from SOCIAL INNOVATION to PUBLIC POLICY

Success stories in Latin America and the Caribbean

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I. Executive Summary

ECLAC, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, identified and reviewed 4,800 social innovation experiences of Latin America and the Caribbean, gleaned in five annual competition cycles. After conducting on-site visits and evaluating the projects, the Selection Committee chose 25 winners it considered the most innovative and that had the greatest impact on the region's social development.

The book's objective is to place these innovations and, above all, their capability for improving living conditions for every inhabitant of the region, at the service of broader groups of the population. The mass application of the experiences compiled here indisputably will contribute to the coveted fulfillment of the Millennial Development Goals, which are just five years away from the 2015 deadline.

The region still faces the challenge of transforming these successful initiatives into public policy to fight against poverty and to affirm respect for economic, social and cultural rights.

The document analyzes the criteria the Selection Committee used to determine the most successful endeavors. It also describes the profiles of the award-winning projects, factors decisive in their success, and lessons learned from these singular stories that arise in some of the region's most isolated places, often from the communities themselves.

The five years of work captured in this book affirm that Latin America and the Caribbean explode in creativity and social innovation. Countless efforts that seek solutions to the most diverse type of problems are underway in the region. The driving force behind most of these initiatives is non-governmental organizations or groups that emerge from the local communities. The majority of novel public efforts address health and education issues.

A key to success and the potential for sustainability over time lies in the active participation of the beneficiary community. Active involvement transforms the community from a passive receiver of benefits into a protagonist of its own welfare. In some cases, participation is gradual in a project's initial stages but emerges and grows during implementation, generating the indispensable feeling of belonging and proprietorship.

Community participation during the implementation and follow-up stages facilitates and results in an on-going training and learning process that contributes to the initiative's success.

Another valuable trait is the capacity successful projects have for weaving alliances. Groups that develop social impact projects form alliances with community members, other communities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and interest groups in the markets in which they participate. And, especially, they form alliances with the State at the local, intermediate or national level.

The extraordinary combination of the elements we have described has proven to be effectual in solving social problems. If the projects are able to achieve massification through public policy, clearly, social indicators such as poverty, school dropout, and maternal-infant mortality can be reduced with greater efficiency and effectiveness than traditional models or models imported from other latitudes with entirely different idiosyncrasies.

II. Prologue

Martín Hopenhayn[1]

Since 2004, ECLAC with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has had the privilege of identifying and becoming acquainted with more than 4,800 experiences in social innovation developed in some of the 34 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This was made possible through a competition held annually during five years.

ECLAC itself has faced many challenges in this process. The first, naturally, was to construct a conceptually solid definition of social innovation that could also be measureable and identifiable from the descriptions programs and projects provided about their identity, activities and forms of administration. After much discussion, we defined innovation as new ways to do things, new ways to organize, that yielded better results than the traditional models, and that was cost-efficient. Most importantly, innovative projects were those that fostered and strengthened participation by the community and beneficiaries themselves, transforming them into true protagonists of their own development, thereby strengthening citizenship consciousness and consequently our region's democracy.

Each of the projects submitted in the different competition cycles underwent a stringent process of analysis and evaluation that included participation by experts in each of the issues and an on-site visit to confirm information provided by the initiatives. The Selection Committee, comprised of three people with extensive experience in the region, headed this process. Committee members have held positions of political responsibility in their own countries as well as international entities that allow them to understand the region from a global perspective, its problems, challenges, and the effort to find solutions. Two of them are the authors of this book.

We have learned incalculable lessons from each and every one of the projects submitted to competition. As I said at the conference in Guatemala City in 2009, the opportunity to meet the project organizers in person and listen to their story by word of mouth, learn about their challenges and their activities, evoked in me admiration and longing. Each one of these men and women exude enthusiasm. It is the enthusiasm of a person who has found meaning in what he or she does, of the person who is motivated by the bonds of a commitment both practical and ethical.

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[1]   Director, ECLAC Social Development Division.

These initiatives teach us that cost efficiency is not only a matter of keeping costs low to achieve excellent results but also to achieve chain reactions that radiate in other directions. These projects are capable of generating vibrant circles that generate development and improve living conditions for the beneficiaries.

Today we can underscore how the process of creating the initiative empowers the community. At first, there is a certain feeling of powerlessness before the apparent enormity of the problem, but as the project advances and begins to find alternatives, one can sense the confidence that arises from having achieved something very important for the entire community. Moreover, this empowerment is reinforced by the recognition accorded by third parties.

These are genuine social entrepreneurs. They fuse the dimension of adventure, of doing something new, with the process of "producing" or achieving something concrete. The idea of collectively confronting a challenge, using a new formula to dodge an obstacle, is also present.

In addition, although we recognize that assistance-oriented actions are often vital, such actions have the defect of placing beneficiaries in an intrinsically weak position, in which they lack autonomy to make their own decisions. Others decide for them. These experiences, as Mr. W.K. Kellogg, creator of the Foundation that bears his name, has said, demonstrate how "to help people help themselves."

In this world ruled by the market, everything is solved individually, or at best, within a family. The key to the innovative experiences analyzed in this book is how they bring together many people, each working for the group. The ancestral idea of reciprocity, that by giving, a person wins, is evident as well.

Clearly, the region is impregnated with an immense innovative spirit. It could not be otherwise when people connect with each other motivated by shared needs.

Yet, we still have a long road ahead until the gap between this great social wealth and public policy is bridged. The development of capabilities, collective identity, and access to well being, demand that these gaps be spanned.

For this to take place, policy decision-makers must recognize social innovation as a central protagonist in the development of Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a major objective of this book which I hope will inspire you so that the innovations others have created can be placed at the service of a very broad group of our region's population, that unquestionably needs them to decidedly improve their living conditions and affirm their economic, social and cultural rights.

III. Criteria used by the Selection Committee to select the winners

The Committee made constant efforts during the evaluation process to make explicit the criteria it used to select some projects and not others as potential winners.

This process, by examining a considerable number of projects from many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and including the permanent discussion among its members, increasingly refined its criteria and verified its validity, appropriateness and applicability. Each stage of the contest enriched the meaning and scope of these criteria, while pointing out possible limitations that needed to be taken into account.

Throughout five years, the experience of examining 3,000[1] projects with these criteria allowed them to mature and helped in their application on a case to case basis. We will briefly refer to each one of them.

1. Innovation

Although the objective of the contest was to identify and award the most outstanding projects in social innovation, the evaluation Committee decided that the concept of "innovation" did not need to be limited solely to new ideas that had never before been carried out in other places in the world or region.

It did not seem realistic to have applicants submit thousands of totally new ideas applied to the persisting problems that affect vast sectors of the population. Of course, the contribution of proposals with completely new initiatives –in other words, that were strictly innovative in the limited scope of the word- was valued.

However, the Committee decided to also consider as innovative experiences that introduced significant changes to positions or processes already existing in other contexts when such changes had a strong impact on results and implied an appropriate adjustment to the positions or processes used before in similar projects.

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[1]   Of the 4,800 projects submitted during the five Competition cycles, 3,000 met the minimum qualification requisites, were reviewed by external evaluators and then analyzed by the Selection Committee.

2. Considerations on the relation between costs and results

The Committee always sought to make explicit the relation between the costs of starting and implementing an initiative and the results it produced. This consideration was not limited to income-generating projects, which necessarily compete in a market that introduces the need to consider costs versus results, but also included any project aimed at providing a service or solution to a problem that affected a specific group.

The logic behind this rationale was that, to win the contest, a project had to be potentially sustainable in its geographic environment and in other contexts and that such possibility would not be feasible if the costs significantly exceeded those of other alternatives.

This consideration is important for non-governmental or civil society organizations that seek to promote a project. But it also is for an eventual tie with the State (at a central, intermediate or local level) in terms of support or possible transformation of a successful project into public policy (financed in part by the fiscal budget). Moreover, the Committee believed that the issue of reasonable and efficient costs is one of the greatest contributions that the ECLAC and Kellogg Foundation project can make to the region's social development, in the context of the budgetary restraints that all countries constantly go through. This consideration should also involve non-governmental organizations that work in the sector as well as the project organizers and beneficiaries.

3. Potential for replication

The goal of selecting the winning projects in social innovation was not only to find novel initiatives. It also was to identify projects that, in addition to being successful, had the potential to be replicated in other regions within the same country or in other Latin American and Caribbean nations as a proven and efficient means to solve people's unmet needs caused by difficulties of different nature.

This consideration is essential. An underlying objective of the contest is to present efficient and successful ways to address and resolve persistent problems in the region. The ECLAC initiative, with the support of the Kellogg Foundation, seeks to highlight the lessons learned and the different alternatives for solving problems that not only involve the direct beneficiaries, but that can also help many other people in the region who face similar situations and have been unable to resolve them.

Highlighting these kinds of experiences is a valuable contribution to those working in the field, public decision-makers and non-governmental organizations. This type of information offers tested examples of ways to effectively respond to persistent challenges.

4. Potential to become public policy

The volume of projects submitted to the contest (4,800) reveals the diversity and number of initiatives taking place in the region to address problems that affect many and diverse groups, and for which there are no institutional solutions.

The role of non-governmental organizations has been essential in the implementation of these initiatives. However, the work carried out by these groups, however praiseworthy, is incapable of taking these solutions to the entire population of a country, and not even a specific area. Having these kinds of initiatives reach a significant proportion of the population requires that these projects, once tested on a small-scale, be extended. This process is hardly possible without the participation of the State at a local, intermediate or national level.

For this reason, for the Committee it was vital to identify projects that demonstrated potential to build ties with the State and eventually develop the capabilities needed to turn the initiative into public policy at a local, intermediate or national level. This potential is usually evident after the project has consolidated and has shown to be feasible and successful.

The jury was interested in projects that could show this potential, which could indicate the possibility of long-term sustainability and an eventual extension of coverage or universalization.

5. Effects on determinants of poverty

A particularly important aspect for the Committee's evaluation of successful projects was their effect on the determinants of poverty among beneficiaries. Latin America and the Caribbean unfortunately register high poverty levels, and although they have been reduced, the region continues to be the most unequal in the world.

Lowering these indicators is essential for meeting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, the impact that a project could have on the determinants of poverty was a key element of income-generating projects.

The projects in the category income-generation were examined in terms of their capacity to increase the monetary income of the beneficiary community. Projects in other categories were evaluated in terms of different, non-income aspects, given that, as is commonly accepted, poverty is not only a result of the lack of monetary resources, but also of other deprivations, the lack of opportunities or discrimination. These conditions were addressed by successful projects in all of the categories.

6. Potential to reduce discrimination and exclusion

A common characteristic of the numerous projects submitted in all categories was that they all sought solutions for groups of people suffering some sort of segmentation that severely impaired their chances of improving their living conditions.

Due to the impact these kinds of projects have on vulnerable groups, the Committee considered important to include this factor as another criteria to be taken into account when assessing a project's success. Gender, age, ethnicity, income level, physical or mental disabilities, geographic isolation and many other reasons are the underlying factors of discrimination and exclusion and impede much of the population's access to opportunities that could allow them to resolve serious problems.

Therefore, for the Committee it was particularly important to identify how these projects sought to overcome these barriers in a permanent and sustainable way.

7. Development of social responsibility

An aspect that the contest highlighted was the active participation of the private and business sectors in searching for solutions to the problems faced by those less fortunate; that is, corporate social responsibility.

Undoubtedly, the private sector's perspective on responsibility for social development and environmental conservation has fortunately spread throughout the world, beyond merely assistentialist actions.

For this reason, when there were projects of social responsibility, there was great interest in carefully exploring what factors fostered this participation, what were the motivations, how it

was achieved, how to make sure that the project is effectively driven by an interest in helping the population and not as a way to expand business, and, of course, its real impact.

8. Potential sustainability

The goal of ECLAC's initiative, supported by the Kellogg Foundation, goes beyond identifying and encouraging innovative and successful projects. That in itself is an important and valuable aim. However, if that were the only objective, it would stop short of contributing effective and significant solutions to the myriad of problems experienced by millions of people in the region.

It is also the goal of this initiative to look for projects that in addition to being successful in the relatively limited scope of its group of beneficiaries, could also expand and be amply reproduced in different contexts. A first necessary condition is that the project be sustainable in time.

For a project to be potentially sustainable, it must have several characteristics:

It has to have proved its maturity; in other words, at least surpassed its stage of experimentation, the initial difficulties of starting it up and the first stages of implementation, and be achieving quantitative results.

It must be capable of continuing to gather the beneficiary community, which must be willing to continue participating in the project.

It has to have attained financing for a reasonably long period of time or count with a model that makes it self-sustainable.

It has to have articulated successfully at different levels of society and the community it serves and probably established positive ties with the local government or even, in some cases, with intermediate or national levels of the State.

Fulfilling all of these conditions of sustainability makes it possible for a project to expand, either by turning into public policy at a local, intermediate or national level (as some of the projects submitted have actually done) or because it generates interest and support from public or private entities that ensure it a sustainable future.

IV. Profile of award winning projects

The previous section analyzed the criteria applied by the Committee of Notables to the competing projects during the five years of the programme.

These were the aspects the committee worked with *a priori* in order to select the projects that passed the different stages of evaluation down to the final selection of winners.

This section refers to the profile of the winning projects. They are the common characteristics observed after applying the selection criteria. In other words, the profile shows how a winning project is perceived and the characteristics that define it.

This profile can indicate to academics, non governmental organizations and, above all, decision-makers, which conditions promise success. This information may be of great use when considering the possibility of supporting or seeking to reproduce a project or turn its model into public policy.

In general terms, the winning projects have the following characteristics:

1. They are innovative; that is, they have developed new management styles, new work alternatives or even new areas that improve life conditions, and have a strong impact on the beneficiary population.

2. They produce specific effects that lead to a better quality of life. This is due to the opportunities they provide to generate income in contexts of high poverty and few opportunities, because they seek inclusive solutions for groups at risk or that are discriminated, because they assert rights in fundamental areas, or because they improve environmental conditions in the areas where the target groups live, or a combination of the above.

3. They solve the specific problem for which they were created in an efficient and effective way. In addition, in many cases they have positive side effects of great importance to the population as a whole.

4. They strengthen or even induce the active participation of the beneficiary community, sometimes during the early stages when the problem is being defined and solutions sought, and at other times during more advanced stages, or even during the follow-up, and certainly while it is being implemented.

5. They develop among their participants a sense of ownership over the actions they carry out, an aspect that contributes to the project's sustainability and is essential to ensuring its continuity in time.

6. They strengthen leadership and organizational skills among beneficiaries as well as among the project managers, and these skills frequently expand to their own communities.

7. They develop and facilitate synergies between local knowledge and practices, sometimes ancestral, and technologies or modern practices. These synergies are often the basis of success.

8. When it comes to productive projects, they foster conditions for the association of the participating population. They tend to organize and strengthen their communities and help beneficiaries develop organizational skills.

9. They frequently aim to eliminate gender discrimination, promoting the participation of women even in tasks traditionally considered to be "men's work".

10. They promote the creation of partnerships with the government on different levels, civil organizations, trade unions and the private sector. A partnership with the government may be the first step for it to realize the potential of turning these experiences into public policies, with the capacity to reach a high number of people; that is, with the potential to become universal. Partnerships with the business sector promote corporate social responsibility and heighten their potential and benefits.

11. They already have an outstanding record. They have overcome the experimental phase and have been working for years, which reinforces their potential for sustainability. This is a decisive and enormously useful factor from which policymakers can draw lessons and promote their replication.

12. In almost every case, the costs of producing the good or service are lower than those of traditional market solutions, and so they offer a very positive cost/result ratio. Sometimes they shed light on more efficient ways to attain even better results. This aspect should be of special interest to public policymakers, non governmental organizations and international organizations that support these kinds of initiatives. In other cases, the projects cover a segment of the market that has no other alternative, and this market accepts the price charged. This is particularly true in the case of organic products.

13. They are, in general, projects that have counted with significant external financing, which in many cases has laid the foundations for their development. This financing comes from different sources: local and international non governmental organizations, government, especially at a local level, and/or private sector organizations.

14. They learn to articulate with external agents, be they the non governmental organizations that support them or the government, especially at a local level and sometimes even at a national one.

V. Factors for success

What makes an innovative project successful? This chapter analyses 25 award-winning projects from five years of the "Experiences in Social Innovation Contest", based on the factors the authors considered important to their success.

These variables included:

1. Community participation at the different stages of the project, starting with identifying the needs that lead to its development and consideration of alternative solutions and their selection, through implementation, and follow-up.

The term "community" refers to the following categories:

- The project leaders, who consider themselves members of their own community, and are directly involved in the different project tasks, from the moment it is defined, through start-up, implementation and follow-up;

- The community most directly benefited by the project; and

- The community at large.

2. Alliances between the project and government sectors (at the national, intermediate or local levels), at the beginning and throughout later stages of implementation and follow-up;

3. Alliances between the project and national and/or international non-governmental organizations, including funders during the different stages, from formulation to implementation and project follow-up;

4. Synergies between traditional, even ancestral knowledge, and technical or "modern" know-how;

5. Community appropriation, by leaders, and also the beneficiaries or participants in activities, as a whole;

6. Individual leadership, which may have come from within or beyond the community;

7. Institutional leadership, which may also have come from within or beyond the community.

In the case of income-generating projects, aside from the above factors, the authors also analyzed:

8. The competitiveness of the organization and the product;

9. The capacity to form associations (associativity);

10. Integration of producing chains.

This analysis sought to establish whether these variables were actually present in the set of winning projects, in a systematic way, exploring how important each factor was to the different projects, and identifying how it contributed to success.

