

# **MAYA COMMUNAL LANDS IN BELIZE:**

**A fit-for-purpose model to support indigenous land rights,  
climate resilience and legal integration**

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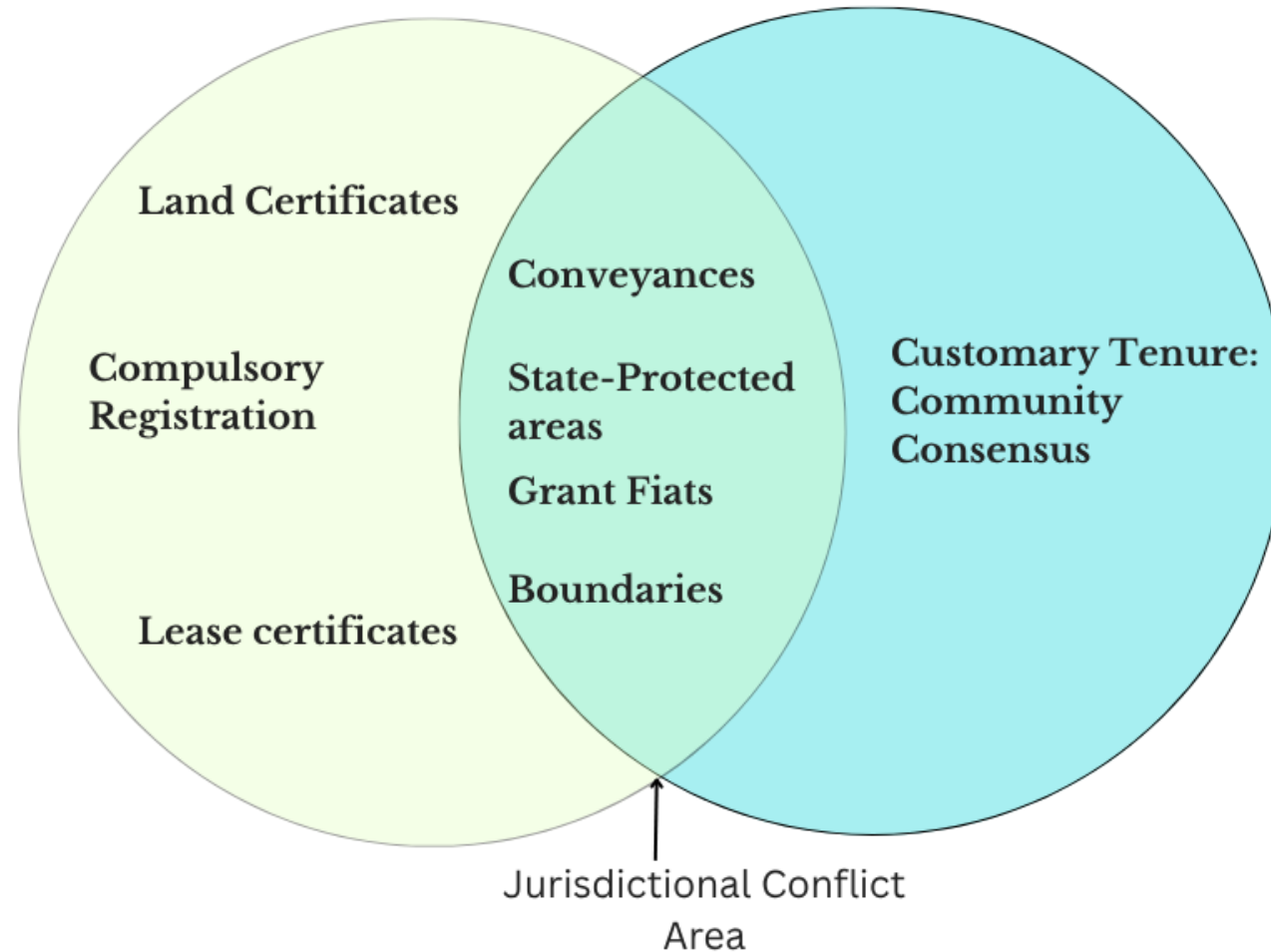
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# WHY INDIGENOUS LAND TENURE IN BELIZE MATTERS

- 41 Maya communities in Toledo District practise communal tenure predating colonial rule.
- Court victories (Supreme Ct 2007/2010; CCJ 2015) affirmed Maya rights, but implementation remains incomplete.
- Lack of legal integration and cadastral demarcation limits enforcement.
- Need for a framework balancing custom, law, and development.

