, utensils, designs, ceremonies, technology, visual, interpretive and literary arts.



Art. 173 clause a

Declaration of the United Nations about the rights of the indigenous community
art. 3, art. 5, art. 8 -september 2007

What is Health

Health is a physical, mental and spiritual condition that every living person should enjoy.

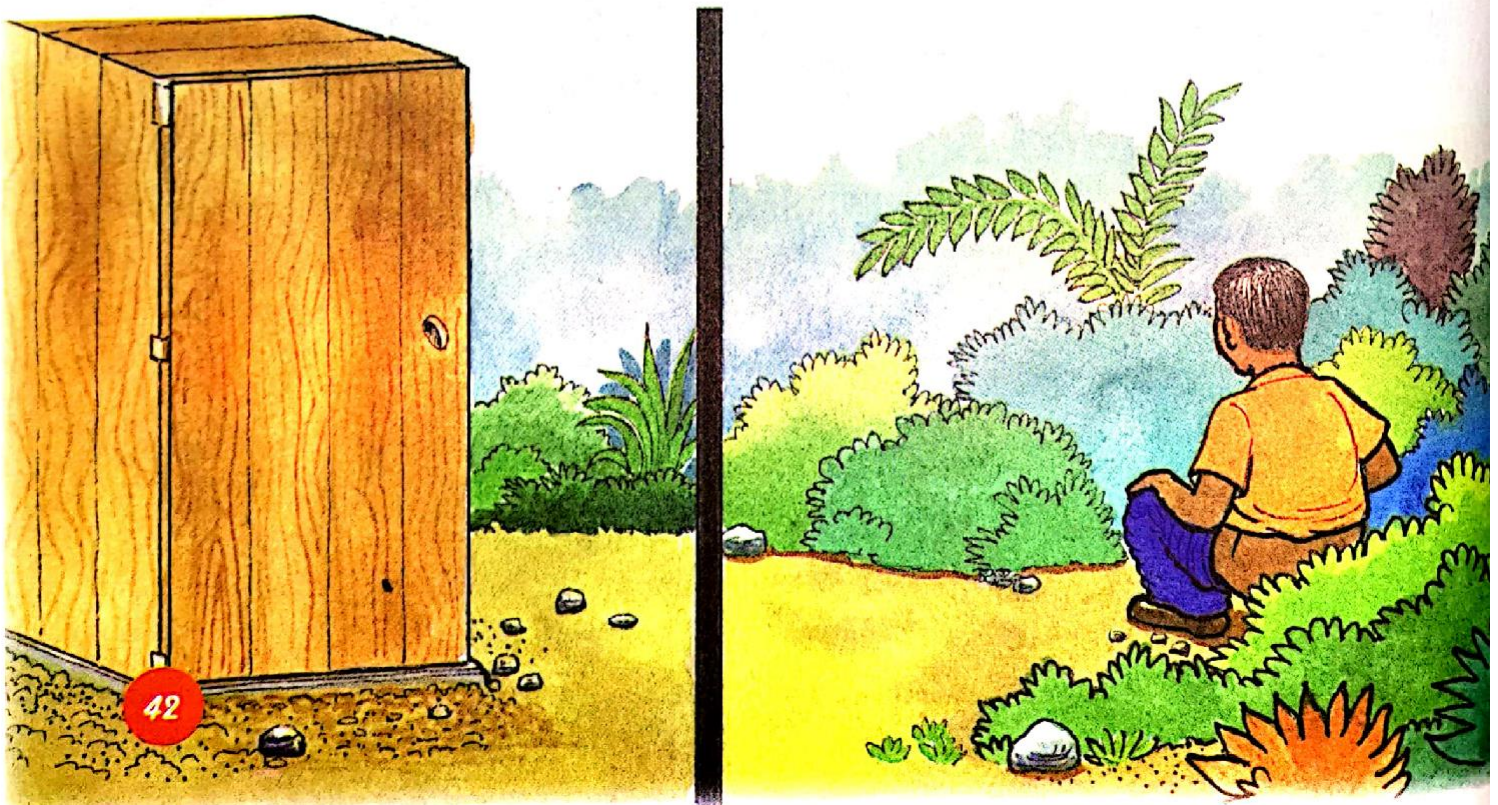
- For the GARIFUNA people health is a Physical and mental state of balance in which a person can be found, in other words a person should enjoy health when he or she has no sickness or pain.
- For the TAWAHKA people, health is a good state of mind for a person, without sickness and with a healthy body.
- For us island people, health is feeling good physically, mentally and spiritually.
- For the PECH people, health is being healthy physically and spiritually.
- For the LENCA people, is being healthy mentally and physically.
- And to the Tolpan people, health is being well physically and mentally.
- To the CHORTI people, health is our well being and a sound mind. It's enjoying happiness, it's the physical and spiritual balance of the body.
- For the MISKITO people, health is having a healthy body with the capacity for hard work.