The analysis of these factors was conducted from two different perspectives. The first examined the groups of issues addressed by projects. The second examined sets constructed using a cluster analysis model and the Ward method[1].

The issues used for these groupings were: Income generation; youth-at-risk programmes; affirmation of rights, including health care and educational initiatives; volunteering and social responsibility.

The cluster analysis generated six groups:

Cluster No.1: "Maringá Social Observatory" (Brazil); "Administration and Treatment of Wastewater" (Ecuador); "Popular Finances" (Ecuador); and "*Lèt Agogo*" (Haiti).

Cluster No.2: "Integrated Program for Andean Crops" (Argentina); "Joint Consortium for Economic Reforestation (RECA)" (Brazil); and "Sustainable Production of Trout in Lagoons and Cages" (Peru).

Cluster No. 3: "Preventing Violence and Resolving Conflicts through Peer Mediation" (Argentina); "Freshwater Cup Environmental Football League" (Belize); "Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools" (Colombia); and "Prevention of Drug Use and Gangs in Marginal Urban and Rural Areas" (Guatemala).

Cluster No. 4: "Family Housing for Students" (Bolivia); "Community Health Actions in the Tapajós National Forest" (Brazil); "Foods for Nostalgia from Mexico" (Mexico); and "Community Defenders" (Peru).

Cluster No. 5: "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody" (Argentina); "Making mischief" and the "Four Leaf Clover" (Brazil); "Integral Healthcare for Migrant Indigenous Population" (Costa Rica); and "Community Health Program: Health is Everyone's Responsibility" (Paraguay).

Cluster No. 6: "Our Footprints" and "Storytelling Grannies" (Argentina); "Program to Eradicate Child Labour and Protect Girls and Young Women Working in Domestic Service" (Brazil); "From Shantytown to Neighbourhood"; "From Garbage to Recovery, Hope for Integration" (Chile).

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[1] The cluster analysis can be defined as a set of techniques whose purpose is to group n individuals into homogeneous groups. It is a very useful exploratory technique, since it makes it easier to synthesize the information, develop and confirm hypotheses about these individuals or variables (Laredo 2010).

Factors for success by issue group

Income generation projects

Community participation

One outstanding characteristic of the winning projects in this category has been the broad participation of leaders and, to a greater or lesser degree, the involvement of beneficiaries and the general community in identifying the problems, project start-up and implementation, and follow-up[2].

The extent of this kind of participation throughout the different stages was deep, but several conditions had to be met for success. The community must already have some level of organization and get involved with the idea of generating associative processes as an alternative to individual action. This requires having an organizational structure that permits consultation among members and representative decision-making. It requires a strong leadership within the community, able to achieve definitions and decisions that are fully shared. This generates a strong sense of ownership of the project among the community, which favours its lasting over time, a factor crucial to sustainability.

Alliances with governmental sectors at the local, intermediate or national levels

Contacts with government, at least at the local level, are necessary from very early on, since this kind of project requires authorizations, permits and other kinds of bureaucratic processes. These contacts aren't necessarily genuine "alliances". In the early stages, that is, at start-up, genuine alliances with government are few and far between, even at the local level. Often, project leaders report a lack of government support as a barrier to getting ahead. Notwithstanding, when the enterprise begins to show visible results, that is, when it has overcome the initial difficulties and is in full implementation, often some degree of recognition and support from government emerges, especially at the local level and even, in some cases, at the national level. The lack of participation from intermediate levels of government (for example provincial or district governments) is notorious.

Alliances with civil society or non-governmental organizations

Alliances between projects in the **Income-generation** category with civil society organizations and other non-governmental agents from outside the community were very important in most, but not all cases.

For example, in the project "Sustainable Production of Trout in Lagoons and Cages" (Peru), there has been no involvement from civil society or non-governmental organizations at any stage. Members of the community itself organized around a common goal, through community assemblies.

Likewise, in the project "Joint Consortium for Economic Reforestation (RECA)" (Brazil), there has been little external support, essentially through donations that helped the reforestation and manufacturing activities to get started. In the case of the "Integrated Program for Andean Crops" (Argentina), members of a farming cooperative organized with support from technical experts living in the area, and received significant financial support from the Inter-American Development Bank to implement their initiative.

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[2]   Only in the case of one project, "Popular Finances" (Ecuador), the outside agent was able to organize the community around a situation affecting it, achieving very significant results for the community.

In some **Income-generation** projects, extensive community participation is significant at every phase, as is the presence, in some cases, of non-governmental organizations, which have supported some projects from their inception. In cases where these alliances developed, they were decisive in driving projects. These organizations have been key in the search for resources, in technology transfers, in providing organizational support and in many other aspects that helped these projects to consolidate. Without community participation, the projects would not have been as deeply rooted as they have become, and quite likely their development would have been more difficult without the external support.

When projects establish alliances with non-governmental organizations, these organizations support them to a greater or lesser degree from the early stages, through the phases of implementation and follow-up. Often they remain associated with productive development and help to ensure consumer confidence, as occurred with Haiti's "*Lèt Agogo*".

Synergies, appropriation of innovations, ability to associate and compete

Projects sought a synergy between modern, technical knowledge, often contributed by an outside agent, and local knowledge. Often the latter has included an ancestral component and the understanding of the surroundings have been key elements contributed by the general community.

This has meant that the alliances that forged projects with agents external to the community, whether non-governmental organizations or representatives of government, generated a recognition of traditional knowledge as a resource that could be complemented by modern knowledge, to increase productive efficiency and competitiveness of both the organization arising from the process, and the product or service.

Projects stimulated and continue to stimulate the development of community capacities that have led to collective appropriation of the innovations so introduced. This has been key, and shows that when a community participates actively in defining the problem from which it suffers and in constructing solutions, it takes over the model and grows stronger, ensuring that the project can continue to function in the future with increasing independence, as was the case with most of the production-related projects.

Vertical integration of production chains

We have noted that projects promoted vertical integration as a way to boost product efficiency and competitiveness. Integration of production became very important in transforming products and in their marketing, an essential component to improve the income of the project's producers. Moreover, in some cases it was this very integration that helped these productive programs outperform the minimums and succeed in terms of both quality and quantity, in local and even export markets.

Leadership

In these projects, individual leadership from the community came together with institutional leadership from the civil society organization or some government institution. This combination has reinforced internal community leadership, which otherwise would not have appeared and, as a result, would not have mobilized community capacity to the extent achieved in these projects.

Both kinds of leadership are necessary for the project to take off and deal with the hardships and disillusions of the initial stages, before they start to yield visible and tangible results for the community in general and for outsiders.

Youth-at-risk projects

Community participation

The start-up of the projects in this group does not reflect a community debate or decision, but rather an initiative begun by a non-governmental organization and in one case, the State[3].

Once these projects become more established, however, participation and leadership built, especially among the benefiting community. Examples: the educational community, in the case of projects for preventing school violence; young people and their companions, in the case of youth in legal custody; and of the same, in the case of youth at risk from drugs and gangs. In this last type of project, peers became a particularly apt group for attracting other young people into the programs, serving as an example of how to build a new, more hopeful life plan, within the law. The general community, in the area surrounding the program's focus, have also participated actively in implementation.

Alliances with governmental sectors at local, intermediate or national levels

With the exception of one project led and financed by the government from the start[4], most established strong alliances with the local and national public sectors[5], from the early phases. This has been crucial to developing, consolidating and, often, obtaining stable funding based on budgetary contributions. Some even achieved sufficient linkage to become a public policy at the municipal or national levels[6]. Others, while not involving alliances from the start[7], sought out these contacts and obtained local or national government support, once they were up and running and could show some concrete results.

Alliances with civil society or non-governmental organizations

Two projects[8] in this group have been carried out by national non-governmental organizations, acting independently on model development and with financial support from similar, international organizations. The "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody", meanwhile, generated no alliances with this kind of organization, since it began as a government program, in this case at the local level. Finally, the "Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools" (Colombia) required no alliances with non-governmental organizations, as it developed within the social responsibility initiatives carried out by Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce. In short, in this case, the alliances themselves were established through the funding mechanisms.

Leadership

For the projects in this category, promoting leadership among participating youths has been key, and in many cases, these young people became the motors driving further integration of their peers.

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[3]   Program "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody", Argentina.
[4]   Program "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody", Argentina.
[5]   In the case of the "Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools (Colombia), coordination with the local government was decisive, since this was how it obtained a significant share of the resources necessary to implement the program in different schools.
[6]   The project "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody" is a public policy developed by Argentina's national government; the program "Preventing Violence and Resolving Conflicts through Peer Mediation" (Argentina), is today a local public policy.
[7]   The project "Prevention of Drug Use and Gangs in Marginal Urban and Rural Areas" (Guatemala).
[8]   The project "Preventing Violence and Resolving Conflicts through Peer Mediation" (Argentina) and "Prevention of Drug Use and Gangs in Marginal Urban and Rural Areas," (Guatemala).

At the same time, the institutional leadership of those promoting the projects has also been decisive to success, especially at the start, whether this involved a government body, as with one of the cases studied, or civil society organizations.

Rights-affirming projects: health care and education

Community participation

In neither of the two issues taken up within this group do we find broad community participation during the early stages, when needs were defined. Generally, the catalyst was some kind of technical index, which the community didn't necessarily know about or fully understand.

However, once underway significant participation developed, with characteristics peculiar to each sector. For health-care projects, participation has been essential. Each member became a correspondent in health care and not mere receivers of assistance in the event of illness. Without this participation there could be no success. This is a central factor that public policy decision-makers must take into consideration.

In the case of education, once projects were defined, there was clear acceptance and participation from the educational community (principals, teachers, students, parents), who became an essential foundation that permitted implementation and ensured the initiative lasted over time. Moreover, early participation of teachers was key to the project being accepted and implemented without resistance, which in many cases can lead to obstacles and even the failure of an effort of this nature. To a greater or lesser degree, the community participated according to project specifications. For example, community participation remains essential and significant in cases such as the "Family Housing for Students" or "Our Footprints".

Alliances with governmental sectors at local, intermediate or national levels

Health care projects mostly began as public initiatives at the local level or enjoyed support from the healthy ministry, right from the start[9]. It's important to note that although many initiatives started in the public sector, sadly this did not necessarily mean that they became public policies replicated elsewhere.

In education, a close relationship with educational authorities was essential to getting started, but these initiatives did not necessarily become public policies either, at least at the beginning. Later, when they had results to show, some projects did become public policies[10] and now have resources from government budgets. In general, however, they continued with support from the non-governmental organization that created them.

Alliances with civil society or non-governmental organizations

In the case of health sector initiatives, which with one exception[11] were carried out by governmental bodies, once the projects had established themselves, to a greater or lesser degree connections

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[9] This was not the case with "Community Health Actions in the Tapajós National Forest", nor of "*Making Mischief*" (both from Brazil). These were both initiatives begun by a national non-governmental organization. When the state-level government, in the first case, and the municipality, in the second, noticed their success, they became public health policy, for the population lining the rivers in the Amazon and in the Municipality of Senhor do Bomfim, respectively.

[10] "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody" and "Storytelling Grannies" (both from Argentina); "Family Housing for Students" (Bolivia); "Making Mischief" and "Four Leaf Clover" (Brazil); "Integral Healthcare for Migrant Indigenous Population" (Costa Rica); "Popular Finances" (Ecuador); "Community Health Program: Health is Everyone's Responsibility" (Paraguay); "Community Defenders" (Peru).

[11] "Community Health Actions in the Tapajós National Forest", nor of "*Making Mischief*" (both from Brazil).

appeared with civil society organizations, with unions or private associations, which basically donated to the different activities.

For education sector projects, in contrast, with just one carried out by a government body[12], there was clear participation from civil society organizations right from the start. Moreover, these are the direct leaders and implementers of programs that, as mentioned above, have all achieved either resources from the public budget or direct integration as public policies.

Synergies between traditional knowledge and modern techniques

In the case of projects in both education and health, when the services have involved indigenous peoples, these initiatives have always relied on ancestral knowledge, seeking a synergy with more modern forms of knowing, not only to ensure local involvement but also because of a full recognition of their usefulness and contribution to better acceptance and quality of the service provided. In the case of education, this synergy made improvements to reading comprehension possible and thereby facilitated the learning process.

Individual and institutional leadership

In health care projects, more than individual leadership we have found institutional leadership from local or national public health authorities crucial to design, start-up and implementation.

In the case of education projects, two types of leadership emerged. Individual leadership arose from within communities, while external leadership also emerged, either from a government body or a civil society organization, which drove and accompanied the project. In the latter case, however, project leaders paid special attention to developing local leaders.

Volunteer-based projects

Community participation

Projects in this category arose on the initiative of the representatives of a non-governmental organization, who sought to bring together community participation around a shared problem. As a result, in all cases a civil society organization headed the start-up of the project[13]. Once the project was established, organizers achieved broad participation from the community directly benefited and the general community. In every case, volunteers formed part of the new association that developed.

Alliances with governmental sectors at local, intermediate or national levels

All projects promoted alliances with government, to a greater or lesser degree, above all at the local and even the national level, but this was generally achieved only after the project had made solid progress.

In some cases, this alliance was associated with pressure to give priority to an issue or place it on the country's legislative and political agendas[14]. In others, it arose from the possibility of gaining support to achieve greater effectives, as was the case with "Community Defenders"

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[12]   "Our Footprints" (Argentina).

[13]   In one case, it did not rely on a civil society organization but rather there was clear and active participation from a women's group, leading the community, determined to fight family violence. This was Peru's "Community Defenders" project.

[14]   "Program to Eradicate Child Labour and Protect Girls and Young Women Working in Domestic Service" (Belo Horizonte, Brazil) and "From Shantytown to Neighbourhood" (Chile).

or the "Maringá Social Observatory". Finally, two programs had alliances that, while they contributed, were not of vital importance, although by deepening them further these would be able to expand their public policy influence[15].

Alliances with civil society or non-governmental organizations

Because in every case, projects arose from initiatives put forward by this kind of organization, we expect the community to continue these alliances throughout implementation and follow-up. These organizations have been key to the design and search for funding, support for coordinating activities, the organizational development of communities, and contributing and/or transmitting technical knowledge.

Synergies, appropriation of innovation, the ability to associate and compete

Perhaps only one, "Community Defenders" (Peru), reveals a search for synergies between modern, technical know-how and local knowledge, which sometimes contains an ancestral component, and understanding of the environment, these last contributed by the community at large.

For the other cases, these did not develop in communities with the necessary level of cultural cohesion to be able to speak of traditional knowledge and, moreover, they involved issues for which these synergies were not all that relevant.

Leadership

Strong leadership from within the community participating directly in the project has been apparent, along with some external, institutional leadership from the civil society organization behind it. In this case, it is essential to highlight the case of "Community Defenders" (Peru), whose leadership is rooted in community women acting as protectors, with a clearly defined position regarding society in general, governmental and particularly judicial authorities.

Factors for succes according to the cluster analysis

By analyzing all 25 projects, grouped in clusters, as described at the start of this chapter, we found some more significant factors.

The main factors

Community participation has emerged as one of the most significant success factors in any program involving social innovation. Although, as mentioned in the thematic analysis, this was not always present during the early phases of defining alternatives for dealing with any particular problem, participation is always fundamental when it comes to implementation.

In projects of this nature, participation is the only way to ensure that the community feels and sees itself as benefiting from a government or civil society organization initiative, and also as the protagonist of its own development. The projects analyzed reveal enormous diversity in practices and strategies to involve the community and promote genuine participation. Potentially, this kind of participation can break with assistentialist practices and awaken a feeling and perspective of full citizenship, intensely aware of both rights and duties.

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[15] "Freshwater Cup Environmental Football League" (Belize) and "From Garbage to Recovery, Hope for Integration" (Chile).

These projects also show enormous creativity in terms of the concrete actions used to mobilize and empower the community. These are apparent in everything from the simple solutions for preserving the environment and the ecosystem using the mobilizing power of a soccer tournament through to the more complex community governance arrangements that promote and give voice to different groups and community leaderships.

There are cases in which time and even resources must be invested to stimulate leadership within the community and strengthen the community organization to ensure that its participation is truly effective. In the case of these initiatives, flexibility has always been essential to adapt the program or project to the real needs, conditions and priorities established by the community.

Even when, as mentioned, most winning projects developed and have been carried out by civil society organizations, their *link with government authorities* has remained relevant to successful social innovation, and particularly their expansion and possible inclusion within public policies.

In this sense, the most important alliances with local government occur during implementation. In some cases, the national government's participation was important, or it even participated from the program's inception. But above all participation from the local level state has been a key factor in the consolidation of many winning projects.

Aside from community participation, *institutional leadership* is another variable in success, present in most of the projects. Institutional leadership is two-fold. On one hand, the organization has a technical capacity, in terms of both general management and specific to each of the issue areas (health care, education, income-generation). On the other hand, it also contributes to political articulation, which requires political will, vision, skill in fostering alliances and preserving them even in adverse conditions.

