

This notice is part of an educational activity of the Office of Education and Community Relations. It was made with the creative purpose of narrating what was discussed during the first youth dialogue. This does not have the real purpose of being submitted to the press.

Press Release: First Community Dialogue in San Lorenzo

Instructions: before starting the audio

The group is instructed to imagine that after the first dialogue a report and radio bulletin are made where what happened is summarized. The idea is for them to be able to listen to the news story or imaginary radio bulletin to remember what happened at the first meeting. This may also help those that did not participate in the first activity to know what happened during it.

The audio begins.

“On May 2, 2019, a meeting was held with community leaders from the Municipality of San Lorenzo at the Community Center of Barrio Hato. This meeting was attended by 19 community leaders from diverse sections of the Municipality including Barrios Hato, Florida, and Jagual, and the sections of Las Cruces and Montanez. They were able to converse among themselves and with representatives of the Judicial Center of Caguas and the Office of Education and Community Relations about the subject of conflict between neighbors. The conversation was livened up with music, flowers on the tables, and snacks which were shared by the attendees. That atmosphere which was created was very pleasant, although some lamented that coffee was not serve. Those present got to know each other through a cruise through the islands of the Caribbean and the creation of various lifeboats which they had to board after encountering a storm along the way. The crewmembers could arrive to shore on their boats (among them were: The Samaritano, Martin, Henry, and the survivors). Once ashore they enjoyed some delicious pina coladas. The same tranquility they enjoyed on the shore is that which is aspired to in their communities in San Lorenzo.

During the activity, the leaders spoke excitedly about how to define the concept of neighbor conflict and mentioned some examples of conflicts they observe in their communities. Later they spoke about strategies to use to manage said conflicts and possible external resources that could help them to confront conflict between neighbors. Through this project the Judicial Branch is interested in making the community more aware of the courts and judicial processes while at the same time making the courts aware of the realities of the communities of San Lorenzo, including the conflicts between neighbors they encounter. It also has the goal of exploring alternatives to create a collaborative project which works with the subject of conflict between neighbors.

“The discussion was carried out at three tables through which the participants navigated. Every 15 minutes the groups would rotate with the rhythm of the music towards a close table where a host from the Judicial Branch was waiting. In the discussions, the following ideas were generated. They defined the word conflict as problems, controversies, fights, commotion, differences of thought and disagreements. The motives for said conflicts were varied, including family situations, unnecessary noise from music, motors or vehicles, vehicles blocking the entrance to homes, bad management of trash, failure to maintain plots, stray animals and teenagers or children without supervision affecting the property and tranquility of third parties. The conflict still prevailing in many communities is over boundaries between plots and homes.

Some of the practices suggested to be used to resolve neighbor conflicts included: get to know each other and have dialogue in community meetings, the use of intermediaries who facilitate the dialogue, and community vigilance by means of cameras or a system of blocks and guards (the latter being well known neighbors to the members of the community). However, in some instances they have had to resort to the court.

Regarding the support resources they might receive, they included education about the subjects that generate conflicts, since they understand that some conflicts are the product of neighbors not knowing each other. In the same manner, they suggested education about the consequences of people's actions and the property rights of citizens. For the boundary conflicts they mentioned education to know about the judicial processes attending to those of boundaries and inheritance, and how to make those cases to a court. What evidence should they present? And how could they help a surveyor in that process? They also spoke about the possibility of using intermediaries and developing mediating leaders to attend to some conflicts. In order to incentivize participation of the community in activities which would be for the general public they proposed the use of vouchers, raffles and food, and giving publicity to the activities.

After two hours of participating in these activities, the group agreed to meet again on June 13 at the same time and on the same channel. And for that reason we are meeting here today.”

The audio is paused and the following questions are asked:

1. How did you find the note? Did it narrate well what happened in our last meeting?
2. Would you add or modify anything?