How to Conserve Health

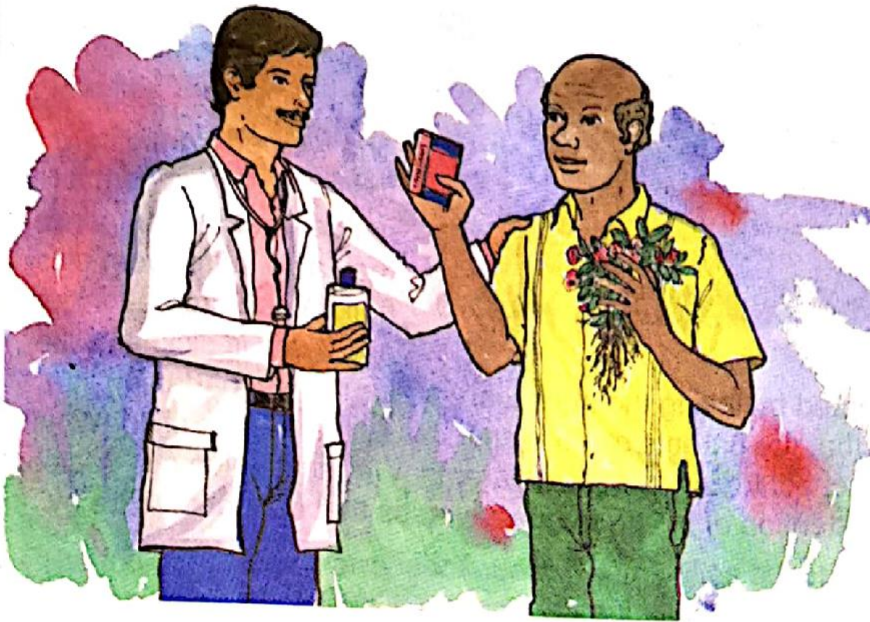
To conserve health we must keep in mind few important advices that can help us all. Let's discuss a few ideas between us.

- Do not contaminate our atmosphere by throwing garbage.
- Do not defecate in our water system; Lake; Creek, gully and water spring and others.
- Wash our hands with soap after defecating
- After using the bathroom keep it clean and the toilet lid down.
- Do not let a puddle form nor retain water, because insects can be born and cause sickness.
- Keep our house clean and in order, in other words sweep and clean with care all the rooms and other things daily.
- Maintain a good hygiene and a good personal appearance, this means to comb our hair daily and use clean close every day, brush our teeth three times a day.
- Make sure the food is well cooked before serving.
- Wash our fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Eat different colour of fruits because of the variety of colours we can find the kind of vitamins we need.
- Eat a lot of food-specially vegetables.
- Eat a lot of greens daily, because it gives us energy.
- Workout at least forty five minutes a day.
- Drink a lot of clean water, because if we drink dirty water we will get sick.
- Throw the garbage in the trash can and separate the recycable ones.



Our Health Problems

In the native towns of the afrodescendants of Honduras, we suffer different sicknesses cause by many reasons: the lack of resources to keep us healthy, the distance of medical service and high cost of medications.



- The sickness that appears among the CHORTI are arthritis, dengue, fever, breathing problems, like cough, cold, tuberculosis and a lot suffer from anaemia; because of our bad conditions.- our house is infested by bed bugs that cause bad skin disease; other unhealthy conditions that causes diarrhea, indigestion, upset stomach; the lack of food causes under nourishment.

- The sicknesses that appear among the GARIFUNAS are, arthritis, cancer, H.I.V./AIDS, diabetes; the main problem is the trafficking of drugs among young people and alcoholism; the women suffers from breast cancer.
- The sicknesses that we islander suffer are, H.I.V./AIDS, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, tuberculosis and lots of women suffer with breast cancer.
- The LENCA community suffers a lot of breathing problems like cough, pneumonia and many with tuberculosis. They also suffer stomach problems like diarrhea, indigestion, stomach pain and the majority with anaemia, vomiting, fever and headache because of the bad conditions of our environment, they also suffer malaria and the women suffer breast cancer.
- The sicknesses that are found in the MISKITO town are, stomach problems like diarrhea, fever and because of little water they have conserved it also causes dengue, malaria and other with arthritis, respiratory problems like cough, and pneumonia.
- The sicknesses that can be found among the PECH community are tuberculosis, diarrhea, malaria, cough, pneumonia and cold; lots of women suffer breast cancer, they also suffer indigestion, anaemia because of the lack of food, they also suffer under nourishment.
- In the TAWAHKA town they suffer lack of healthiness causing malaria, dengue and bad skin disease; respiratory problems like cough and stomach problems like diarrhea, because of the lack of food they suffer under Nourishment; the women suffer breast cancer and the young people suffers drug addiction dengue malaria paralysis by emersion(diving), the lack of food and diarrhea.
- The TOLPAN people suffer from dengue, diarrhea, malaria, and pneumonia, and anaemia, arthritis, under nourishment, cancer and chicken pocks.