For these projects, institutional leadership expresses itself in different ways. In some cases, it is apparent in the organization's ability to build enormous networks of alliances that seek political and/or community legitimacy, along with technical knowledge and resources. In others, it arises from the ability to initiate processes that involve the community from the start and above all in the implementation of projects. Finally, leadership is associated with the capacity for generating an efficient cost-benefit model.

The *community appropriation* comes directly from community participation, but is not necessarily present in all social innovation projects. We cannot forget that to participate is different from appropriating an experience. Participation, as mentioned, was more intense during the implementation phases, a stage that to some degree is more mechanical or formal. Appropriation demands that the community understand the experience, master it and incorporate the methods and principles into its own inner workings. By reaching this level of appropriation, the community can continue the innovative practice through its own efforts, evaluating and improving it constantly, without giving up the partners who have provided support from the start, but nonetheless reducing the level of dependency.

These projects reveal several forms of appropriation. At their most consolidated stage, the community not only runs the program or project on its own but is also able to continually adapt its practices to changes in the context or the environment. The community becomes the owner of these processes and is responsible for the initiative's continuity and sustainability.

Secondary factors

Community participation during the project initiation phase is less apparent than during implementation. In fact, it is more the exception than the rule.

The most comment trajectory starts with the presence of a civil society organization or

some government body that develops its own reading of the problem the community faces, and wishes to deal with it, thereby starting a pilot project that gradually pulls in the community, which participates more and more. Seldom does the community, its representatives or leaders get involved in defining the main characteristics of the problem. For example, they may know that many boys and girls die young or quit school due to poor performances or failing.

There were very few occasions in which the *presence and participation of the central government* played a key role in the success of an experience. In some cases we can see that some specific, pre-existing, central government program, for example run by one of the ministries, provided resources for training or technology within the traditional terms in which it normally operates.

In general, the decisive level for official support has been the local government. This is hardly surprising and seems to reflect the efforts to decentralize that Latin American governments embarked upon in the past 20 years, which have turned local or municipal governments into leaders in their own development, while consolidating democratic models in the region.

The specific factors

Although in terms of the general average it has not been as relevant, for some projects an additional, specific factor became decisive.

Synergies between traditional and ancestral knowledge and modern or western knowledge: In about one-third of the winning projects this has been very significant, particularly in two situations.

In income-generation projects, the inclusion of ancestral knowledge has made the difference to the product or service offered to the market.

Projects with strong community mobilization have also been relevant: their appreciation of traditional know-how has bridged between the techniques of current interventions and age-old values and beliefs, in issues such as health care or education. This has earned these initiatives legitimacy and enhanced their efficiency in pulling populations excluded from public systems into these rights-affirming approaches.

These two types of projects reveal the potential for combining ancestral wisdom with modern techniques and suggest that this approach should be used more often in social development programs, particularly when working locally with indigenous or Afro-descendent populations.

On the leadership question, we have found that the most relevant factor was institutional and not individual. In only three cases is the presence of an *individual* leader of the community itself of primary importance. This type of leadership stands out for the persistence and even obstinacy in the community leader, striving to resolve a specific problem or make the most of an opportunity. These leaders have proven very capable of mobilizing support and alliances both within their community and in their broader network of contacts, with other organizations, governmental authorities, or development agencies.

Paths of innovation

The map of selected success factors reveals the importance of each, on its own, but also in combination. This analysis revealed six groups that follow different paths to reach their innovative model.

Group 1: Consisting of *initiatives with enormous mobilizing power and ability to generate alliances*. The main characteristic of this group's projects, characterized by a marked institutional leadership exercised by a non-governmental organization, is their ability to

mobilize support and allies at different levels that include the community, direct beneficiaries, other civil society organizations, local and sometimes even national government. In the case of the community, it is involved and participates right from the inception and grows stronger through implementation and the support, which yields real appropriation of the innovation. The relationship with governmental authorities, at both the local and central levels, is important from the start, and grows even more significant during implementation. This type of alliance is key to the model becoming a public policy. In short, this group seems to follow the "expected prescription" for social innovation: it starts from an important demand or need, involves the community and different allies to resolve the problem, achieves positive results at a good cost-benefit ratio, and consolidates (initially at the local level), becomes better known and is replicated as a public policy, often, moreover, becoming an example to other experiences.

The projects in this group include: "Maringá Social Observatory" (Brazil), "Administration and Treatment of Wastewater", "Popular Finances" (Ecuador), and "*Lèt Agogo*" (Haiti)

*G*roup 2: This group includes *projects that have been self-managed by the community itself.* There's nothing surprising about the fact that community participation starts in the very early phases of analysis of the situation and the search for solutions, precisely because the innovation is associated with self-management, especially when it comes to production-oriented and income-generating projects led by organizations of the community itself. It is the community, generally through its leaders, which takes the initiative to organize productive and social processes, acting from the idea stages onward through implementation and follow-up. There was little dependence on external allies such as non-governmental organizations. In general, government participation was weak at the start, but became more significant during implementation. In this group, we find two cases in which the application of ancestral knowledge has been key to the initiative's success. The consolidation of projects in this group occurs primarily at the community level, through appropriation by beneficiaries, more than by government.

The projects in this group include: "Integrated Program for Andean Crops" (Argentina), "Joint Consortium for Economic Reforestation (RECA)" (Brazil) and "Sustainable Production of Trout in Lagoons and Cages (Peru).

Group 3: This group involves initiatives i*n which community participation was initially promoted by an outside organization*. The community became actively involved through implementation. In no case was there clear community participation in the original diagnosis of the situation or in coming up with the idea or solutions, but it does appear during implementation and further, ongoing activities. Led by an external non-governmental organization with strong institutional leadership, these projects have little relationship with government. Beneficiaries generally appropriate the initiative, as do public authorities, but to a lesser degree. These are projects in which an actor outside the community is able to produce a good diagnosis of a problem that is relevant to the population, propose and develop local multipliers and leaders, using service method that is simple and effective in transforming the situation at hand.

This group include: "Preventing Violence and Resolving Conflicts through Peer Mediation" (Argentina), "Freshwater Cup Environmental Football League" (Belize), "Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools" (Colombia) and "Prevention of Drug Use and Gangs in Marginal Urban and Rural Areas" (Guatemala).

Group 4: The element common to this group has been *ancestral knowledge valued by a non-governmental organization from outside the community.* These projects deal with highly diverse issues, among them income generation, health care, education, youth. But in every case, traditional knowledge was incorporated as an explicit part of the working methodology. This is central to understanding these initiatives, ensuring the outside organization's legitimacy, making it more effective, and making it with a significant institutional leader in the eyes of the

community. It was no coincidence that these efforts achieved community participation and total appropriation of the project over time. Moreover, these projects have also generated alliances with government, especially local rather than national, to implement their activities. Given the territorial nature of these experiences, their main links have been with local authorities.

Projects in this group include: "Family Housing for Students" (Bolivia), "Community Health Actions in the Tapajós National Forest" (Brazil), "Foods for Nostalgia from Mexico" (Mexico) and "Community Defenders" (Peru).

Group 5 brought together *innovation generated by local public programs*. In this set, community participation has not been decisive, even during implementation. The most important success factor to date is government leadership. In just one case, the initiative arose from within a local social organization. Moreover, these initiatives have rapidly become public policy. Thus, these have been innovative processes implemented by local or municipal authorities seeking effective ways of bringing marginalized populations into social public services, such as education or health care. In this kind of action, governments apply technical or process innovations, along with those more associated with the concept of public policies themselves and the expansion of those with the right to use them.

These include: "Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody" (Argentina), "Making Mischief" and "Four Leaf Clover" (Brazil); "Integral Healthcare for Migrant Indigenous Population" (Costa Rica) and "Community Health Program: Health is Everyone's Responsibility" (Paraguay).

Group 6 consists of *projects bringing together both volunteers and community participation*. In this group, community participation again appears during implementation, rather than from inception. A central characteristic of this participation is that it is facilitated by volunteer work to mobilize or improve community capacity. In general, these initiatives have been led by organizations with a strong institutional leadership. Results in terms of community or local government appropriation vary. Given the high proportion of volunteer labour involved, there is room for some doubts regarding the cost-benefit ratio and the possibilities for efficient expansion. From another perspective, however, these are projects that work well provided they have a great many volunteers, which is only possible in certain kinds of places or contexts.

This group includes the projects: "Our Footprints" and "Storytelling Grannies" (Argentina), "Program to Eradicate Child Labour and Protect Girls and Young Women Working in Domestic Service" (Brazil), "From Shantytown to Neighbourhood" and "From Garbage to Recovery, Hope for Integration" (Chile).

Success factors associated with processes and results

Following the analysis of individual factors and the study of the different paths of social innovation, this section examines what these projects can teach us in terms of their sustainability and the possibilities for their replication.

Logically and ideally speaking, social innovation projects that have been successful, lasting and possible to replicate should also contribute in terms of three additional key dimensions: 1) the competitiveness of the solution proposed, that is it should yield a favourable cost-benefit analysis; 2) the full appropriation of the innovation by the community where it is located; and 3) appropriation by governmental authorities.

This is to say that those initiatives that have an efficient cost-benefit ratio and have thrived, should be included as public policies or they should empower the community sufficiently to lead to other, different social actions.

What can we conclude from the study of the behaviour of these winning projects, in

terms of these three elements, indicative of results? In other words, what factors arising from the processes were present in the paths of these projects that were in some way decisive to the promising results obtained, in terms of competitiveness, appropriation by the community or transformation into public policy?

The analysis of these relationships once again highlights three factors already apparent in the previous analyses:

- Strong community participation in implementation and, to a lesser degree, in the early development of the innovation;

- Although less relevant than the previous point, local government participation in implementation and support for the project was also important; and

- Strong institutional leadership, in a few cases accompanied by individual leadership by some community member.

This analysis yields a harmonious set of three interrelated factors. An actor with strong institutional capacity is able to attract both the community and government authorities. As this relationship begins to produce results, the potential for appropriation by the groups involved and closeness to government, especially at the local level, makes it possible to increase the scale of coverage and realize the potential for turning into a public policy or program.

Carrying this analysis one step further, we find another factor that is also part of this virtuous combination: the support from a non-governmental organization or some other external ally. Whether through funding, training, contacts with other networks, this agent helps to revitalize the local experience and make it better known among a broader audience.

To conclude, we would like to emphasize that the presence of these factors seems to be a necessary but insufficient precondition to explain the success of a process of social innovation. Community participation, alliances with local government and/or outside civil society organizations led by a strong organization, certainly help to generate successful, sustainable and replicable projects, but they do not guarantee this success. From the opposite perspective, it is clear that the lack of most of these factors tends to result in less consistent processes with poorer results.

VI. Lessons learned

What lessons can we draw from the analysis of these projects during the five-year period? It is important that we pause to reflect on these models, and, then share the experiences gained with other people and organizations dedicated to similar endeavors of great social impact. States, in particular –and not only the countries where the projects are underway but all Latin America and the Caribbean– should observe these successful experiences, worthy of replication in other communities and, in some cases, even foster universal application of these models.

Latin America and the Caribbean, as a whole, have appalling conditions of poverty, indigence, and inequality. ECLAC regional statistics for the period spanning 1990 to 2008 reveal that in 2008, 33.8% (27.6% urban and 52.2% rural) of the total population was below the poverty line (ECLAC, 2009). However, in some countries, such as Haiti, where 74% lived in poverty in 2004, a far greater proportion of the population is impoverished (CEPAL, 2004). Other countries with the highest rates of poverty were: El Salvador with 47.5% in 2004; Nicaragua with 61.9% in 2005 and 46.8% in Colombia the same year; Guatemala with 54.8% in 2006; Honduras with 68.9% in 2007 and Bolivia with 54.0% also in 2007; and Paraguay with 58.2% in 2008 (ECLAC, 2009).

The levels of indigency are equally shocking. In 2008, 12.9% of the region's inhabitants lived in conditions of indigence. As in the case of poverty, in some countries indigency is much higher than the regional average. In 2004, 55% of Haiti's population (CEPAL, 2004) and 19% of El Salvador's inhabitants were indigent. In 2005, indigency was 31.9% in Nicaragua and 20.2% in Colombia; in 2006, 29.1% in Guatemala; in 2007, 45.6% in Honduras and 31.2% in Bolivia; and in 2008, indigency was at 30.8% in Paraguay (ECLAC, 2009).

During many decades, studies on inequality measured by the Gini coefficient[1] reveal that Latin American and the Caribbean is the world's most inequitable region. (World Bank, 1996; See Table 1)

Recent ECLAC (2009) statistics indicate a Gini index of 0.522[2] for Latin America, suggesting that in the past decade, instead of improving, the situation of inequality appears to have deteriorated.

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[1] The Gini coefficient is a scale based on numbers between 0 and 1, in which 0 represents perfect equality (everyone has the same income) and 1 represents complete inequality.

[2] As a simple average taken from 18 countries of the region.

What can be said about such conditions of inequality, poverty and indigence? For the majority of Latin Americans work or income deriving from work, the sale of goods or services is known to be the primary source of practically all their income. The magnitude of inequality, poverty and indigence in the region should come as no surprise, considering the inadequate and informal conditions in which people obtain income from work.

Indeed, ECLAC data for 2008 indicates urban employment in Latin America in low productivity sectors (also known as informal employment) as 48.5% of total urban employment. This type of employment is frequently associated with quite low earning levels and little or nonexistent social security coverage. Such job market conditions are not only the consequence of periodic economic crises, however, as similar conditions predominate during periods of economic growth. The problem is structural in nature, with no relation to circumstances of a given moment.

TABLE 1
GINI COEFFICIENT OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION:
REGIONAL MEDIANS BY DECADE

| Region	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999
Latin America and the Caribbean	52.7	48.7	47.5	49.0
Sub Saharan Africa	39.0	48.5	42.5	43.4
Middle East and North Africa	41.9	43.8	39.2	39.7
Southeast Asia and the Pacific	33.0	40.5	40.7	36.0
OECD and other industrialized economies	32.7	34.3	32.1	32.8
South Asia	33.7	33.0	32.0	30.6
Eastern Europe	23.5	22.2	24.1	28.5

Source: World Bank, 1996.
Average regional medians by country for each decade. Sample of countries by region varies from one decade to another, according to the availability of data from each country.

Governments of the region's countries are explicitly interested in reducing the poverty, indigence, and inequality that characterize the way of life for a very high percentage of their citizens. All countries are signatories to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. While the achievement of these goals depends on the characteristics and methods each country deems appropriate, clearly, the problem in the region is urgent, and solutions must be found to correct these situations. (See Graph 1)

The Experiences in Social Innovation program, which ECLAC conducts with support from the Kellogg Foundation, provides a listing of documented examples of cases successful in, effectively and efficiently, solving problems associated with inequity and poverty. Concrete examples also exist of programs that help reduce the school dropout rate and progress towards achievement of universal primary education, and improvement of maternal and child health conditions.

Undoubtedly, such experiences interest and are highly useful for social policy decision-makers of regional country governments, as well as institutions whose mission it is to foster sustainable development and reduce inequity, poverty and discrimination.

GRAPH 1
LATIN AMERICA (17 COUNTRIES): PROGRESS IN REDUCING
EXTREME POVERTY AND TOTAL POVERTY FROM 1990 TO 2008
(In percentages)
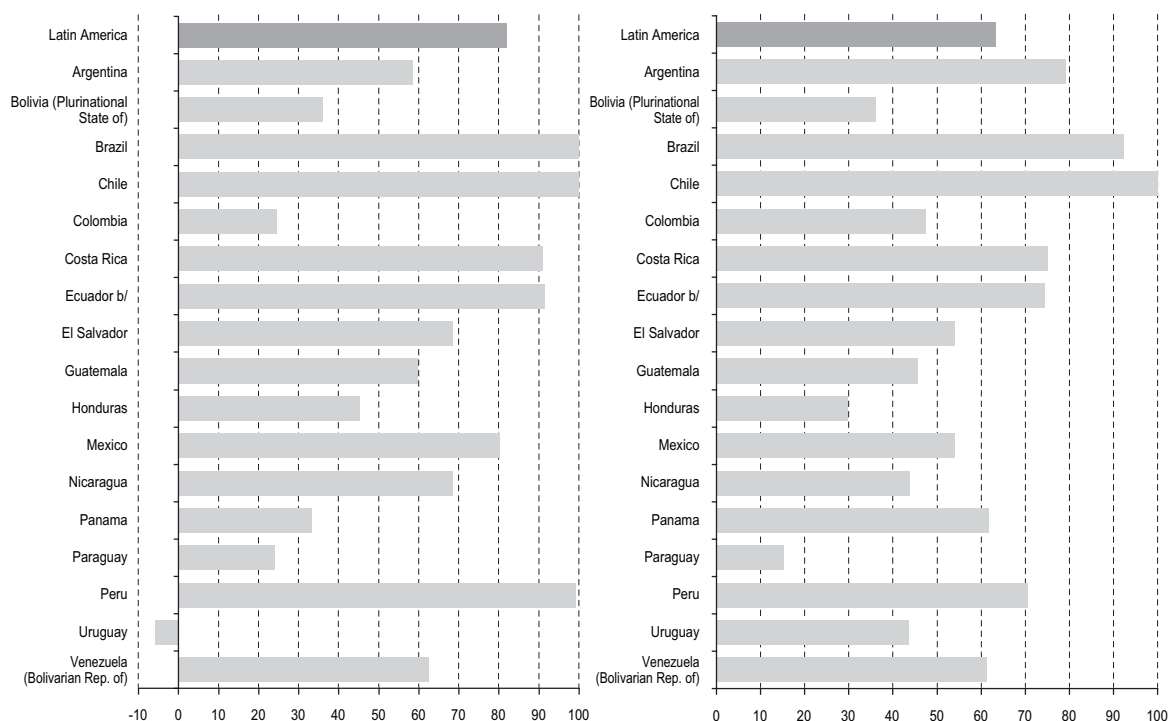
Source: ECLAC (2009), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2009.*

The program described above carefully analyzed thousands of successful programs, choosing to highlight 25, that, in the opinion of the evaluators, are successful and can be readily reproduced and sustained in other contexts.

