Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in Belize: SATIIM Presentation to UK – Belize Association

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- Indigenous-led organisation
- Created in 1999 by five communities: Barranco, Midway, Conejo, Sunday wood and Crique Sarco
- Land was designated a National Park in 1994 without consultation or consent.

Current Projects

- Traditional Agriculture
- Indigenous-led Conservation
- Sustainable Livelihoods
- Forestry Management
- Building Capacity for FPIC Implementation

Building Capacity for an Inclusive, Pragmatic National Effort to Implement Belize's Free Prior and Informed Consent

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Funded by
the European Union

Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a right granted to Indigenous Peoples, recognised in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aligns with their universal right to self-determination

Free – no coercion, intimidation

Prior – full consent before any activity

Informed – Community has all relevant information, presented in a culturally accessible manner

How did FPIC get to Belize?

Under the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) 2015 Consent Order, the Government of Belize has agreed to:

Develop legislative administrative and/or other measures necessary to create an effective mechanism to identify and protect the property and other rights arising from Maya Customary land tenure practice.

Paragraph 4:

...until such time as the measures... are achieved, it shall cease and abstain from any acts, whether by the agents of government itself or third parties acting with its leave, acquiescence or tolerance, that might adversely affect the value, use or enjoyment of the lands that are used and occupied by the Maya villages, ***unless such acts are preceded by consultations with them in order to obtain their informed consent****...*

Protocol

Government of Belize approved the *Maya of Southern Belize Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation Protocol,* January 25th 2022.

It was subsequently used for:

1. Solar electrification
2. Resilient Rural Belize Program
3. US Capital Energy oil exploration

Challenges encountered during the implementation of the FPIC Protocol

- Lack of common understanding of customary governance
- Limited socialisation and education of the Maya of Southern Belize FPIC Protocol since introduced
- Government technical staff working on projects targeting indigenous communities have limited awareness of the right to Free Prior Informed Consent
- Parties engaged in the consultation process utilize a diverse range of required forms stipulated by the FPIC Protocol.

Project activities

- FPIC manuals for Maya communities, GOB, and CSO
- FPIC trainings for communities, GOB, and CSO
- Facilitate learning exchanges
- Conference on FPIC
- Standardising forms
- Awareness campaign

Significance...

For UKBA:

Many may be a part of projects in Toledo, and fall on indigenous lands

For other indigenous groups:

An example of litigation resulting in land rights being upheld, a comparison for their own aspirations

For the Maya of Southern Belize:

Letting people live in a way that they value, recognising that the land and resources is theirs

Thank you

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