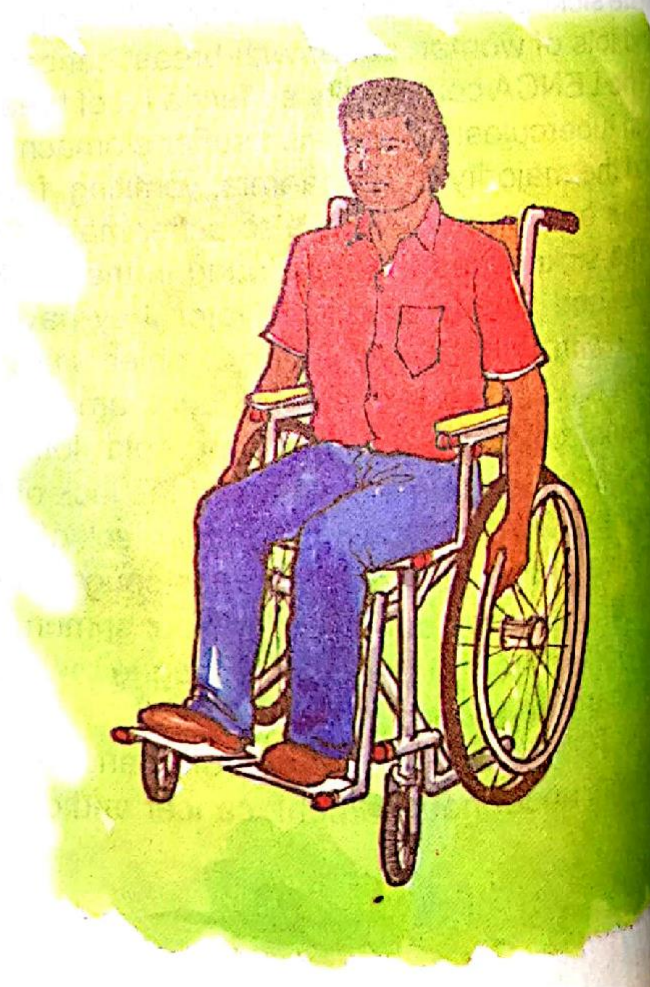


The women from different town appear with breast cancer and uterine cancer, they also suffer from alcoholism and drug addiction, and there is sickness like

H.I.V./AIDS, which can be prevented by taking the necessary precautions if partaking in a healthy sex life. The problem is that the parents can transmit this to the unborn child. Which the children are forced to leave school to care for there parents. We must value our tradition of humour, but also demanding attention of health for the sickness that cannot be cure by our tradition.

The Lobsters...and the MISKITO Divers

Because of the insecure work condition in the diving field we have lots of Miskito cripple from diving. Since 1960 they began to dive in Gracias a Dios; since then diving occur in insecure conditions. The situation that needs to sharpen, is because the Miskito men submerge without protection; the young men between sixteen and thirty five years old work as divers, and they submerge themselves into great depts of water without the necessary protection; these immersion is to fish for lobsters and sell to the Marisco Hybour and Agua Azul, because of this, from 1969 until 2006 we have the following situation. 120 divers paralysis only by parts of the body, 80 paralysis completely. These terrible work conditions have left 400 hundred widows and 600 orphan kids.



Alcoholism and Drug Addiction

Alcoholism

- Alcoholism and drug addiction exist in the indigenous and afro-descendent town. That affects the health of the people in our communities.
- Alcoholism is the excessive and lengthy consumption of alcohol. It is also an incredible disease.
- The dependencies of alcohol not only causes health disturbances, but it also can cause family separation; loose of job or the increases of traffic accidents.
- Alcoholism causes a liver disease that is called cirrhosis, that consists of the inflammation of the liver.

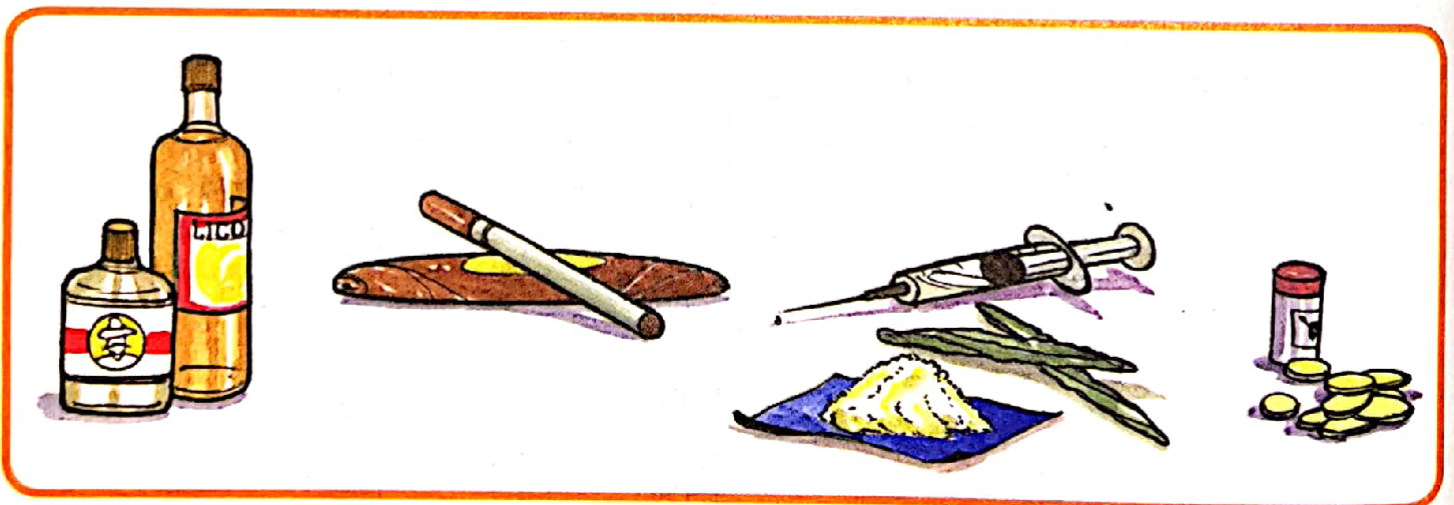
Drug Addiction

Drug addiction affects equally the health of people that consume and create, dependency that causes many factors:

1. Progressive deterioration of the quality of life.
2. Lost of behaviour controls.
3. Denial or auto deceit.
4. Alcohol and drugs use despite the hurt it causes to others and families.
5. Low self-esteem.
6. Mental alterations (Dementia)

Because of all these reasons, we should prevent alcoholism and drug addiction in our town, through education and by not consuming alcohol or drugs. We should also prohibit the promotion and installation of canteens in our indigenous and afrodescent communities.

Fuente: <http://lencolombia.com>.



Rights for Health

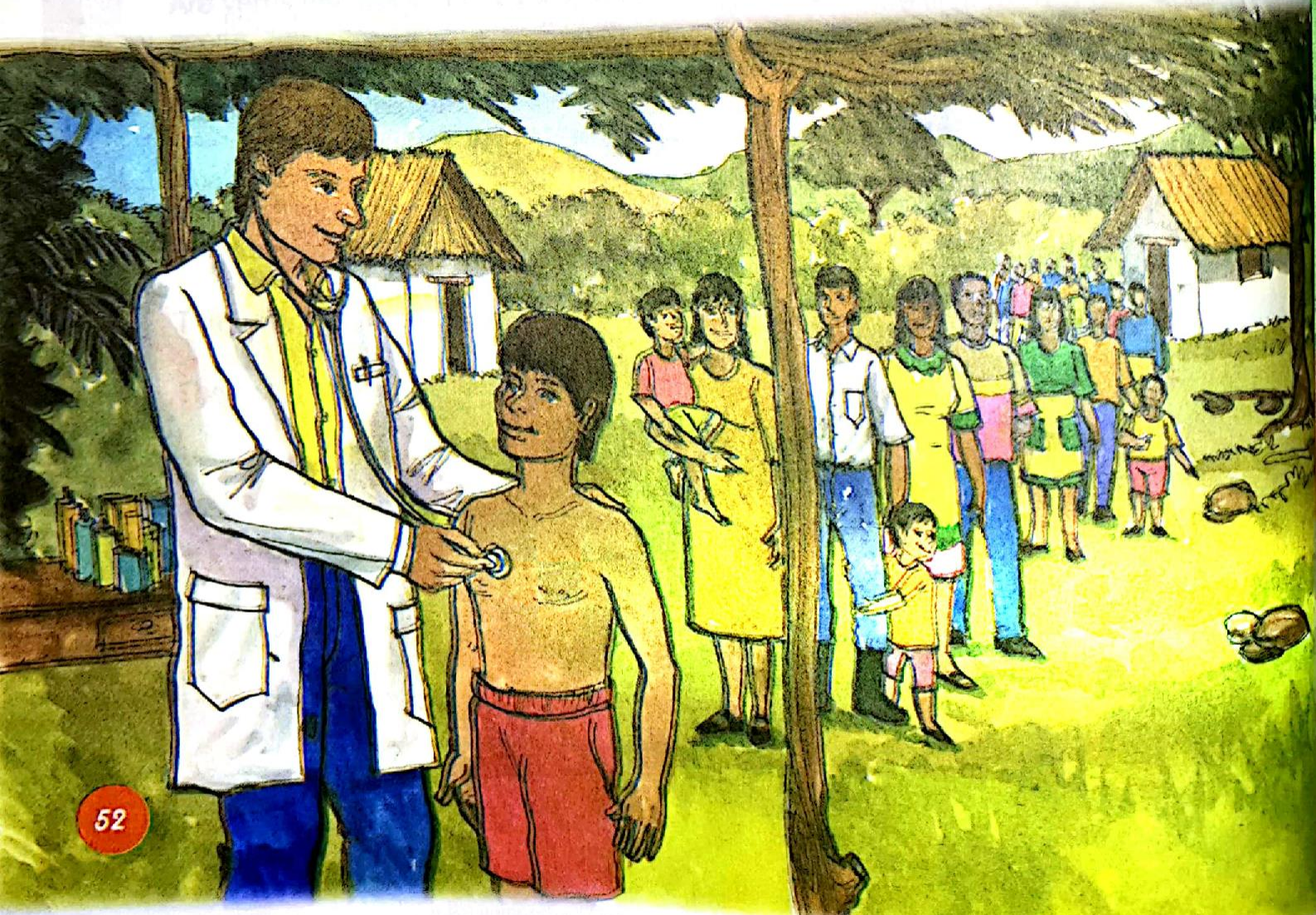
The indigenous and afro-descendants peoples of Honduras, has the right to enjoy a good health.