In addition to these 25 projects, the study documents many others that were not awarded yet are also excellent examples of initiatives that work. The initiatives illustrate the yearning for self-improvement of people who live in dire situations, as well as their will to strive with discipline and persistence to improve their economic situation, and access health and education.

This chapter will review the major lessons learned from the award-winning projects, classified by thematic area.

Income generation

This type of project aim to organize, foster or increase the generation of income for its beneficiaries, who, generally, are also its main actors. Conducted in rural or semi-rural areas, all projects under this category are designed to solve a specific problem, normally identified by participants themselves, with the goal of developing or improving production or marketing of a given product.

Upon studying the projects under this category, indeed some elements can be viewed as learning culled from experience, or, in other words, lessons learned.

Projects that seek associativity and organizational development of small producers

The successful experiences under this category demonstrate the significance of the project-organizing group within the community, and establish as priority cooperative development of the various producers who comprise the project. In other words, they seek associativity.

Associativity implies an alliance and cooperation among producers who view a project as a means to attain a common good and improve competitive capacity. This cooperative effort addresses challenges such as the difficulty in obtaining a raw material, funding needs, attainment of technology appropriate for the project, equipment for improved production processes, and better marketing conditions. Successful projects develop such practice in due course and people are trained to improve their collective action, including integration in the productive chain and organizational development.

Without associative, organized, and structured work, projects of this nature, which encompass many small producers, are unlikely to have been viable or obtain the success they achieved.

Text Box 1
JOINT CONSORTIUM FOR ECONOMIC REFORESTATION (RECA), BRAZIL

This organization arose as a community's response to conditions of extreme poverty that characterized their life in the Amazon. Settlers, mostly from southern Brazil and unfamiliar with the zone's difficult productive conditions, were given lands by the government, but without any technical or financial support. After clearing the forest to make way for cultivation, the land's productivity was so low that, despite an increased area under cultivation, they continued to live in poverty. After several failed attempts, they sought help from rubber tappers, whose livelihood depends on forest conservation, and with whom they had disputed in the past. An association that now engages in sustainable production and transformation of natural forest products has its origins in this situation. It offers products in market niches that have a preference for this kind of products. Reforestation and protection became fundamental to the process because the forest itself is the production base. At present, the association has a processing plant and has reforested vast areas of forest. Thanks to this approach, income has improved and job opportunities have been generated for community members.

Projects that seek to articulate producers with markets

It is quite evident that successful projects increasingly improve participants' understanding of the characteristics and variations of the markets in which they seek to position their products. Understanding markets and one's own capability for interacting with the various economic actors entails a difficult, non-lineal process. Therefore, a community must fully internalize this concept as an important, if not critical, asset for project consolidation and sustainability.

Text Box 2
SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION OF TROUT IN LAGOONS AND CAGES, PERU

The project successfully articulated not only producers to the market in the various stages of trout production and marketing, but also fishery production activity with other activities such as ecological tourism, strengthening the community's economic and social development. Cooperation between the groups has enabled them to successfully meet the challenge of fingerling production and even prepare trout for sale on major urban markets.

Projects that seek synergy between ancestral and modern knowledge

Projects under this category seek to articulate the producers' ancestral knowledge and practices with modern knowledge, commonly contributed by an external agent. A good articulation of these perspectives requires recognizing and valuing participants' knowledge regarding management of their surroundings, to complement these with modern techniques that contribute new, value-added elements to achieve better and more competitive results. This fusion produces an element that injects greater dynamism into the production process, which both benefits from and fosters change.

Text Box 3
INTEGRATED PROGRAM FOR ANDEAN CROPS, ARGENTINA

The Argentine economic crisis of the late '90s gave rise to this program, based on ancestral knowledge of Andean cultivation, in which seeds are preserved in family vegetable plots for household consumption. Small farmers received technical support from agronomists, who employ traditional knowledge as point of departure for upgrading production techniques and developing industrialization processes that generate value-added elements, improving conditions for entering not only local markets, but even European markets that prefer organically-grown products.

Projects that seek alliances with local government

In many cases, the first contact between projects of this type and local government is bureaucratic in nature, to satisfy conditions and regulations required of production projects. Frequently, some community members are also local officials, which considerably eases such procedures.

Commonly, during the initial stage of project implementation, there is no significant direct participation or support from local government officials. Moreover, the project developers often refer to this aspect as a difficulty to be overcome in the initial stages. Nevertheless, once the project begins to produce concrete results, local officials frequently recognize and support these enterprises.

Government participation at local level is extremely important. It strengthens the community's internal organization, helps obtain technical assistance, opens the road to other levels of support and is the first step towards achieving product sustainability and expansion.

Text Box 4
ADMINISTRATION AND TREATMENT OF WASTEWATER WITH AQUATIC LENTIL, WATER LETTUCE AND REEDS, ECUADOR

This project stemmed from a municipal government program developed jointly by an indigenous population and the highest local government authority known as the Parish Board. The local government took on the project as public policy and the community organized to overcome a collective problem, namely, pollution of communal waters. The acquisition of new capabilities strengthened the community, permitting it to connect with various NGOs and sister communities, in a process that transformed participants into producers, businesspeople, tourist agents, and environmentalists. The local government's unwavering support also brought financial backing from municipal officials.

External Agent

Although not all projects in this group had the assistance of an external agent in the early stages of the process, for groups that did have external support and orientation, it was a decisive factor in the development and success of such initiatives.

The lessons learned are double: First, the lack of an external agent, without decisive community participation, can lead to the absence of a sense of proprietorship, which does not bode well for the project's future sustainability. Second, the technical and financial backing that an external agent can provide, in the context of broad participation by the beneficiaries as well as a sense of proprietorship, can vest a project with decisive momentum that will help overcome the difficult initial stages, easing the road towards project consolidation. Frequently, the external agent exercises fundamental institutional leadership the program needs to ensure success.

Text Box 5
MILK IN ABUNDANCE, HAITI

The project began in 2000, launched by the Haitian non-governmental organization VETERIMED that united, organized and trained small farmers who have become milk producers. Thanks to this program, production conditions improved, personal income rose and the zone's food security was strengthened. Since its inception, this organization has focused on organizing small-scale producers, exercising leadership in creating a milk production model that employs a network of micro producers.

FOODS FOR NOSTALGIA FROM MEXICO, MEXICO

The leadership exercised by the Foundation for Rural Production, A.C. has been key to the project's success. The foundation implemented an organizational, production and marketing model involving the nopal cactus, linking women nopal producers of Ayoquezco (MENA) with a group of migrants originally from the same town (MIGPAO), who market the product in the United States, where they reside.

Youths at risk

A number of macro social variables significantly impact the region's youth. The four most important, in the authors' opinion, are highlighted below:

First, the rapid demographic transition poses a unique responsibility for today's youth. The pattern that can be discerned indicates a not so distant future when the aging population will impose untold responsibilities for today's youth for maintaining the social protection systems.

Second, the fast pace of technological and social change exert an additional tension that former generations did not experience with such intensity. The continual incorporation of new technology in production processes encumbers young people's insertion in the job market. Although today's youth achieve a level of education greater than older members of their communities, they face higher rates of unemployment and lower levels of income, as the ECLAC study Youth and Social Cohesion in Latin America: A model to be assembled (*Juventud y cohesión social en Iberoamérica Un modelo para armar* (CEPAL, 2008) has shown. Moreover, the most extensive and rapid access to new knowledge and values is producing profound changes in personal development. The classic nuclear family structure no longer is the most prevalent in the large urban centers.

Third, the rapid advancement in information and communication technology is greatly effecting the organization of social networks and how individuals interact with family and community.

Lastly –and perhaps a corollary of the previous factors– is increased violence, mainly, but not exclusively, an urban phenomenon that particularly affects youth, both as perpetrators and victims, as crime statistics consistently confirm.

The four award-winning projects that address issues concerning youth teach us several important lessons:

Education is key to improving opportunities for youth and to reducing risk conditions youth face

The acceptance and capacity to embrace new opportunities for personal development through education are responses society can offer youths who, at some point in time, exhibit criminal behavior. Not only more acceptable from a moral standpoint, such opportunities also more effective for preventing relapse in delinquency, fostering social insertion and reducing the exclusion they have encountered throughout their lives.

The option of joining a gang in order to seek "social status" can be counterbalanced by offering an environment where youth are respected and accepted, and can find an opportunity for education and exploring dignified ways of insertion in society. The approach to alternative, non-punitive sentences –already widely adopted in countries of the region– could be reinforced by actions that present juvenile delinquents with new educational horizons, fostering greater acceptance from their community.

Text Box 6
PREVENTION OF DRUG USE AND GANGS IN MARGINAL
URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, GUATEMALA

Conducted by the Ceiba Group Association of Guatemala, this project creates a setting of acceptance based on the example of peers and opportunities for gang members or drug addicts to resume their studies through an accelerated primary, secondary, or baccalaureate education. The program also offers vocational training and helps youth find their first job. An estimated 95% of youth assisted in this program leave the maras and drugs behind, and 60% find jobs. Essentially, the program gives them what society has denied them all their life: a chance to develop and insertion in society.

Youth participate in their own recovery and reinsertion

A very effective alternative is to give youth the possibility to actively participate in their own recovery and reinsertion process. This approach transforms a social program beneficiary into an active agent of a process that benefits the participant. Moreover, excellent results can be achieved at a much lower cost than assistance-oriented programs.

It is inappropriate to confront a youth who commits a crime or who engages in dangerous conduct, as a simple beneficiary of violence and crime prevention programs –or as an individual who represents a potential problem for society. Involving the troubled youth in the process of looking for new opportunities and his own social reinsertion has proven to be much more effective.

Furthermore, with this approach, the youth becomes an excellent agent for promoting a non-violent culture among his peers. His example of the real possibility of achieving a better life within the framework of the law leads others to choose the same road.

Text Box 7
SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR JUVENILES IN LEGAL CUSTODY, ARGENTINA

The Support System implemented by the Attorney General's Office of La Plata, Argentina avoids incarceration of juvenile offenders and prevents adolescents who leave protected legal custody from relapsing as repeat offenders, while also integrating youth who for different reasons have resided in various protective systems. Upon entering the Support System, the youth is assigned a mentor who will help him or her build new life horizons and a stipend enable the youth to live independently. A mutual responsibility agreement, backed by the judicial official, obliges the beneficiary to continue a training process that will enable accessing employment and have a life of one's own. The mentor continues to accompany the young man or woman during a period of approximately three years, during the course of which projections for the future will be drawn and the youth will be able to make these come true. Since its inception, the Support System has assisted 1,500 youth, with only five repeat offenders.

Youth promote a culture of peace

Youth must become important actors in promoting a culture of peace. Programs that seek to reduce school violence by fostering dialogue and tolerance not only represent a "profitable" long-term investment, but they also yield concrete results on the short term. These results are manifest in strongly embracing the idea of tolerance and diversity, as well as a greater capacity for conflict management.

Conflict resolution methods and techniques tend to be simple. They can be managed and implemented in schools, centering on young students who become mediators and reproduce the model, a characteristic that eases replication in a broader range of schools.

This form of work breaks traditional, official approaches to handling conflict. It recognizes possible problems may arise, but makes a commitment to a culture of dialogue and negotiation as avenue to handle conflict that is always present in people's lives.

Text Box 8
PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS THROUGH
PEER MEDIATION AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUTHS
IN SITUATIONS OF SOCIAL RISK, ARGENTINA

Developed by the Social and Educational Alternative Foundation, this program aims to reduce violence within the school setting by means of mediation between peers, in other words, students with support from their teachers. Mediators are selected from among those who express desire to accept that role and enables choosing students who in the past have been victims of violence or aggressors. The program has resulted in a lowered incidence of violence among students, as well as more harmonious relationship between students and teachers.

Although, traditionally, courts and/or police have been viewed as having sole responsibility in situations of violence, communities are becoming increasingly aware of the need to develop joint actions between government and civil society to reduce violence.

Although programs designed to prevent and keep violence under check and to assist societal reinsertion of youth can be initiated by government or civil society, more and more programs involve volunteers or civil society organizations undertake actions in conjunction with officials. This type of mutual collaboration fosters a broader scope in government programs while also increasing the possibility that an initiative developed by civil society may become public policy.

Text Box 9
***HERMES* PROJECT FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**
IN SCHOOLS, COLOMBIA

This initiative of the Bogota Chamber of Commerce was undertaken in the context of social responsibility. Founded on the notion that conflict is inherent to human nature but can be resolved through dialogue to prevent disputes from exploding in violence, a conflict resolution system has been developed for public schools of Bogota. The program trains and certifies student mediators who help find solutions to conflicts between peers. The student mediators extend the model by training successors, thus, generating conditions that favor sustainability over time, even in a community characterized by high population changeover, since students graduate and leave the school. Under this model, teachers acknowledge that at times they may be the root of the conflict and, even participate in negotiation mediated by students. The initiative, underway in 251 public schools of Bogota and the Department of Cundinamarca, has achieved great results in the country's school system, having succeeded in lowering the level of school violence. The program spurred the creation of a National Network of Mediators and School Conflict Managers, stirring interest among government officials who now provide support for transforming it into public policy.

Affirmation of health and education rights

Access to health and education are irrefutable rights, at least, in principle. The constitutions of every nation of the region explicitly recognize these rights. Unfortunately, however, these rights are meaningless for millions of people who have no access to health and education services, which supposedly is their right. This occurs due to low income or outright poverty, isolation from urban centers where states provide the greatest offering of such services, physical handicaps that impede access to services, or ethnic or racial discrimination.

The projects within the category Asserting rights address this type of aberration by proposing solutions that give compliance to those rights not covered due to the limitations described above.

The major lessons this type of project teaches us are the following:

It is possible to end discrimination that ensues when a specific population cannot assert its right to health or education

Frequently, initiatives to assert rights do not spring directly from the community affected by discrimination; rather, the efforts to restore rights stem from a group of persons who insist on ending this breach and involve the community in their endeavor. Such groups commonly originate from the state and occasionally from civil society. Models designed and tested may be incorporated as public policy in similar areas.

Text Box 10
COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTIONS IN THE TAPAJÓS NATIONAL FOREST, BRAZIL

The program, underway in the forest region of Tapajós River, a tributary of the Amazon, in the northern Brazilian towns of Belterra and Aveiro in the State of Pará, was developed by the Center for Advanced Studies in Social and Environmental Promotion in the context of *Health and Happiness Project*. This community health initiative arises as a solution to an isolate zone in which the population lives dispersed with many hours of river travel away from urban centers where they could access health services. The community itself diagnosed its most urgent problems, such as the difficulty in accessing health services, high rates of infant mortality and morbidity due to infectious diseases, parasites, malnutrition, lack of potable water and sewage treatment. The *Health and Happiness Project* developed as a creative alternative to enable improvement of health conditions and facilitate access to services. A ship hospital travels the river to provide health services, and community members are trained as health monitors capable of identifying cases that require referral to health professionals, and a water purification system is designed to improve water quality. Today the program has been signaled as the health assistance model to be employed all along the Amazon river system of Brazil.

Articulation between government and the groups affected by the problem is key

In all these situations, considering that it is the State's obligation to provide health services and basic education, regardless of who heads the project, good articulation must be built between government agencies and the groups affected by a given issue. Otherwise, beneficiaries will not accept their own responsibilities, for example, in the area of public health, they would be reluctant to contribute to health care through preventive measures.

Text Box 11
COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM:
HEALTH IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY, PARAGUAY

The program provides inhabitants of Fram with a health model to ensure quality and equity in health care service for everyone. This was achieved through a decentralized administrative model and articulation between the community with the municipal government and health care service. Fundamental to the program's success is that public health services keep in touch with the needs of the client population they serve, thus ensuring accessibility by all. The program installs a health security model for Fram health care services that generates a better financing and purchasing system, which meet the community's needs. This model operates through a network consisting of the Public Health and Welfare Ministry in conjunction with the Itapua local government.

Fostering capabilities of project participants

Fostering the capabilities of all people involved in a project –organizers, public employees, beneficiaries, families and the community as a whole– is a task fundamental to the success of these projects. It is the only way to guarantee beneficiaries become truly active participants in the project's actions.