# DUAL GOVERNANCE CONFLICT IN BELIZE

## State vs Maya Alcalde System



# PILOT STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

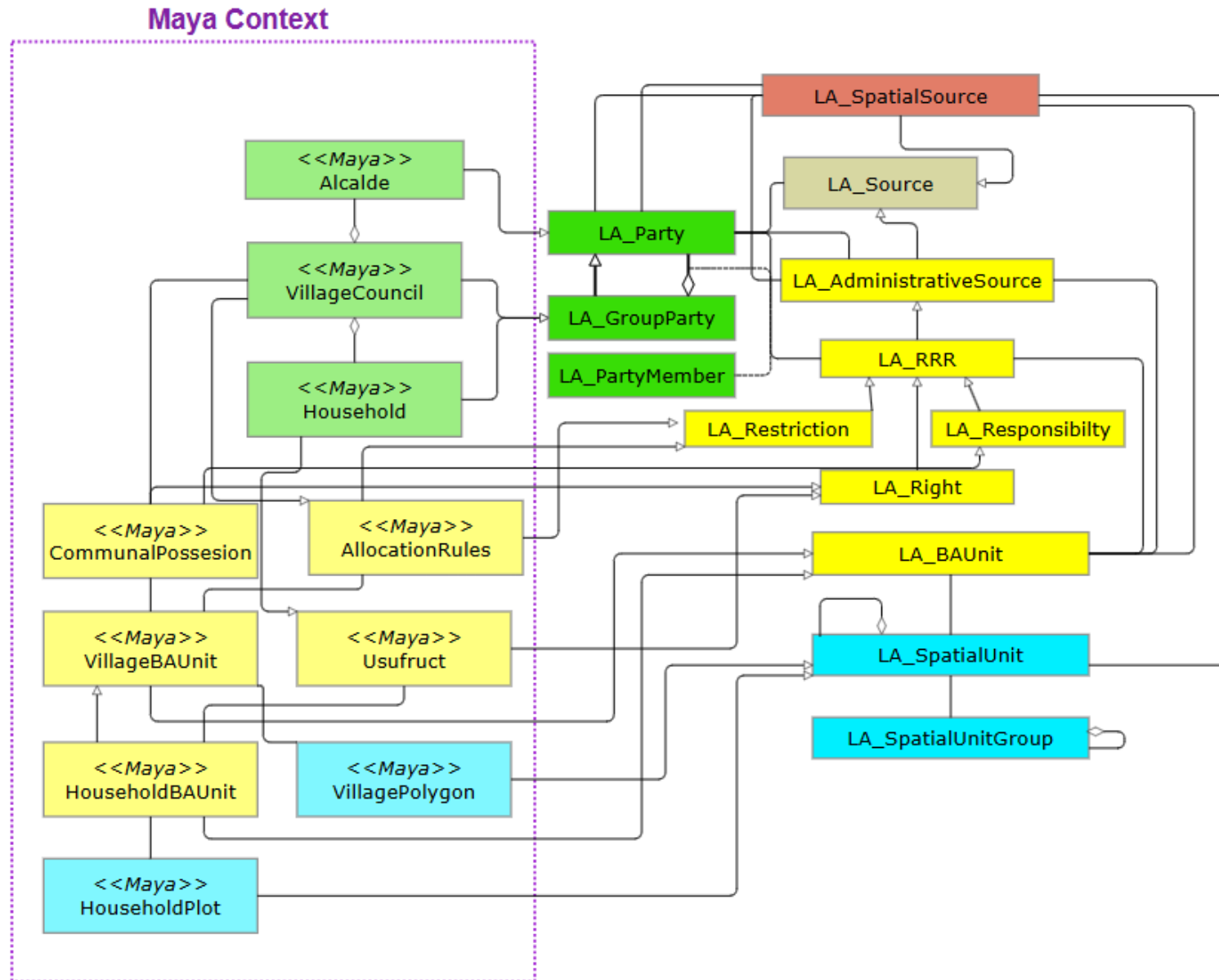
- Four Village: San Antonio, Big Falls, Laguna, Santa Cruz
- 52 respondents
- Survey – perceptions of tenure security, conflict resolution, formalisation
- Purpose: derive baseline perceptions



# WHAT THE DATA REVEALED

- Tenure Security: 96% felt no fear of eviction
- Documentation: 42% lacked title documents
- Governance: 63% say land allocation is shared between Alcalde and Village Council
- Formalisation fears: Cultural erosion, loss of control, taxation
- Message: High social legitimacy but weak state recognition

# APPLICATION TO LADM



# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Judicial rulings must be supported by technical and institutional frameworks.
- FFPLA and LADM provide scalable path to integration.
- Participatory adjudication under Alcalde system ensures legitimacy
- Strengthening land governance = tenure security, climate resilience, and cultural preservation

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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