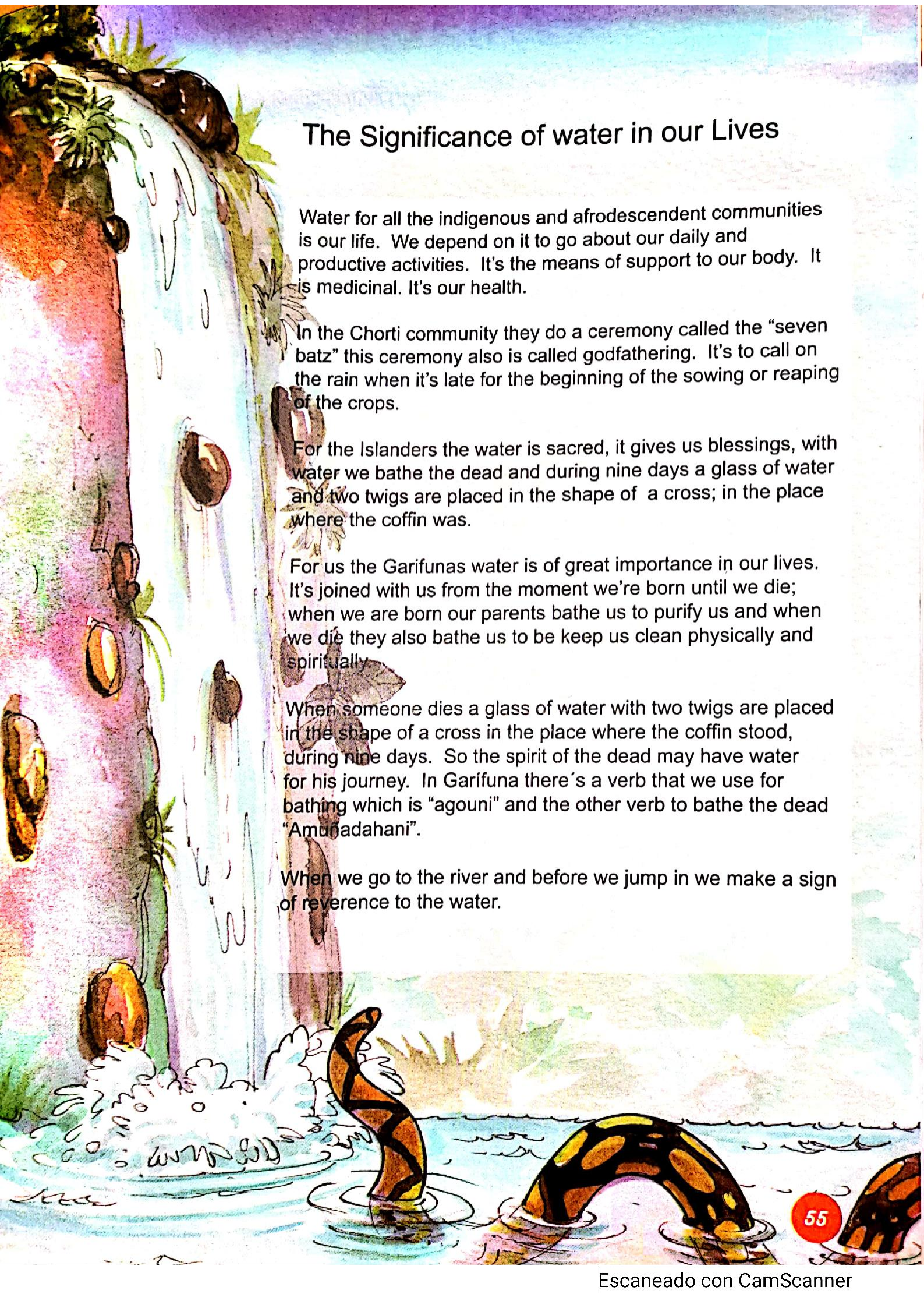
The indigenous and afro-descendants have the right to participate actively in all the programs and projects that the government produce, with the objective to be included in the agenda of human development and that way assure there health and life condition.

We have right the to practice our traditional medicine in combination with modern medicine.

The government has the obligation to offer suitable services with the objective to guarantee physical, mental and psychological health for the native and black communities.

The government must facilitate and offer, training, qualification and prevention in coordination with our indigenous and afroHonduran organizations.





The Significance of water in our Lives

Water for all the indigenous and afrodescendent communities is our life. We depend on it to go about our daily and productive activities. It's the means of support to our body. It is medicinal. It's our health.

In the Chorti community they do a ceremony called the "seven batz" this ceremony also is called godfathering. It's to call on the rain when it's late for the beginning of the sowing or reaping of the crops.

For the Islanders the water is sacred, it gives us blessings, with water we bathe the dead and during nine days a glass of water and two twigs are placed in the shape of a cross; in the place where the coffin was.

For us the Garifunas water is of great importance in our lives. It's joined with us from the moment we're born until we die; when we are born our parents bathe us to purify us and when we die they also bathe us to be keep us clean physically and spiritually.

When someone dies a glass of water with two twigs are placed in the shape of a cross in the place where the coffin stood, during nine days. So the spirit of the dead may have water for his journey. In Garifuna there's a verb that we use for bathing which is "agouni" and the other verb to bathe the dead "Amuñadahani".

When we go to the river and before we jump in we make a sign of reverence to the water.