Text Box 12
THE FOUR LEAF CLOVER PROGRAM:
A STRATEGY FOR REDUCING MATERNAL AND
INFANT MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY, BRAZIL

In this program, which became government public policy of the Sobral municipal government in the state of Ceara, participation of "social mothers" is key element in the strategy's success. These are women from the community who accompany mothers or children at risk who lack support from their families. They are trained as caretakers in homes or in the hospital, geared to promoting health, preventing complications and premature births, and helping mothers nurse their babies. These actions also elevate self-esteem and strengthen family bonds, while also improving maternal and paternal self-care.

Active family participation is essential

Involvement by the beneficiaries' families is vital to the success of these projects. On health issues, as some of the previous text boxes underscore, families must become partners in taking responsibility for the care of their members, just as health services must take responsibility for assisting them. The family also must participate in the education process of its sons and daughters, to ensure they foster and support the child's school attendance.

Text Box 13
FAMILY HOUSING FOR STUDENTS, BOLIVIA

The Family Housing for Students Project is an innovative initiative that recovers an ancestral custom (*utawawa*), in which families who live in isolated places send their sons and daughters to towns that have schools, where they reside with family friends or godparents, in exchange for performing domestic or agricultural chores. The modern version of this custom provides the boys and girls lodging without obliging them to work for room and board, by boarding with "host families," who are paid from the respective municipal education budgets. The "local coordinator" acts as liaison and communicator between parents and the "host families," to ensure children are properly treated, while also supporting the teachers and paying the host families for boarding and feeding the children during their stay.

The solutions proposed must be adapted to the specific characteristics of the target population

Considering that the projects and programs assist populations with specific characteristics, it is important that the solutions proposed be understood and adapted to those specific characteristics and needs, involving and attaining community acceptance.

Text Box 14
MAKING MISCHIEF, BRAZIL

The project instills greater awareness in the student community regarding the situation of young people with visual impairment and provides the classroom teacher support and orientation so as to improve pedagogical approach to these students. The project works with families of visually impaired children, orienting parents on how to assist their children in the course of daily activities in the home. It also works with families whose children have normal vision so they understand the education process and to dispel doubts that the education quality their children receive will not be affected. In the schools the project provides itinerant teachers who provide pedagogical support to visually impaired students in the classroom and helps them develop skills for daily life. The itinerant model, which costs less than traditional special education for handicapped persons, enables students with some degree of disability can study in the regular school system, in this case, close to where their families' place residence, even rural areas.

Government support is essential for transforming innovative models into public policy

The State plays a much more significant role in this type of project and programs, not only in regards to the human or financial resources but especially because it is the only means to transform these projects into public policy to be implemented by pertinent government agencies. Some of the projects undertaken on the local level, only obtain validation and expand when local governments support them.

Text Box 15
HEALTHCARE FOR MIGRANT INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, COSTA RICA

The project, developed by the Coto Brus Health Department of Costa Rican Social Security Fund, provides health care to a mobile indigenous population that enters the canton of Coto Brus from Panama to harvest coffee. The indigenous people move from place to place seeking monetary income, frequently the only money they earn in a year. Costa Rica's social security model also enables them to uplift living conditions, at least during the time they are living on Costa Rican soil. The project, which arose as a response to public health problems that affect this mobile population group, proposed a health model that looks for and assists the indigenous people in the plantations where they work and live. A team is trained to provide primary health care and, if necessary, refer more serious conditions to health facilities. The public health achievements attained have transformed the project into public health policy.

Volunteering, social responsibility and community participation

Latin American and Caribbean societies could always point to countless examples of solidarity, charity and volunteerism. However, in recent decades, due to the influence of political, social and economic development, this social capital has acquired many new forms of expression.

Participation in the community's chores –a highly developed trait among native cultures of the region– that waned in the context of dictatorial governments, reemerged with the region's

sweeping return to democracy. Initially, this occurred as an expression of political resistance and, later, adopted and fostered by the State itself.

This form of participation opened new perspectives for social control. In the present day, laws and regulations shape the formation of an array of "community committees" as part of a system of local, or even regional and national, governance. In addition to committee participation regulated by law, countless opportunities exist for participation through neighborhood associations and the like. Community participation, to a lesser extent in the big cities and metropolitan areas, is a reality and the distinct expression of political and social progress the region has experienced.

Community volunteer work, which in the past existed in the form of charity, has acquired new forms and connotations. The concepts of "citizen responsibility" or social responsibility" are increasingly common in higher social classes. This type of volunteerism, perhaps known by other names and with little conceptual thought, has long been present among the lower social economic classes.

Today a proliferation of group volunteer actions –by neighbors, professionals, firms– exert influence on specific social problems. However, unlike the distinctly charitable nature of volunteer work of the past, today's volunteers are more apt to tackle and fight root causes of poverty rather than ease suffering through clothing or food donations, namely, actions of charity.

Volunteer work has increasingly taken on the characteristics of incisive social action. In this sense, the poorest families are no longer the sole focus of volunteer activity. Today their focal point tends to issues such as the environment, culture and education.

Corporate social responsibility has gained great importance, increasingly expanding the extension and scope of its actions. It is becoming all the more common for companies to concern themselves not only with issues related to their sphere of business, but also broader social problems.

The six award-winning projects classified under the area of Volunteerism and community participation exemplify this diversity, addressing a range of issues and concerns such as: environmental protection, access to dignified housing, social control over government corruption, social integration of persons with special needs, and human rights, including violence against women and child labor.

These projects offer important lessons, including the following:

Pressing issues can mobilize volunteer work

Initiatives that center on issues of pressing current interest are capable of mobilizing people willing to donate time as volunteers and to promote the proposal. Although several examples below were initiated by non-governmental organizations, all of the projects depend on mass volunteer participation to have an impact and to assure economic sustenance.

Text Box 16
FROM GARBAGE TO RECOVERY, HOPE FOR INTEGRATION, CHILE

The project offers an innovative solution to two contemporary issues: care and social integration of persons with disabilities through a financially sustainable model that does not depend exclusively on donations, and environmental protection. The Union of Parents and Friends in Solidarity (UPASOL) is an NGO that traditionally has offered physical rehabilitation services. To assure financial solvency, the organization decided to employ recycling as an industry. Recyclable products became the means of payment for services rendered. Any community member, regardless of income or the service required, pays with recyclable products. This circulatory system generates a sense of loyalty that encourages people to give these products even when they do not have to "pay" for services. This model has proven capable of covering nearly 100% of the cost of assistance to disabled persons.

Concrete proposals for shared interests foster volunteer participation

The success in mobilizing volunteers came about largely because the projects offer concrete proposals that can be implemented immediately to solve dysfunctional situations, going beyond simply denouncing problems to forums far removed from the ordinary citizen.

Text Box 17
MARINGÁ SOCIAL OBSERVATORY, BRAZIL

The Observatory stems from civil society and citizen discontent with corruption that allowed the malfeasance of a sizeable amount of public funds. Although justice prevailed and the defendants went to jail, government coffers never recovered the lost funds. A broad-based group of individuals representing community organizations, universities, businesses, and unions were spurred to create the Ethical Responsibility Association (in Portuguese, Sociedade Eticamente Responsável, SER). Its purpose is to prevent vice in the public bidding process, monitoring transparency in use of funds, fostering ethical conduct among public officials and publicizing the economic importance of paying taxes. Under the auspices of SER and faced with the need to reinforce public conscience through direct actions, the coalition created the Maringa Social Observatory to monitor concessions process conducted by the municipal government, as well as, Municipal Council expenditures, through the efforts of many volunteers. Its results have been so significant that more than 50 other social observatories now exist throughout Brazil. The success in attracting volunteers and enthusiastic community participation has turned out to be, to great extent, the most novel and innovative aspect of the proposal, strengthening SER's past public education efforts.

Novel and simple solutions attract a vast number of volunteers and fosters community participation

These refer to new ways of tackling social problems such as environmental protection or social control. In addition to the projects' innovative characteristics, the methodology is sufficiently simple so as to be applied by volunteers and adopted by the entire community.

Text Box 18
FRESHWATER CUP ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, BELIZE

This project arises from the need to involve the community in protecting an immensely rich and fragile ecosystem. It is founded upon an innovative, yet simple, proposal: to capitalize on the popular passion for soccer. The Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), vested with protection of the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor, created a soccer tournament in which the requirement for participation is having developed, in conjunction with the community, and implemented an environmental protection project, according to their abilities. The games, attended not only by players and their families but by the community, are employed to develop environmental education programs. With this strategy, TIDE has aroused community concern for environmental protection and has involved people in concrete actions. The Championship Cup has attracted more than a thousand players, and has involved an estimated 10,000 children, youth and adults in volunteer work to protect the environment.

New challenges that are generated through innovative models result in synergy between the public and private spheres

Generally, volunteer actions do not complement the State's role; rather, these launch new challenges with innovative solutions to problems unaddressed by local governments. To the extent that volunteer actions do not compete with but fill a void, public officials become interested in working together with the non-governmental organizations and their volunteers, opening new doors to cooperation between civil society and local government.

Text Box 19
**COMMUNITY DEFENDERS: A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PERU**

In Cusco the Community Defenders program originates from a cooperative work between the Peruvian non-governmental organization Legal Defense Institute and a spontaneous movement of women of Cusco concerned about the high incidence of violence against women, who seek to report perpetrators to police and punish them. From this joint effort arose the community defense groups, comprised of women volunteers, mostly Quechua speakers who were trained by the Institute. They are friends, neighbors, and comadres of the victims. These characteristics foster trust, encouraging the women confide in defenders and tell them about their situation, even daring to report aggressors to police. Aggression is addressed from a rights perspective. The aggressor does not have the right to abuse a woman, and the woman has the right to defend herself. The process changes a view of the world acquired as a child, where beating, shouting at or insulting a woman and the children was considered normal. When a woman freely decides to denounce her aggressor, defenders accompany them throughout the difficult process. Cooperation with local government officials, built with great effort over the course of time, permits better follow-up of each case. This innovative, yet economically inexpensive, action enables accessing justice in isolated places out of reach from traditional judicial channels. The initiative's positive achievements roused government interest to replicate the experience throughout the Department of Cusco.

Corruption is an issue that pertains to business social responsibility

A central issue of any firm's social responsibility must be to make every effort to avoid corruption and participate in stemming it when corruption crops up. The Maringá Social Observatory, described in Text Box N. 17, is a genuine example of corporate commitment to the fight for transparency.

Social responsibility has the capacity to mobilize governmental action

When social responsibility actions are generated by federation-type organizations, these have a greater impact over more extensive areas and facilitate mobilization of governmental budgets in the context of concerns traditionally addressed by the State.

Text Box 20
HERMES PROJECT FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS, COLOMBIA

As described earlier, this initiative of the Bogota Chamber of Commerce, in the context of social responsibility programs, addresses conflict resolution in the schools. When the program began showing concrete results as well as a model that could be reproduced and sustained over time, even in a changing population such as a school, the district and provincial Education Ministries have made a commitment to the program by contributing funding for school groups coordinators in the different communities.

VII. Final thoughts

This document presents careful analysis of the 25 award-winning projects of the five cycles of the "Experiences in Social Innovation" contest organized by ECLAC, with support from the Kellogg Foundation, held from 2004 to 2009.

The purpose of the analysis was the following:

1. To review the criteria the Selection Committee employed to evaluate the 3,000 projects that met the requirements set forth in the competition guidelines.

2. To ascertain what other patterns, beyond selection criteria, the winning projects may have shared, observe whether these trends varied by category or thematic area, and if certain general models can be discerned when the projects are analyzed transversally.

The most significant aspects of social innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean

An initial and self-evident reflection is the sheer number of efforts and creativity that exist in the region, arising all of them from the search for solutions to a wide range of problems that profoundly affect quality of life of some or even the entire population of a given locale. As we have frequently mentioned previously, the region has a veritable explosion of innovative social projects. However, we must be willing to take them into account, not only to highlight their novel approach, but also to cull ideas from these successful efforts to apply in other places and even consider them as foundation for developing public policies and programs.

The endeavors mainly have their origin in civil society organizations or communities themselves. Most of the projects begin without government participation. However, in the course of time, as their excellent and significant results become apparent, government officials become involved, often providing critical support, and become their chief advocate.

The award-winning projects also include significant endeavors from governments, especially at the local level, in areas such as health and education.

Why is there less government presence in innovation development? Although the program does not provide a resounding and irrefutable answer to this question, we know that

innovation implies a process of trial and error in which there is no guarantee of success for the final results. Limitations imposed by laws, although necessary, limit the possibilities for the public sector to undertake a risky process of this nature. These obstacles precisely should encourage officials to appreciate and learn from the innovations civil society and communities are capable of developing, so as to transform them into ideas that give shape to public policy and to multiply its impact.

In many cases, the role of civil society organizations addresses the need for support sought by the communities themselves. Examples abound of community leaders who identify a key problem they want to solve and then look for a non-governmental organization to provide support, guidance and, frequently, financial resources.

In other cases, civil society organizations, as external agents, approach the community, with full understanding of their problems, and propose to work together to solve them, generally offering funding and technical assistance as well.

When a non-governmental organization initiates a project, it makes an effort to gain active community participation in all stages of the process, ideally, from the initial assessment of the problem to implementation of solutions, and even subsequent follow-up. Undoubtedly, to a great extent, the success these projects achieve is attributable to the quality and extent of community participation, although the NGO's role as decisive catalyst should not be overlooked.

Possibly the most significant effect broad community participation produces during the various stages of a project, but especially during implementation, is the *sense of belonging* associated with the project. When this feeling holds sway, the community is willing to work together to overcome the adversities that inevitably exist as the initiative develops.

Another notable effect of broad community participation is the training and learning that take place in the course of the project, a process in which the NGO's role is decisive. A key lesson to be learned is to recognize the merits and importance of determining the costs associated with each stage of the process and the consequences of ignoring them. A non-governmental organization, and, even less so a government entity, is unlikely to get involved in a project that lacks a clear cost/benefit relationship. After all, with resources scarce and the needs immense, evaluation of the type and cost of impact achievable is essential. Another effect is to *learn to form alliances with different key actors* to ensure the initiative can function smoothly. Alliances with other members of the community as well as other communities, with different civil society organizations, the private sector, interest groups of the markets in which they participate, and above all the State at the local, intermediate or national levels are fundamental to a project, which necessarily must insert itself into the formal sphere.

When the *private* sector participates in this type of social project, in the context of corporate social responsibility, either directly or through its professional guilds, it can achieve a very significant impact.

Regardless of the value of NGO and other private sector entity participation in this type of project, it is also important to bear in mind that problems of poverty, inequity, discrimination, exclusion and failure to respect economic, social and cultural rights in Latin America and the Caribbean can *hardly be overcome without State involvement*. Successful projects such as the ones reviewed in this competition must be broadly extended or universalized if they are to be statistically significant regionally. As this 5-year exercise showed, when a project achieves far-reaching results and captures government attention, to the point that officials acknowledge its impact, adopt it and replicate it in other places, it could be thought that the project has the potential for mass expansion and sustainability. Such is the route traversed from an isolated project to a program that becomes public policy. For this reason, it is imperative to invoke dialogue between people and institutions involved in this type of project, and the State, a process that can be very productive.

VIII. Success stories in Latin America and the Caribbean

The project Experiences in Social Innovation, carried out by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) with the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, includes a contest that began in 2004 and has so far concluded five cycles.

There have been 4,800 initiatives submitted to the contest from almost every country in the region and the project has a bank of 72 finalist projects that have excelled for their innovative and successful practices, of which 25 were selected winners.

Each contestant was evaluated through a strict process that included field visits and the presentation of the finalists in Innovation Fairs held in Santiago, Chile (2005), Mexico City (2006), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2007), Medellín, Colombia (2008) and Guatemala City (2009), where the Committee of Notables selected the award-winners.

We now present the 25 projects that won in the five cycles. They are all innovative experiences, with excellent results, cost-efficient and, therefore, replicable.

These projects are grouped in four general areas: income-generation, youths at risk, affirmation of health and education rights and volunteering and community participation.

Success stories in Latin America and the Caribbean

CHART 1
AWARD-WINNING PROJECTS OF EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION,
BY COUNTRY AND AREA

Country	A. Income generation	B. Youth at risk	C. Affirmation of health and education rights	D. Volunteering and community participation	Total
Argentina	1	2	2		5
Belize				1	1
Bolivia			1		1
Brazil	1		3	2	6
Chile				2	2
Colombia		1			1
Costa Rica			1		1
Ecuador	2				2
Guatemala		1			1
Haiti	1				1
Mexico	1				1
Paraguay			1		1
Peru	1			1	2
Total	7	4	8	6	25

The contest considered eight areas of participation: health, education, nutrition and food security, youth programmes, social responsibility, volunteering, income-generation and rural/agricultural development. For the analytical purposes of this book, these areas were regrouped in the four included in this chart.

A. Income generation

1. Integrated Program for Andean Crops
(Programa integrado de cultivos andinos), Argentina

Quebrada de Humahuaca, Jujuy and Salta

Cooperativa Agropecuaria Artesanal Unión Quebrada y Valles, Cauqueva
(Quebrada and Valles Unified Farmers Cooperative)

Background

In the 1990s, farmers from the Quebraba de Humahuaca region began unifying informal groups of producers in 25 districts of the departments of Iruya and Tumbaya, Tilcara and Humahuaca. One of the new group's first steps was to organize to collective transportation to sell produce in the markets in Jujuy, thus eliminating intermediaries and promoting local crops. In 1996, these farmers established the *Cauqueva Cooperative*.

