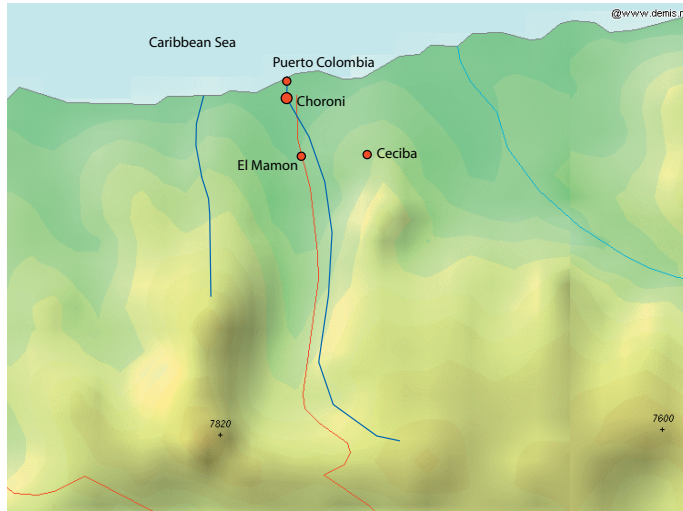


SUBREGION



Pic. 1: north coast of Venezuela

FACTS

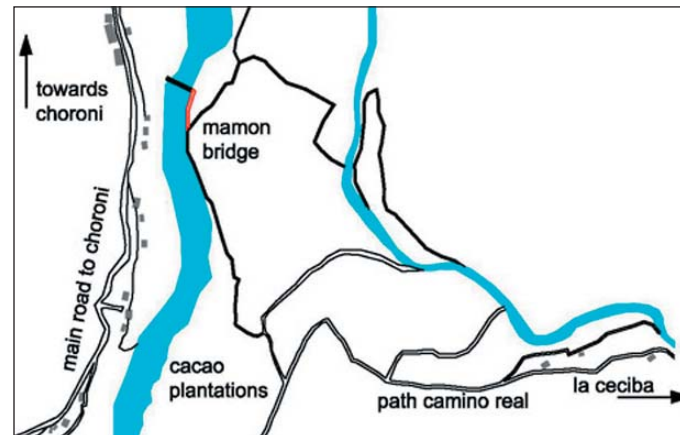
Inhabitants:	20-30
Population Density:	unknown
Average Income:	unknown
Life Expectancy:	unknown
Language:	Spanish
Religion:	catholic
Climate:	tropic
Topography:	800m

INTRODUCTION

The basis of our research is a small settlement called La Ceciba in the mountainous area by the valley of Choroni, the main town in the National Park Henri Pittier. Because the area of the National Park is not especially significant for historically early or indigenous settlement, there is no literature or based sources found concerning the settlement or traditional construction of the area. Our own experience on the place, contact to people knowing the area as the organization of the *Caracas Urban Think Tank* which comprehensively surveys the region, and the quotation of general Venezuelan vernacular architecture helped to gather information which we tried to keep as objective as possible.

The settlement of Ceciba consists of about 10-20 farm-worker families, with about 4 to 5 family members living in each house. The village lies in the mountainous area about 45 minutes by food from Choroni in the valley, only connected by one of few pathways called the Camino Real. The laid back location leaves the settlement isolated and behind in the local development process. It is not met by the growing eco tourism in Choroni and is also nearly excluded from the local market, the value added and social life.

The land the people settled does not belong to them but to a private person, who gave the farm-worker families his verbal agreement to settle the area. Especially in the last five years the increase of invasions and immigration in the valley of Choroni has been significant. The growth of settlements and the factors that come with it conflict with the idea of the protection of the eco system of the National Park, but is tolerated. Still the area is controlled by officials, and settling in the laid back mountainous area decreases the chance of being controlled. Living in the valley also became too expensive. Therefore the land ownership situation is changeable and unclear, which is reflected in the lower effort the inhabitants raise for the sustainability of their village.



Pic. 2: Site Map: The Camino Real is connecting the mountainous area with the main road to Choroni; the cocoa plantations are located on the way

INFRASTRUCTURE



Pic. 3: fixed water pipe

Pic. 4: path to valley

There is hardly any infrastructure. Water is supplied over long distance through attached pipes, which lack water. Water is also taken from the river and collected in tanks. There is neither a garbage management nor sewage system and hardly any households have toilets or hygienic facilities. Electricity is available though illegally. Surrounding plants are cut and used for several purposes. The cleared space provides agricultural and usable areas, affecting the environment. Public facilities as a community building, a barbecue place and a „bollas criollas“ alley are used together. All main social, cultural and health facilities, schools and more lucrative jobs are located in Choroni.



Pic. 5: banana plants

Pic.6: construction site

SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE

The village has grown along the important path which connects the valley of Choroni with the mountainous area. There exists no proper structure. The village consists of about 25 houses built in a clay-bahareque construction, which are of different condition. Most of the houses gather within the village structure. The community building used by all members forms with the barbeque and bollas criollas place the centre of the village. The cared way of execution and creation of the community building reflects its important status.



Pic. 7: house on pathway

Pic. 8: community building

Laid back from the main settlement further up the mountain are the cultivated areas of banana and fruit plants found. New construction sites of houses along the path develop.

MOBILITY

Mobility plays an important role in every-day life of the inhabitants:

Missing infrastructure, supply with every-day needs, farm-work on the remote plantations and school requires the people to shuttle between Choroní and their village every day. The only connection is the Camino Real. It is a steep footpath of 45 minutes through the rainforest mainly used by the inhabitants and other people living in the mountainous area. People either walk or take pack mules to carry goods.

MATERIALS

All houses in the settlement of La Ceciba are built as clay-bahareque constructions, differing in the way of execution. A majority of used material is supplied in the area, as wood or bamboo for the frame construction and clay for the filling and plaster of the walls. Joints are usually fixed with rope or nails. For the strut foundation either rocks or seldom concrete is used. The former roof construction of fixed palm leaves has been replaced today by corrugated iron sheets. It is suggested to be preferred because of the easier way of building, better protection towards animals, insects and also burglary.

Images:

Pic.-Nr.1: wikipedia; Pic.-Nr.2-8: *Urban Think Tank*, Caracas

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