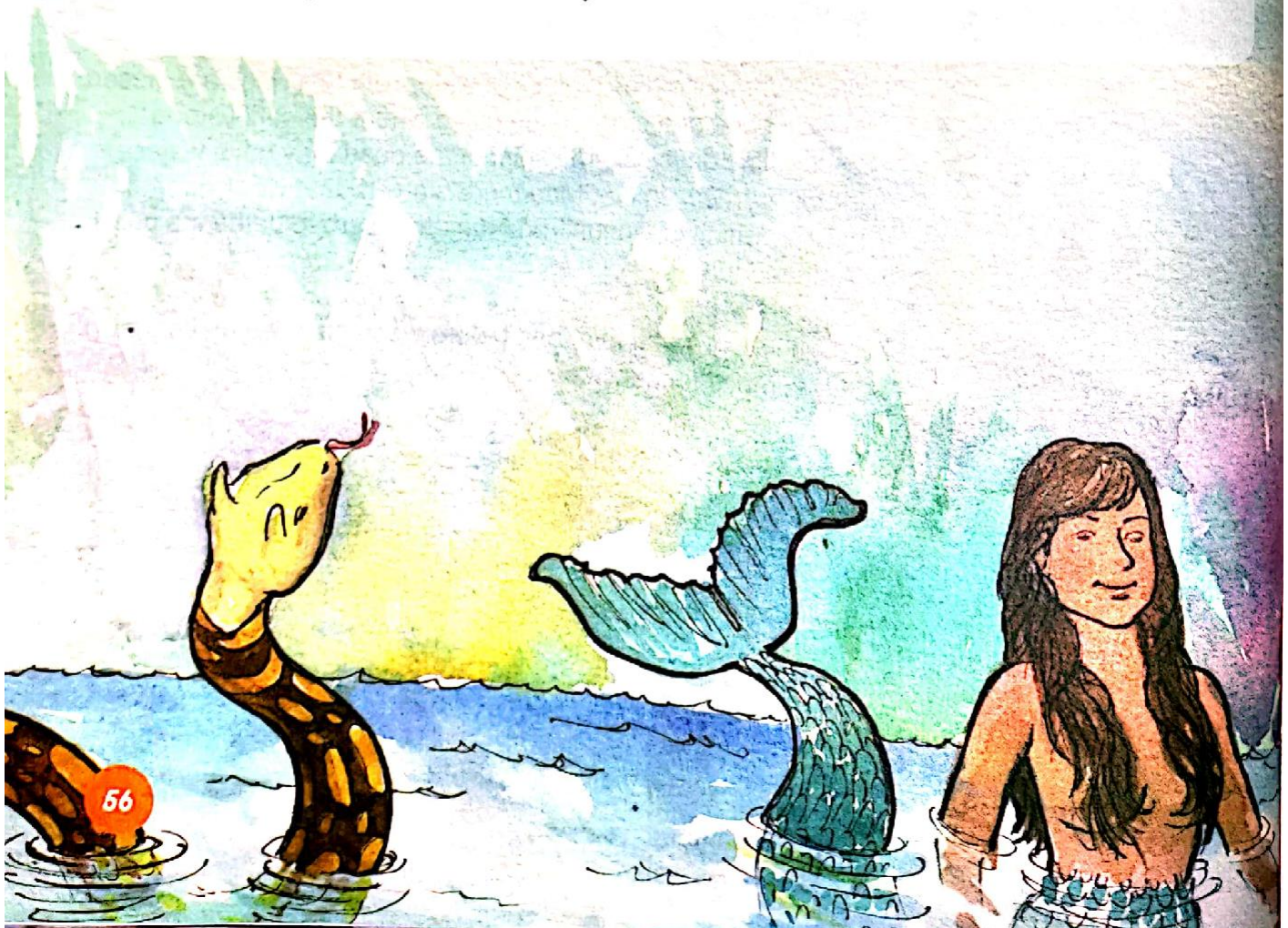
To us the Lencas the water is sacred, without her we cannot live and we think that she's alive; when someone dies we place a glass of water with two twigs in the form of a cross and the water in the glass is change for the next following nine days so that the spirit of the dead may drink water while he's traveling. On the way one of the dogs that he loved most in life waits for him to help him cross the river Jordan. Before getting into the river we make reverence as a sign of respect. The owner of the water is the serpent with horns and the mermaid.

To us the Miskitu water is life.

To the Pech community water is health, it's sacred and it has spirit. It cures a few illnesses and its owner is the serpent with horns and the mermaid.

To us the Tawahkas the water is sacred, it has spirit, when we go to the river before jumping in we make reverence as a sign of respect.

For the Tol community, the water has spirit. It's sacred and we have a lot of respect towards it. The goddess of the water Usücjües is the serpent that protects the water from the people that want to destroy its sources.



Water in the World and in Honduras

All over the world water is life, but not everyone in the world has water. For the year 2006 it was calculated that 1100 million people from poor countries lack adequate access to water and 2600 million doesn't have the basic service of the water. This lack of water is due to two reasons: there are no politics that favour the democratic distribution of the water.

The poorer countries, due to lack of economical resources are excluded from the water service. There are no infrastructures that transport the water for the basic needs of life or that allows the use of water as a means of support.

It's understood that by basic needs we're referring to the water that's needed to prepare food, to drink, bathe and wash clothes. Water as a means of support is the water that's used in agricultural or industrially.

The access to water is a fundamental part of the human rights. A person is a true citizen if his fundamental needs are secure. A society in which poor people doesn't have water, is a society that's not worried about its citizen.