The economic crisis that hit Argentina in 2000 severely affected market conditions, forcing farmers to look for alternatives. With the support of community elders, they came upon the idea of reviving production of traditional Andean crops, using seeds preserved in household gardens. This would reduce dependence on external technical assistance and lower production costs.

The *Cooperative* developed new products based on maize, Andean potato and other traditional tubers. In this way, the *Cooperative* turned crisis into a good opportunity for productive reconversion. This strengthened its collective organization to transform and market products that, due to their special characteristics (traditional and/or organic) found a privileged niche in the market.

Challenge

Increase the living standards of 150 cooperative members through the production and sale of traditional crops and foods. A key element was to increase the acreage given to organic production of Andean potatoes and other tubers to ensure the production of quantities large enough to be attractive to national and international markets.

Process

The process consists of three stages: production, post-harvest, and marketing.

1.   Production

Revival of ancestral traditions preserves local culture and traditional farming methods while employing new technologies for greater productivity and guaranteed quality. This program presents a successful model for combining traditional and modern methods.

To incorporate new technology, cooperative members required technical assistance and additional resources (for high density planting, for example). The cooperative extended loans to members and provided training in planning and estimating production costs. This helped ensure outcomes and guarantee loan repayment.

The cooperative also created and financed crop insurance for members, to increase their capacity to ride out spells of bad weather and build their sense of economic security in

this new venture. If farmers produce fewer crops than the local average, crop insurance covers the difference.

The cooperative has also modernized local production by promoting development of rhizobacteria use, biological pest control, improved soil management and introduction of protocols to meet international standards. It also promotes the reproduction of native species by preserving genetic resources.

2.   Post harvest

Preserving crops or transforming them into foods and other derivatives adds to the possibilities of selling these products and increasing their prices. The cooperative organized the receipt, selection, cleaning and processing of various types of crops. The Andean potato, for example, is either vacuum packed or dehydrated for mashed potato mix. The cooperative's processing plant employs five local community members are employed for this purpose.

3.   Marketing

This stage, which covers product sale, logistics and marketing, is a particular measure of the cooperative's success. Many of its products had never been sold in large commercial markets but are now popular in Argentina and abroad.

Diverse strategies are used to market the products, including a website, the personal stories of individual farmers, and recipes. The cooperative organizes tastings at different events. Marketing strategies include attractive references to cultural heritage and identity. This boosts sales and sparks interest among customers in visiting the region to learn about its customs and culture. This has generated new commercial, cultural and institutional partners.

Costs and financing

The cooperative is now self-sustaining, like any other commercial enterprise. Its costs are lower than those based on a large-scale agroindustrial production model. Overall, its annual costs total US $ 77,779, which includes production, technical assistance, investment and marketing.

Several investments (refrigeration, equipment, processing plant) were financed first by donations and subsequently with loans from the Inter American Development Bank and other international lenders. This external support totals US $ 16,500. The cooperative generates US $ 69,000 in its own resources through the sale of its services and fees and contributions of its members.

All production costs are covered by the sale of products and generate profits for both the cooperative and individual farmers. The cooperative also plays an important role in setting base prices that benefit both its members and local producers at large.

The cooperative is currently facing stiff competition from products entering illegally from Bolivia, and has requested the Argentine government to exercise more stringent controls at the border.

Social innovation

The *Cauqueva Cooperative* presents a successful model of associativity, integration of different types of knowledge, product industrialization to create added value, and development of niche markets.

It also constitutes a model for reviving appreciation for traditional foods and crops, transforming them from consumer goods of marginal value to an important source of income.

This includes the cooperative's innovative development of a bank to preserve genetic material from traditional crops.

It is unlikely that individual farmers belonging to the cooperative would have achieved, on their own, the results that the collective has obtained. This success demonstrates how this associative model –which combines collective activities with individual production– can optimize the chain of production from rural homes to product sale.

This cooperative's endeavors also contribute to the renewal and appreciation of indigenous Kolla cultural traditions, which gives impetus to the local economy by attracting tourism.

The program represents an innovative example of community participation in the strategic development of a region designated as a World Heritage Site. This model attracts and trains its beneficiaries by reviving traditional knowledge and culture while interacting with new requirements of globalization and competitive markets. Argentina's economic crisis was the motor for innovation that led this community to return to the ancestral roots than became an attractive source of income generation for the families of the Quebrada region.

Lessons learned

The cooperative model is feasible in rural areas when individual land ownership and decisions about production are maintained. Inclusion of the entire community, from young to old, provides opportunities for new generations and a greater sense of ownership of the program's final goals.

The interchange of knowledge between peasants and professionals, backed by training, allows for greater variety and better quality products, facilitating new market niches and better prices.

Impact

The program has increased the income of local farmers, deepened the social capital of local communities, and contributed to a new appreciation of local identity. This has been accompanied by decreases in the costs of inputs and improvements in production, marketing, access to credit and training. The variety of products has increased (50 types of potatoes, quinoa, amaranth, tomatoes) and new products have been developed (*alfajor* pastries, breads, mashed potato mix).

The cooperative's Peasant Life Museum and its four sales outlets (butcher shop, vegetable stand, handicrafts store and grain dispensary) represent the recuperation of traditional ways and customs, as well as the preservation of regional biodiversity.

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2. Joint Consortium for Economic Reforestation *(Reflorestamento Econômico Consorciado e Adensado, RECA)*, Brazil

Nova California, Rondônia
Associação dos Pequenos Agrossilvicultores do Projeto Reca
(Small Farmers Association)

Background

The *Joint Consortium for Economic Reforestation (RECA)* has its origins in the arrival to Nova California, Rondônia province of landless peasants from southern Brazil in search of new opportunities and better living conditions.

The migrants received lands from the National Institute of Agrarian Settlements (INCRA) in the 1980s as part of an agrarian reform program that did not supply them with technical assistance or credit. Unfamiliar with local conditions or appropriate crops, the settlers attempted to grow the crops, like cassava and corn, they brought from other regions. The results were disastrous. Local soils and climate were unsuitable, bringing such low productivity that the farmers were forced to clear more forest and plant ever-increasing areas in the hopes of obtaining income. Add to these difficulties the challenges of bad weather and constant threat of malaria, insect pests, unfamiliar animals and problems with political legitimacy.

Clearing trees for crops generated heated disputes with *seringueiros* (rubber tappers) who relied on the tropical forest as their only source of income. Poverty and desperate circumstances led the new settlers to join together to search for ways of overcoming the difficult conditions and the government's lack of support.

The settlers approached the *seringueiros* for guidance on ways to adapt agricultural production to local climatic conditions and planting cycles. These conversations led to the realization by migrant farmers that the tropical forest, when used appropriately, can be transformed into a source of cash crops. Discussions of possible joint efforts to implement agro-forestry production systems led to the creation of the Association of Small Agro-forest Producers, the predecessor of *RECA*.

Proposals presented to officials in Acre and Rondônia were unsuccessful. The association then sought support from the Bishop of Acre, who accepted the project and presented it to the Center for Statistics and Social Research (CERIS), who helped reformulate the proposal for presentation to the Dutch organization CEBEMO (Roman Catholic Mediation Board for Financing of Development Programs), CEBEMO approved the project in 1989 with resources to replant 200 hectares of land.

Challenge

Improve living conditions for the families and communities of 360 impoverished farmers who migrated to the Amazon region in the 1980s as part of an agrarian reform program.

Process

Activities along the chain of production are divided into agriculture and care of the agro-forestry systems and the subsequent processing, packaging and marketing of forest products. *RECA* currently has 1,200 hectares under cultivation with agro-forestry products native to the Amazon basin. These include white cacao *(Theobroma bicolo),* cashew nuts *and* pejibaye palms

(*Bactris gasipaes*) –for sale and for certified seed development– palm hearts, acerola (*Malpighia emarginata),* arazá (*Eugenia stipitata*), rubber, carapa (*Carapa guianensis Aubl.*), açaí (*Euterpe oleracea*) and several types of wood.

Individual properties of *RECA* members average some 100 hectares. This is not large for the Amazon region, where productivity is low and cultivation is done using organic agro-forestry systems.

These small-scale producers are organized in 11 groups according to sector. Each group has a leader, a coordinator and a women's representative. The leader is responsible for organizing labor. The coordinator is responsible for relations with *RECA*, including completion of projects, construction and purchase of equipment.

In the *RECA* model, producers and members sell their produce to the association at a price previously determined by the General Assembly. The products are inspected to ensure quality standards.

The *RECA* processing plant operates three units to transform prime materials and prepare them for sale:

1. Pulp unit: Processes white cacao pulp, *açaí, arazá* and *acerola* fruit. Equipped with areas for reception, washing, separation, crashing, depulping, packaging, cold storage and a quality control office. Managed by an administrator and staff.

2. Palm heart unit: Receives palm stalks, which are selected for size and quality, cooked, prepared and packaged. Unit is managed by an administrator and secretary.

3. Oil and butter unit: White cacao butter, cashew and *carapa* oil extracted. Equipped with covered boxes for seed fermentation, drying equipment for sun and rain, wood-burning ovens to heat seeds, presses to extract oils and packing equipment. Operations are supervised by an administrator.

During the harvest season, 180 people are employed to process products; this number drops to 25 in the low season. Most are members of *RECA*.

In addition to prime materials, *RECA* produces and markets processed goods, including handmade liquors, sweets, jams and soap from white cacao butter.

Products are sold in local, national and international markets using diverse channels. *RECA* has sales representatives in major cities in the region, including Branco (Acre), Porto Velho (Rondônia), as well as Vitória (Espíritu Santo) and São Paulo. It also sells unprocessed products directly to major food manufacturers around the country.

An important client of *RECA* is Natura, which manufactures cosmetics from natural products and uses white cacao butter for creams and soap. It is a fair trade company, with training courses and distribution of a portion of profits from product sales to *RECA* members.

Recently, *RECA* created a new international market niche in collaboration with a French fair trade NGO selling its products, and especially palm hearts, directly to consumers. *RECA* products are certified as organic, which makes them attractive to environmentally aware consumers.

RECA offers an array of training opportunities to its members, who take in courses in human relations, job safety, product hygiene and quality, pest control, soil improvement, beekeeping, fish breeding and handicrafts. The children of members can take advantage of agreements with agricultural schools.

Women play a prominent role in all of *RECA's* activities, including plantation administration and production. All working groups include a women's representative who

participates in coordination, planning and decision-making. *RECA* women have formed their own group to produce handicrafts and homemade sweets and to organize events, among other activities.

RECA conducts social responsibility activities and invests in human capital, as exemplified by the creation of its Family Agriculture School, which employs a work-study methodology of 15 days of classroom study and 15 days of practical applications on the farm.

In health, *RECA* has trained 10 lab technicians to test for malaria, which is widespread in the region and debilitating to local residents. Today, thanks to detection and training conducted by *RECA*, with technical assistance for mosquito eradication from the government, incidence of malaria has dropped significantly.

Over the years, *RECA* has built a number of alliances to support its development. Among them:

- The Dioceses of Acre helped *RECA* during its initial phase, with consultancies and fund-raising.

- The Pastoral Commission of Terra, Acre (CPT) supported the project with training, technical assistance and sharing experiences.

- The Acre Agricultural Research Enterprise (Embrapa-AC) did research on white cacao pests, and conducted training in product quality and hygiene, soil analysis and monitoring and evaluation of agro-forestry systems.

- Support from the National Institute for Amazonian Research (INPA) provided *RECA* with a vehicle and technical assistance over a three-year period. INPA has conducted soil, weed and pest studies.

- The national Ministry of the Environment helped implement agro-forestry systems.

Costs and financing

Production costs are covered by sales, which also generate profits for the company and its members. These costs break down as follows: purchase of prime materials from farmers (46%); salaries for the processing plant and marketing division (12.5%); administrative expenses (39%).

Training and social responsibility activities totaling US $ 2,400,000 (BR $ 4,000,000) in 2009 were financed (90%) by *RECA* with its own funds, with additional support from Petrobrás Brazil's Producir.

Social innovation

In the face of adversity and neglect on the part of the government, farmers joined forces with rubber tappers to create agro-forestry systems, recover deteriorated lands and obtain training. Farmers are organized by crop type under a coordinating body that represents them in the *Association*. Farmers sell to the Association at a fixed price. Activities in education, health and business administration increase social capital.

RECA demonstrates the possibility of creating models of production that protect the environment and facilitate income generation for producers. The program shows that environmental conservation can also be financially profitable.

Lessons learned

The *RECA* model is one of sustainable development where the community generates the income that allows members to escape poverty and protect the environment. It demonstrates

the possibility of introducing new associative forms of production. Community finances are managed with transparency and training increases productivity. Certified organic production opens a niche market. Strategic management brings to market products with added value, such as fruit pulp, jams and oils.

Impact

Since 1989, *RECA* has grown from 86 families to over 300 families of small agro-forest producers who farm some 1,800 hectares. This associative model has allowed members to generate incomes more than 30% higher than those of local farmers who work on their and sell unprocessed products.

In, 2009, *RECA* processed 1,300 tons of fruit and sold pulp to food industries in the Brazilian northeast and São Paulo. Farmers who were barely surviving several years ago today enjoy salaries above the country's minimum wage.

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3. Administration and Treatment of Wastewater with Aquatic Lentil, Water Lettuce and Reeds *(Manejo y tratamiento de aguas residuals con lenteja acuática, lechugín y totora)*, Ecuador

San Rafael de la Laguna, Otavalo

San Rafael de la Laguna Parish (political-administrative local authority)

Background

By 1999, Lake Imbakucha (also known as Lake San Pablo) has been highly polluted by sewage from surrounding towns, hotels and the flower-growing industry. The sewage system, built with septic tanks, had virtually collapsed –a situation that worsened every rainy season. Some 90% of the wastewater emptied into the lake was untreated. Water pollution was affecting the health of local residents, the production of totora reed –an important crop for the local economy– and the indigenous culture that had existed in the lake region for generations.

Studies to reduce pollution were conducted in 1999 and 2000. In 2002, a proposal was developed to use aquatic plants and reeds to clean wastewater. The municipality of Otavalo financed the initial feasibility study, conducted by the Center for Pluricultural Studies (CEPCU) with resources from the Canadian government.

The study identified wastewater treatment with pools of aquatic lentil, water lettuce and reeds as the best alternative and one that could be easily operated by community members. With funds from the Development Project for Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian Peoples (PRODEPINE, financed by the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development) and municipal resources, an experimental tank was built in the community of Puerto Alegre, to positive results.

Challenge

Reduce pollution in Lake Imbakucha and its negative impacts on the health of local residents and the conservation of the area's plant and animal resources.

Process

The Center for Pluricultural Studies invited community representatives to discuss the proposal for a wastewater treatment using tanks of aquatic water plants. It was important for the community to discuss this in its parish Assembly (the top local administrative authority) in order to reach agreements and assign responsibilities for plant administration and operation. The treatment plant proposal presented the following advantages:

- No electricity required
- Simple maintenance that can be conducted by community members
- Opportunities to generate income by making use of the aquatic plants used to treat wastewater
- Free of noise, bad odors and insects
- Capable of processing variable quantities
- Tolerates long periods without addition of new waste
- Profitable even for small communities

Once the treatment plant proposal was approved by the Assembly, San Rafael de la Laguna representatives created several new organizations: the San Rafael Water Administration Board; the Imbakucha Association; and (with San Miguel Bajo municipal authorities) the Plant Administration Committee.

To carry out the project, however, community members needed training in a wide range of areas. The Center for Pluricultural Studies prepared a training timetable and scheduled workshops in the framework of a Community Action Plan for Project Management that it presented to local residents. This included reviews of the diagnostic studies; field visits for direct observation; interviews with residents and leaders; and presentations to the community.

The training phase included the following workshops:

- Introduction to the Wastewater Treatment with Aquatic Plants project

- Community Action Plan for Project Management

- Organizational structure

- Legislation

- Discussion and approval of legal statues

- Community organization

These workshops contributed not only to project development but to increasing the capacity of local people to interact with different levels of the government.

Under the guidance of the San Rafael de la Laguna parish, the Assembly created the Imbakucha Water Lentil Autonomous Workers Association whose members are responsible for administering and operating the wastewater treatment plant. The Association has legal status, and membership is open to all community residents.

At the same time, Otavalo municipal officials conducted community training workshop in acquisition of materials, topography, tank construction, planting aquatic lentil and water lettuce, humus production and sale, and other topics.

Construction and preparation was carried out by local residents in *mingas* (the Quechua word for community labor), under the supervision of experts hired by the municipality.

Ten tanks measuring 2x50 meters each were built to hold wastewater. Aquatic lentil and water lettuce (which float on the surface and absorb contaminants) were planted in each tank. Each week, old plants are harvested and new plants reproduce. Treated slush is used as organic fertilizer; water lettuce is used to feed hogs, poultry, guinea pigs and other small livestock.