In the world the citizens have a right to:

Equality of citizenship: If there is no access to water, then it isn't true that there is equality in the citizenship.

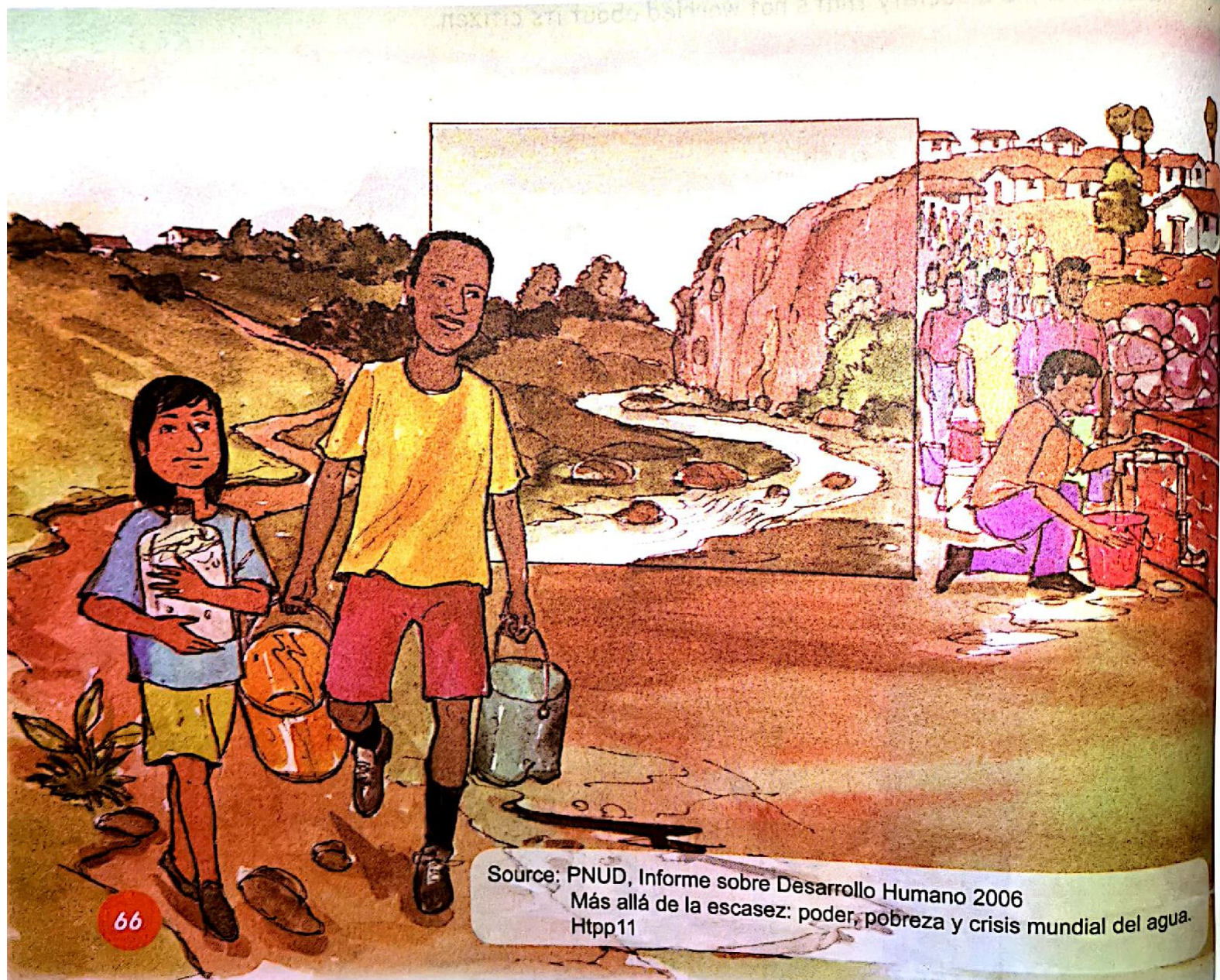
Equality of opportunities: the social justice is not complete if there's no opportunity to have water.

Fair distribution: if the water is not for everyone, then there cannot be a fair distribution. In other words if there is rights over the water then there's no citizenship. The richer countries consume more water and pay less for it. The poorer countries consume or use less and pay more for the water than the richer countries. The poorest people in the countries pay more for water, even though most of the times poor people doesn't even have access to water for their basic needs.

In Honduras the situation is the same as in the rest of the world.

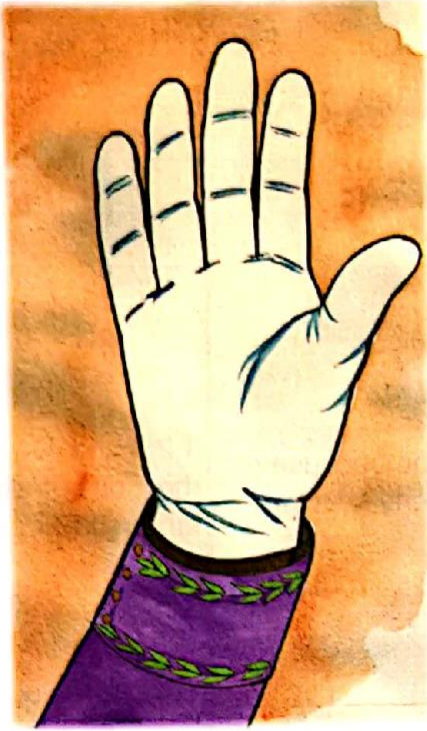
Poor people doesn't have water or the water is of very bad quality.