Improved water quality means that the production of totora reeds, the final step in the treatment process, increases significantly. This led community leaders to develop new uses of totora, beyond the traditional woven mats, for reeds. With technical and financial support from the Fundación Alternativa and the Catholic University of Ecuador, a new community enterprise –Totora Sisa (totora flower in Quechua)– was created to build totora furniture and decorative objects for sale in Quito and export.

The Assembly was also concerned about erosion on the slopes surrounding Lake Imbakucha. The Inka Tocagón Nursery was created for to address the problem of erosion by producing cuttings from native species for use in reforestation and for sale.

Today, Totora Sisa and Inka Tocagón Nursery are important sources of income for community residents.

Costs and financing

Construction costs for the wastewater treatment plant –the motor of the community development plan– was US $ 70,000, a sum significantly lower than other types of treatment plants. (These could run as high as US $ 200,000 and would not work efficiently in areas, like San Rafael, that are sparsely populated.) The cost of treatment plant construction per direct beneficiary (those who use the sewage system that feeds into the treatment plant) was US $ 43. Alternative methods would have cost as much as US $ 140 per person.

All aspects of the wastewater treatment system generate income for local residents. For example, workers also receive an average monthly income of US $ 30 from the sale of animals raised on decontaminated fields, improving family income and diets.

Feasibility studies by the Center for Pluricultural Studies cost US $ 12,000, financed by the local government. The construction of the treatment plant cost US $ 80,600, financed in 13% by in-kind contributions from the community, and 87% by local and departmental funds.

Training in treatment plant construction, maintenance and administration cost US $ 18 per beneficiary, far less than the cost of other sewage treatment projects.

Social innovation

With NGO support, organized communities successfully created new enterprises. The new wastewater treatment plant increased production of totora reeds –prime material for local handicrafts– and led to the creation of a new totora reed furniture factory. The aquatic lentil and water lettuce grown as decontaminants are later used by the community as fertilizer and animal feed. This level of community organization suggests that the primary innovation for replication by villages around the region is the level of organization generated by this community. In addition, this particular model of wastewater treatment has a positive impact on the overall sanitation of the community and quality of lake waters, at no extra cost to San Rafael residents.

The community Assembly also voted to protect the ecosystem, reforest hill slopes with native trees, establish a nursery to sell local plants, and encourage tourism as a new source of income. The form in which a plan for wastewater treatment, developed wit the active participation of the community as a whole, has generated local social and economic development is definitely innovative.

Lessons learned

A community that organizes itself to resolve a collective problem (in this case, pollution of communal waters) is strengthened through the acquisition of new skills. The process, conducted in association with NGOs and neighboring communities, transforms community residents into producers, merchants, tour agents and guardians of the environment.

This is an example of sustainable development in action. Not only did the community improve lake water quality (and with it, the health of the plants and animals that depend on its waters), but the process itself brought industrial opportunities that generate new income for the community.

Impact

More than 100 community leaders have taken classes or training workshop. Self-esteem within the community has increased. Water pollution in the lake has decreased by 90% and the community has prospered from new community enterprises.

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4. Strengthening Popular Finances in Azuay and Cañar
(Fortalecimiento de las finanzas populares en Azuay y Cañar: consolidación de una propuesta de desarrollo local en un contexto de alta migración internacional), **Ecuador**

Azuay and Cañar

Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio
(FEPP, Ecuadorian Fund for Popular Progress)

Background

The program started in Azuay and Cañar, in southern Ecuador, in a poor rural region dedicated to family subsistence models of agriculture, livestock and handicraft production.

Azuay and Cañar have one of the country's highest rates of migration to the US and Spain, a trend that intensified with the Ecuadorian economic crisis of the 1990s. Remittances are the principal source of income for most families in this region. One-third of all remittances sent to Ecuador are destined for Azuay and Cañar.

The region's population was the target of banks happy to receive and place their remittances into savings but not to concede credit or financial services.

These services were largely in the hands of *chulqueros* (loan sharks).

The expansion of the cooperative movement brought the spread of innovative financial activities promoted by the Ecuadorian Fund for Popular Progress, along with its actions for local development in Azuay and Cañar. Under the rubric of Popular Finance, these comprise a sector independent of traditional banks and constitute the institutional framework of popular finance programs.

Challenge

Provide alternative financial services through the creation of Local Financial Structures (*Estructuras Financieras Locales*, EFLs) to rural and semi-rural populations lacking access to commercial bank credit, in order to promote local development through the use of remittances and savings.

Process

Popular finances are defined as the financial resources generated by small organizations where the users of savings and credit services belong to a specific geographic area.

EFLs act like savings and loan banks or cooperatives. They are located in rural areas and poor urban zones, where traditional banks do not operate, and are administered by community members.

The first activity of the program in any specific locality is to create and consolidate the EFL. The following steps are required:

1. A motivational phase is launched by the Fund to present the model to the community as a form of local development that gives community members themselves a leading role, with emphasis on the fact that communities themselves are responsible for administering the EFLs.

2. Once a community decides to form an EFL, the organizational phase begins. Participative mechanisms are used to elect the members who will be responsible for the EFL, including a manager and other administrative personnel, a president, board of directors, and supervisory and administrative councils.

    EFL financial and administrative training includes courses on computation and skills-building for the periodic rendition of accounts to the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion and the community. Equally important is training in governance to guarantee fidelity to the principles of social and community well-being that underlie cooperativism and popular finances. One goal is to ensure that women make up at least half of all people trained.

The Fund provides every EFL with permanent technical assistance on financial, accounting, organizational and administrative issues in order to help ensure their success.

With the participation of EFL members, the Fund develops financial services and products adapted to local circumstances. In some instances, member assemblies set interest rates according to type of credit (always covering inflation and the income the EFL needs to function). EFLs may decide to offer additional services, such as facilities to pay utility bills or cash the government's "human development bond" (a subsidy for people living in extreme poverty). EFLs must fulfill the requirements necessary to receive legal status.

The EFL model adheres to principles of self-management, self-control and self-help, in which participation, trust, solidarity and honesty are valued in its organizational, accounting and financial aspects.

Once the EFL is operational and community members are trained, the receipt and transfer of remittances begins. This requires establishing contractual agreements with the foreign entities that will send migrants' remittances to EFLs. These agreements seek to reduce the transaction costs of foreign banks and facilitate reception of remittances by EFLs efficiently, quickly and at a low cost.

The transfer of remittances requires that EFL be equipped with certain infrastructure, including computer equipment, software and information systems. Purchase is facilitated by the Fund and the People's Savings and Credit Development Cooperative (*Codesarrollo*) Ltda. *La Code,* as it is known, participates in the financial market from a more inclusive perspective, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Banking and Insurance.

One of the premises of the Local Financial Structures is to promote a culture of savings, leveraging of local resources and construction of new alternatives for family economies. To achieve this, they offer communities attractive services for savings, usually for the short term.

The capital of each EFL is composed of the savings of its members (independent of whether or not these members receive remittances), which is then plowed back into the community as loans. This synergy transforms individual remittances into a social and economic resource. The accumulated savings are placed at the service of the non-migrating population, which gains more favorable access to credit. In this way, the savings of migrants are channeled to investment in their home localities.

Last but not least, the Fund's central office, with the support of its regional office and Fundación CODESPA (an international NGO working in Latin America and Africa, funded by the Spanish government), conducts follow-up, evaluation and economic and technical control of each EFL.

Costs and financing

All EFLs are self-sustaining, a consideration that comes into play when determining the interest rates to be paid by members. These must cover operational costs and maintain the value of the funds deposited, taking inflation into account.

The cost to the Fund and other supporting entities of establishing the EFL system nationwide involves administrative costs (wages, professional fees, food and transportation) of approximately US $ 60,000. Operational costs (training of administrators and managers, publicity and marketing) account for some US $ 40,000. Follow-up costs total some US $ 9,300. In 2008, the total cost of supporting EFL creation and follow-up was US $ 108,000.

The Municipality of Madrid has provided some US $ 100,000 in funding, with additional resources earmarked for the future. Contributions in-kind and work conducted by direct beneficiaries, communities, the Southern Ecuador Network of Local and Alternative Financial Structures (REFLA) and the Fund itself total some US $ 70,000.

Social innovation

Creation of a model of popular finance allows people excluded from conventional financial systems to organize themselves and save small sums of money to invest for their own benefit. This capital finances loans to cover the needs of contributing members. Once the initial loan and interests are repaid, another member can then use the system. Even more important and innovative is the training extended to members (both men and women) to administer these funds. The system is self-sustaining and ensures members the chain of credit they need to create or improve business opportunities and thus generate sufficient income to improve their quality of life.

The EFLs are also the starting point for a network that has generated second-tier structures. EFL networks increase collaboration and alliances with international aid agencies, facilitating agreements to develop services for direct reception of remittances.

At the heart of this innovation is its recognition and respect for deeply rooted popular practices to promote and facilitate family savings, employ financial practices that eschew usury and conventional bank rates, and emphasize the need for trustworthy institutions in which to deposit savings.

Lessons learned

Communities have the capacity to organize and train their members to assume responsibility for a financial system tailored to their needs. The development of local social capital through community organization based on trust is capable of overcoming substantial barriers, including lack of access to credit. Training of participants results in greater amounts saved, better use of resources and greater incorporation of women into community affairs.

This type of project is applicable in other rural and marginal urban areas throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to provide incentives for local development. The essential ingredient to replicate this model is political will.

Impact

A total of 21 Local Financial Structures (EFLs) have been created and are functioning efficiently with more than 30,000 members, of whom 55% are women. Women manage twelve of these EFLs, with Boards of Directors composed primarily of women

Today, the EFLs offer financial products and services to rural and marginal urban communities, encouraging savings from local capital ad remittances. Direct transfer of remittances has been achieved, with the resulting decrease in costs. Interest rates are returned to the community and fully finance EFL operations.

The model has encouraged savings and allowed the creation and strengthening of micro-enterprises that generate income and jobs for the community.

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5. Milk in Abundance (*Lèt Agogo*), Haiti

Limonade, Nord Department
VETERIMED

Context

Haiti was the poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean even before the earthquake of January 2010, and continues to be one of the poorest countries in the world. Its population is mostly rural, with high population density and a low Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The agricultural sector represents around 30% of GDP. Production takes place in small units composed of some 700,000 rural families who account for 90% of total agricultural production. Haiti has an estimated 450,000 heads of cattle, with an annual production potential of 145,000 tons of milk. But between 2000 and 2002, average production amounted to just 66,000 tons, less than half potential capacity. In 1999, the country had to import almost 60% of its milk and milk products.

In the Limonade region where the *Lèt Agogo* Program was initiated, farmers lived on smallholdings without title to the land. Given its poor soil and lack of water, dairy farming is the main productive activity, though conditions are precarious. Cattle were considered an investment, for times of great need and not a profitable activity in its own right. Production was low, as were prices received from intermediaries. Poor hygienic conditions for milk production affected quality and led consumers to reject local milk in favor of imported powdered milk. Dairy farmers lived in poverty and, sometimes, destitution.

Challenge

To improve the living conditions of rural Haitian families working in dairy farming and make it a profitable activity that can reduce imports and increase food security.

Process

VETERIMED, the institution that heads the *Lèt Agogo* Program, is a Haitian NGO created in 1991. Given the potential local market for milk and milk products, and the nutritional importance of this food, in the late 1990s, VETERIMED launched a program to increase local milk production. This began with a participatory diagnosis of the problems affecting local milk production and the search for alternative solutions. Among the obstacles identified by VETERIMED were the negative perceptions of consumers as regards locally produced milk; infrastructure problems (poor roads, no electricity, no legal title to farmlands, soil degradation; difficult access to water; lack of veterinary personnel (the country only had just 15 vets in 2005); and the deficiencies in knowledge of production methods among small cattle farmers.

Past experience had convinced producers of an insufficient demand and low prices for milk. To tackle this problem VETERIMED created the area's first micro-dairy as a means increasing the supply of milk and changing the production model.

This required studies and tests to design a production process that did not depend solely on electricity. Conventional machinery was not an option. Plate heat pasteurization was replaced by steam methods. Cooling systems used running water, which required the manufacture of new tanks. Ice is used for the entire cooling chain. Small laboratory sterilizers that use a gas-powered source of heat rather were chosen for the sterilization process.

The next step was to involve the local men and women who, in addition to being providers of the raw material, would eventually become micro-dairy co-owners and workers. Workshops on the micro-dairy operations and processes as tailored to local conditions were given.

This was followed by the establishment, with local cattle farmers, of Limonade's first micro-dairy. The dairy produces top quality long-life milk and yogurt at competitive prices that were immediately popular with local buyers.

The advantages of having built a model for micro-dairies without a great deal of technology are numerous. As micro-enterprises, these have more autonomy and require less investment, especially in heavy machinery. Maintenance needs are simpler and less expensive. All this is achieved without compromising competitiveness or production quality. The model also facilitated familiarization with this technology by local cattle farmers, many of whom were illiterate.

The demand for milk had the desired result: it stimulated farmers to increase production and with it, their interest in improving traditional methods of cattle raising. They recognized the income potential of their cattle and the possibility for improving their quality of life. The next step was to develop a technical and financial system for cattle breeding appropriate to these small producers, which could ensure sustainability and profitability.

One basic requisite was to make headway on legalization and tenure rights to lands. VETERIMED conducted this process in conjunction with the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INARA) and the Milk Producers Association of Limonade (APWOLIM). The proposal they presented to the Agriculture Ministry was approved and legalization of lands titles was achieved through a system of 15-year renewable rental contracts.

By bolstering confidence among the farmers, this advance strengthened the Milk Producers Association and program development. Securing tenure to the land led farmers to invest in improvements to soils, wells, fences and pasture, free of the fear of losing their land at any moment.

It was also necessary to improve animal health, fodder and access to water. To teach farmers to improve fodder, the program prepared model fields with different fodders appropriate to the region and helped farmers plant and maintain theirs field. The region has regular dry spells, which inspired a local farmer to create a well capable of providing water for animals year-round. The enthusiastic acceptance of this well by other farmers was enhanced by the fact that the prototype was developed by a colleague who was facing the same challenges as the rest.

As already mentioned, in 2005 Haiti only had 15 veterinarians, making it impossible to extend de. VETERIMED provided basic training to local cattle farmers to monitor animal health, give vaccinations and evaluate when animals needed specialized care. Women farmers in particular expressed interest in this aspect. Many have since received certification as veterinary technicians from the Agriculture Ministry and now care for other farmers' animals as well as their own. In the Limonade area, 30 local farmers have improved their veterinary skills and pushed the rate of animal vaccinations, which was close to zero, to nearly 80%.

As part of the consolidation, organization and development process of the initiative, VETERIMED has created a registered trademark by the name of *Lèt Agogo* (Milk in Abundance), which is today recognized and valued by consumers of yogurt and sterilized milk. The use of a trademark seeks to guarantee quality control and consumer confidence. All dairies using the *Lèt Agogo* trademark must certify implementation of the program's quality norms and respect for certain rules, including mandatory use of fresh local milk and that local farmers participate in the ownership of the dairies.

The dairy at Limonade was the cradle where the *Lèt Agogo* project was born and where testing, research and improvements to milk processing methods were conducted, in

addition to training the micro-dairy workers (both men and women) who are also members of the co-operative.

Problems with local supplies of essential inputs, including bottles and caps, led to the creation of a Central Supply and Marketing Center to import inputs at the best price. The center promotes distribution and sale of milk products, which has allowed the program to maintain a reasonable profit margin to cover operation and production costs, and control margins for producers and associates. The center has also developed strategies for public relations and marketing.

Program administration is the direct responsibility of VETERIMED, which supervises production in farms and at micro-dairies, conducts quality and health controls, and develops marketing systems. VETERIMED aims to strengthen the administrative capacities of the micro-dairies, so they can be managed by producers, with VETERIMED taking a supporting role.

The chain of production works as follows: dairy farmers make daily deliveries of milk produce to the micro-dairies. Transportation takes place in a variety of modes, including horse, donkey and bicycle. At the micro-dairies, milk is received and a quality check conducted. This is done with simple tests checking taste, smell, density and acidity.

Raw milk is then strained to eliminate impurities and the quantity received is recorded, along with the name of the producer. Payments to producers are made monthly, based on percentages of milk supplied, converted into shares according to prior agreements between producers and dairies. This facilitates producer participation in micro-dairy share ownership and builds commitment to supplying quality products.

Pasteurization is the next step, using a steam-based process. For yogurt, milk is fermented with bacteria; for sterilization, the autoclave method is used. Yogurt is bottled in plastic bottle and sterilized milk in glass. Pasteurization, fermentation, sterilization, bottling and labeling are carried out with simple equipment and tools. The chain of production involves 12 workers, all local residents and, in many cases, milk producers or family members, or cooperative members, all trained by VETERIMED.

When processing is completed, the yogurt is stored in boxes with ice until the following day. Sterilized milk, which does not require refrigeration, is stored in boxes where it remains under observation for six days to ensure the quality of the sterilization process. The Marketing Center is responsible for distribution and sales. The product is currently sold in supermarkets, gas station shops, small stores, from street vendors and in school lunch rooms. One hundred percent of milk production –the entire output from each dairy farmer– is sold.