Water for poor people is very expensive. We spend on water the 10% of our salary. In our country they should increase the access to the water.



Source: PNUD, Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 2006
Más allá de la escasez: poder, pobreza y crisis mundial del agua.
Htp11

Banning of Speech



Garifuna:

As kids they were forbidden to speak their language in school, they were punished. The teachers took hot pepper to the classroom to put in the mouths of the children that spoke Garifuna. They were also punished by having to kneel down in the sand or under the table. The boy or girl that were punish could not go out to recess or eat lunch, the teacher would leave them locked in the classroom and she would go to lunch. At church they were obligated to study catholicism and to read the bible in Spanish.

Tawahka:

At school it was forbidden for them to speak in their own language, they had to kneel under the table or in the sand without the right to go to recess.

Pech:

The teacher didn't allow them to speak in their language in class, she would threaten them. In their homes they would only talk when they were certain that there were no strangers around. Whenever visitors came to the house, the children had to hide and not speak to the visitors.

Islanders:

At school our teachers didn't want us speaking English, only Spanish. In those times those who didn't speak Spanish didn't go to school, it was also prohibited by the church.

Chorti:

At school it was forbidden for them to talk in their language, the boys and girls were beaten with sticks so they could learn to speak Spanish. When a child was punished and the parents didn't send them back to school the following day the teacher would call the "Cabo Cantonal", or any other town leader to force the parents to send the child back to school, and if they didn't comply the fine or punish with jail time.

The Catholic Church made them study the bible in Spanish; some of their cultural practices were considered satanic. Nowadays the person that can't speak their language makes fun of the kids that do.

Lenca:

At School is was forbidden for them to speak their native language, they were punish by making them kneel on a bench and then one of the other kids would come and beat them with a fine stick on their backs until the stick broke in peaces.

The teacher got mad whenever they spoke their native language; they were only allowed to talk it at home. At church with their families they were not allowed to say prayers in their language, they were obligated to learn catechism in Spanish.

Tolpan:

At school they were punish by being beat with sticks on their backs, the sticks were called "valley of angels"; for speaking their native language. They were made to kneel down on sand or gravel, from 7:00 am until 4:00 pm, with no recess or lunch.

Whenever their teacher was man, he didn't take the boys out to lunch only the girls, to play with them, the boys were left locked inside the classroom. The teachers did this because the girls were obedient and the boys weren't, when they told not to speak their native language.

Right to our Language

The Indigenous and Afrodescendent Groups have a right to preserve and keep our own language and culture other than just Spanish or any other language.

Children have a right to an integrated education, in a qualified surrounding that benefits our growth and personal development, physically, mentally and emotionally; developing in us intelligence according to our needs, our interest and our own character depending on our age and mental maturity.

The Indigenous and Afrodescendent groups of Honduras have a right that all elderly people, boys and girls, including those that live on the out skirts of the communities have access to and education in their own culture.

The Indigenous and Afrodescendent groups of Honduras have a right to our own means of information in our language and other means of information non indigenous without any discrimination.

The Honduran Government have the obligation to adopt means that the indigenous and afrodescendent groups can rescue and preserve our culture and language.

Source

Convenio 169

Art. 27, paragraph 1, 2 and 3

Declaration of the United Nations on the rights of indigenous groups, general assembly 13th of September, 2007 p.6

Sep/PRONEEAAH, National Curriculum adequacy of Prebasic in Intercultural Bilingual Education. Honduras 2007.

ACROSTIC

Bless our Island Lord I pray

As we try to do your will.

You can Hike and you can dive

In the lovely island of Roatan

She's the queen of all three

Lady Guanaja and princess Utila

An ordinary life their people live

Dreaming of their children's needs.

The American Dream

One hot afternoon two friends met on the soccer field of the community, John and Michael.

They were talking about the lack of job opportunities when John said to Michael that he was planning to migrate to the United States. Michael answered that he was thinking on doing the same thing because the money wasn't enough to support his family. -I have an uncle that lives in New York that told me to go over there because he got me a job.

I haven't wanted to go because I don't want to leave my family, just imagining myself so far away from my only child makes me sad and I ask myself who am I going to hug in the morning? John answered saying: - Don't worry about it, further on you can send him money. He also added: -I've paid the coyote to help us cross the border; you'll see that the people from immigration won't catch us.

They agreed to travel together without thinking on the difficulties they could face on the way. Before they reached Tapachula, Mexico, the coyote that John had hired turned out to be a thief. He stole all their money, leaving them without anything.

John and Michael had to look for jobs and seeing as how no one knew them they didn't find anything. Finally after many difficulties they got to Chiapas, where they found a widow called Cristina who promised to help them get jobs.

They found a job as waiters. Michael located his uncle and after telling him about the coyote that turned out to be a thief, he asked him to come get them and take them to New York. That's how John and Michael got to the United States to earn money to support their family.