Costs and financing

In 2005, the Limonade micro-dairy required an average of 1,040 gallons of milk per month, from which it produced 13,520 bottles of sterilized milk, of which 12,459 are sold on the commercial market. (Bottles that break during the sterilization process, transport, or returned as unsold prior to their expiry date represent account fro this difference, a loss rate of some 8%.) The sale price for each bottle is 15 Haitian gourdes (HTG), or approximately US $ 0.40. This amounts to HTG 187,000 per month (approximately US $ 4,500). The total cost of production per month, both variable and fixed, is HTG 148,303 (approximately US $ 3,400). Profits from sterilized milk totals HTG 38,582 (approximately US $ 1,000) or 551 minimum legal salaries.

Yogurt production requires 2,080 gallons of milk per month, from which 27,000 bottles of yogurt are produced (with a 10% loss during commercialization, due mostly to power outages during refrigeration or return of unsold units before the expiry date). On average, 23,119 bottles of yogurt are sold each monthly at HTG 16 approximately US $ 0.39), bringing a monthly income of HTG 369,904 (approximately US $ 8,900). The cost of production, after covering

fixed and variable costs, is HTG 327,488 (approximately US $ 7,700). Profits from yogurt totaled some HTG 42,398 (approximately US $ 1,200). This figure, similar to that of sterilized milk, includes payments to the farmers who supply raw milk and the family members who work in the micro-dairies.

Average profit for participating micro-dairies is four times greater than the average per capita income for Haitians-in 2004.

Social innovation

It is important to note that the increased supply of milk products was stimulated by demand. Traditional incentive programs for farms products stimulate production by offering credit and technical assistance, largely ignoring the demand-side. In this case, however, incentives came from the demand for milk, to demonstrate to farmers that milk production was worth their while. The needs of cattle farmers were subsequently addressed and specific, viable solutions were sought.

The experience of *Lèt Agogo,* which has expanded from a local project to a national program, is an example of participation and strategic alliance to achieve responsibility and effectiveness. All the stakeholders involved (NGOs, governmental organizations, international foundation and beneficiaries) assume their responsibilities and support this collective opportunity by striving for sustainability, appreciation and ever-increasing income for their efforts. This ethic of responsible participation has resulted in effective and efficient development, despite a complex set of productive, economic and commercial dynamics.

This program is an example of the capacity for reactivating rural production inspired by the NGOs, government officials and communities working together. Without joint efforts like these, it is likely that the acquisition of property deeds, for example, and all they signify would not have been possible.

The main technological innovation of this program is its capacity to adapt production to a challenging context without compromising quality or productivity. The *Lét Agogo* micro-dairies operate in ways that are appropriate to the socio-economic structure and its fragmented production possibilities. Technology has been adapted to the productive and organizational capacity of the communities, aiming for self-management. This has achieved important advances in the income levels of all participants. The scale and plan of action has been adjusted to the people and their environment with real success.

Many technological innovations employed here obtained use simple equipment and strategies to achieve the same productive processes obtained by sophisticated technology. Simple methods are easily replicated for use in remote areas of Haiti and around the world.

Also innovative is the new strategic alliance in the agricultural sector that involves small producers, technicians, the private sector and governmental officials. This type of alliance taps into existing social capital of area residents, an asset that has allowed them to subsist in conditions of extreme poverty.

Development of social capital by *Lét Agogo* producers has created organizations and associations that can develop solutions not only to poverty, but also to specific production challenges. With the ties that have been established and VETERIMED support, dairy farmers develop viable strategies within the limits and opportunities they themselves identify.

The relationship between farmers and the micro-dairies is an example of how social capital can be strengthened, by giving farmers the option of becoming business partners. This demonstrates their willingness to work cooperatively manner and committed to the community in pursuit of improved living conditions for everyone.

The alliance also demonstrates that it is possible to develop social capital in rural communities by cultivating direct relationship with participants. This has achieved resolution of long-standing conflicts over land tenure and increased the inclusion of women at all levels of production, empowering them as income earners.

The program is a model of cooperation along the chain of production, from farm to store. Everyone has a specific responsibility: farmers supply sufficient quantities of raw milk; micro-dairy managers and workers produce quality products; the commercialization center organizes supplies and sells the final products. Lastly, technicians and professionals of VETERIMED provide the assistance necessary to ensure smooth operations along the entire chain.

Lessons learned

The efforts of VETERIMED, government institutions and the communities have allowed rural farmers to legalize land ownership, improve access to water and gain technical skills in animal husbandry and production of fodder. Beneficiaries take responsibility for animal health and the quality of the milk. The simple participatory methodologies employed by the increase local social capital.

It is possible to design and develop schemes for productive chains that can help to improve incomes and living conditions for the population, including in areas of great poverty and deprivation.

Impact

In 2010, there are 30 micro-dairies producing 7,500 liters of milk per day. Some 2,500 rural residents are involved in the network, many as dairy workers and some as veterinary technicians recognized by Agriculture Ministry.

The program has generated some 250 new jobs in participating communities. Many of these jobs have been taken by women, improving opportunities for participation for rural women.

Local production has brought down the price of milk and milk products, contributing to national food and nutritional security. At the same time, dairy farmers have seen their incomes increase above the national minimum wage.

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6. Foods for Nostalgia from Mexico *(Proyecto binacional de inversión de remesas para el establecimiento de una planta procesadora de alimentos nostálgicos de Oaxaca en Ayoquezco de Aldama)*, Mexico

Ayoquezco de Aldama, Oaxaca

Fundación para la Productividad en el Campo, A.C.
(FUPROCA, Foundation for Productivity in the Countryside)

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Background

For years, most women of Ayoquezco de Aldama relied on remittances from relatives in the United States as their main source of income. Some worked in the local tobacco factory, but when it closed in 1999, some 1,200 community residents were left without a steady job.

Many returned to planting corn, despite its poor yield. The production of nopal –an edible cactus native to Mexico, commonly found in patios and backyards– had also declined, and the income it generated for local women was quite meager. The community was in need of alternative agricultural activities to generate income.

When the women of Ayoquezco de Aldama asked the Mayor for help to obtain a stand in the Oaxaca market by providing them with a vehicle, he agreed, but with a proposal: process the nopal and get a better price.

This proposal gave rise to the initiative that would eventually become *Alimentos Nostalgicos* (Nostalgic Foods). With support from the city, local women learned to adapt traditional processing methods for nopal in a ways that do not deplete agricultural production. They created the Women's Nopal Association *(Mujeres Envasadoras de Nopal, MENA)* and approached the Foundation for Productivity in the Countryside (FUPROCA) for funds to purchase a vehicle and set up a stall in Oaxaca.

FUPROCA, which runs a program with Mexican migrants in the United States to identify investment opportunities for local development, presented the MENA proposal to group of Mexican migrants from Oaxaca. Their enthusiastic response resulted in a partnership between these two groups the led to the creation, with FUPROCA support, of *Productos Nostálgicos Alimenticios Oaxaqueños,* S.A. de C.V.

Challenge

Improve incomes and quality of life for 170 families of Oaxaca women who produce nopal and enter the U.S. market, in partnership with Mexican migrants residing there.

Process

From needs assessment to placing products on the market, the process took place in four stages, as follows:

1.   Technical, social and economic assessment of the region:

A participatory assessment was conducted to identify MENA's strengths and weaknesses, including agricultural production conditions and a market study.

2.   Strengthening production in Mexico:

Studies were conducted to examine process productivity (soil characteristics; pests and diseases that attack cactus) and improvements to be made. The women received technical assistance and training in organic farming and post-harvest management, in addition to technical assistance in organization and management procedures, teamwork, conflict resolution and inclusive practices.

3.   Strengthening productivity with the U.S.-based investors:

FUPROCA worked with the U.S.-based migrant group –the financial backers of the project and in charge of opening markets, particularly California– to instill a sense of proprietorship and ensure marketing success with workshops, consultancies and guidance to design an appropriate business structure. This led to the creation of *Chapulín Inc.* Activities addressed the following issues:

- Integration of the production group

- Induction into its participatory organization

- Identification of productive projects in members' home communities

- Construction of a transnational plan for participation and association with binational productive projects

- Project promotion and membership

- Design and implementation of the organizational structure

- Legal and administrative assistance

- Management training and development

- Exchange of experiences with other binational productive projects.

4.   Market:

This activity was geared to enable project participants to learn marketing strategies and explore alternative solutions to potential problems with product quality, quantity and logistical obstacles in product delivery and sales. Participants received support for developing individual marketing plans, identifying the various options and implementation strategies.

The main goal was to provide these producers with the tools necessary to market their products and discern market opportunities, based on the strength of those products.

Costs and financing

The total amount of funding received by the program since its inception is US $ 1,200,000, most of which was allocated to constructing and equipping the processing plant.

Funding consisted of contributions from MENA beneficiaries themselves (8%); Chapulín Inc. (12%); FUPROCA (16%); Mexico Federal Government Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development and Food (38%); Mexico Department of Social Development (SEDESOL) (16%); Mexican Association of Social Sector Credit Unions (AMUCSS) (5%); Oaxaca state government (4%); and the Ayoquezco de Aldama municipal government (1%).

In 2010, *Productos Nostálgicos Alimenticios Oaxaqueños* received a US $ 20,000 grant from Ashoka.

Once in operation, the program's annual expenditures have totaled US $ 139,000, of which 80% are operational and 20% administrative.

Social innovation

Innovative aspects of this program include the active participation of women in production and company decision-making; participation of migrants as investment partners and product promoters; local integration of the nopal productive chain; modification of traditional methods of nopal production to organic methods; the sense of proprietorship the women derive from having initiating the business themselves; and the generational shift (mothers as founding producers / daughters as administrators) in decision-making and participation.

These women were able to transform a traditional home production of limited productivity and minimal profits into an export industry that injects energy not only into its partners' household economies but into the economy of an entire village, as well.

Lessons learned

Local communities producing traditional foods can create links to migrant communities outside the country and generate business models that improve the incomes of both. This satisfies the culinary nostalgia of people far from home and introduces new products to local markets, generating sources of income for both migrants and the producers who stay behind. Improved productive processes that ensure adherence to food safety and quality standards of foreign markets are key.

Impact

The program raised the household incomes of participating women by nearly 50%. This increase is the result of greater nopal productivity and the relatively steady expansion of sales in the Oaxaca market.

The new business has persuaded potential migrants to remain in the community and brought others back home. The women say that the construction and operation of the plant has reduced young people's incentive for migrating. In fact, 15 children of the founding members currently work in the plant in production and administration.

With more land under cultivation and at greater density, the program has generates seasonal work.

The company is currently comprised of 208 members, of whom 40 are Mexican migrants based in California (San Diego, Los Angeles and Salinas); and 168 are producers.

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7. Sustainable Production of Trout in Lagoons and Cages
*(Producción sostenible de truchas en el sistema extensivo
e intensivo en lagunas y jaulas),* **Peru**

Ocuviri district, Puno

Asociación Pesquera "*Flor de Yancacauha*"
(Flor de Yancacauha Fisheries Association)

Background

In the province of Lampa, with its high levels of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and precarious conditions for production, fishing and aquiculture are supplementary sources of income to traditional activities. In Ocuviri, one of two Lampa districts were this project is being implemented, some 92% of the population was classified as impoverished in 2003, with more than half living in conditions of destitution.

In 1986, community leaders belonging to the "Flor de *Yancacauha"* Fisheries Association developed a business proposal to produce and process trout. This initiative coincided with a period of disputes over land ownership. Laguna Iniquilla and surrounding lands belonged to the Rural Umachiri association, which operated as a social property enterprise (*empresa de propiedad social*) and the idea of obtaining a concession there at that time was a dream, participants recall. The "owners" had initiated proceedings before the Fishing Ministry (now DIREPRO), which ruled that Laguna Chullpía waters were lacking in "sufficient organic mass" and not apt for trout breeding.

Rural Umachiri was unable to obtain concessions for Iniquilla and Chullpía, and this was awarded to the Fisheries Association.

Initial efforts in 1987 and 1988 to breed 5,000 trout alevins (baby fish) were successful, meeting quality standards and demonstrating to more skeptical partners that trout production in these lagoons is feasible.

The development of trout breeding and its consolidation was not easy. In 1995, some 100,000 alevins purchased on credit were lost from lack of expertise and appropriate technology. But local fishermen and community leaders decided to continue with the project and renew their attempts, given the favorable natural conditions (water quality, natural feed, adequate temperatures) for trout breeding, the existing laboratory infrastructure and the association's motivated membership. To adapt trout production to the high altitudes (4,200 meters above sea level), the "Flor de *Yancacauha*" Fisheries Association used trial and error to develop its own technology, now known as Iniquilla Technology, to determine the optimal size to introduce baby fish into lake waters and not fall prey to birds. In 2003, the group changed its legal status from cooperative to association.

The Association has now perfected a model of trout breeding that includes alevin production, processing, marketing and sales.

Challenge

Improve and maintain the incomes of association members and living standards in the local community through sustainable trout production using extensive and intensive modalities.

To achieve this in Iniquilla and Chullpía (far from the capital city of Lima) requires an ecological source of production of trout eggs and alevins for regional and national markets.

Process

The shift from a cooperative to an associative working structure enabled the transformation of these trout fishermen into trout producers. To take the first step, the association employed alevins purchased at high prices that included elevated transportation costs. They then began a long process of trial and error to produce trout eggs and alevins. After a series of failures, they developed the process known as Iniquilla Technology to determine optimal alevin size and ensure the survival of baby trout released into the lake. This is the point where the commercial enterprise comes into its own, with breeding and fishing operations complemented by processing. Today, the association manages an integrated business operation.

A Board of Directors whose members are elected by general assembly leads the Association. The Board supervises various committees: production, marketing, oversight, training, transportation, sports/culture and tourism. The production committee is in charge of reproduction, egg extraction and alevin production; acquisition of inputs and trout feed for growth, girth and pigmentation. Its responsibilities end with the delivery of trout to the Marketing Committee for sale.

The Marketing Committee is responsible for quality control, fish processing (fresh, filleted or smoked) and delivery to clients. The Oversight Committee is responsible for monitoring and follow-up of all committees.

Training combines theoretical and practical aspects, the most relevant being those that improve trout breeding, marketing and links to the Puno Cuzco Corridor Development Project. Funds from this source have allowed the association to hire a biologist and aquiculture engineer.

The Transportation and Sports/Culture committees contribute to corporate social responsibility. The former coordinates with the community to provide residents with transportation in the Association's vehicle to barter for grains with nearby communities or travel to Juliaca, where merchandise is less expensive. The Sports and Culture Committee promotes recreational activities for members, their families and the community at large. The Tourism Committee works with the Puno Cuzco Corridor Development Project to promote regional tourism.

Association members divide its development into three generations. The first group (numbering 12) is that of the founding members, who have been active since 1986 and dealt with the growing pains previously described. When these members realized that they were too few in number to carry out the work required, they convened a competitive selection process for new members. This second group of seven members is made up of younger people with more schooling. The third group is made up of 12 members who joined after acquiring concessions to administer lake basin resources.

Costs and financing

Start-up costs were covered by Association members with labor. Members contributed some US $ 103,000 in nearly 290 working days.

Training and technical assistance were conducted with support from the national government's Puno Cuzco Corridor Development Project, with contributions totaling US $ 420,000 since 2003. In 1996, the Informal Sector Development Institute (IDESI) helped the Association install a laboratory.

Costs related to production from imported eggs, national production of fertilized alevins, growth and release, natural feed, intensive systems (with artificial feed in cages), and processing of smoked trout amount to an annual total of some US $ 46,000.

Trout sales cover these costs and produce a profit that allows the Association to fulfill its goal of improving its members' living standards and help them overcome the impoverished conditions in which they lived.

Social innovation

In circumstances of geographic and technological isolation, a community with little formal education but working together persists in developing simple but efficient techniques to produce the inputs needed to launch a trout processing and marketing business. This includes the development of a new technology adapted to local conditions that is both viable and decisive to the sustainable development of trout production in the region.

Also innovative is the generation of local technologies to produce alevins in the Association's laboratory, using both imported eggs and alevins produced locally through in vitro fertilization. While this does not constitute a technological breakthrough, it does demonstrate the Association's capacity to organize and address challenge.

The program is also noteworthy for its attention to corporate social responsibility, including sports and recreation activities, promotion of local tourism and provision of transportation to local community members.

Lessons learned

The tenacity of these rural farmers to overcome poverty through self-management led them to organize to launch a new productive enterprise. They developed creative solutions to overcome obstacles to trout breeding, processing and commercialization, creating an efficient administrative structure where responsibilities are clearly defined and conducted with transparency.

Technology has reduced their reliance on imported alevins (a step that involved substantial delays and paperwork), lowered production costs and resulted in more competitive prices on local and national markets. This has increased the quantities of trout produced and enhanced the Association's ability to meet production schedules and commitments.

Impact

This breeding system is extensive, based on low costs and high productivity. Local alevin production reduces reliance on external, imported inputs, a process that, given the area's relative isolation, was difficult and costly. Substitution of imported alevins has lowered costs, made their product more competitive on local and regional markets and increased profit margins for the producers.

The Association's 50 members have seen the incomes triple, allowing their families to leave the conditions of poverty in which they lived. In addition to these individual gains, residents of Ocuviri also benefit from this success, with free transportation to Puno and Juliaca, sports and cultural events sponsored by the Association, and other contributions to the community. Social capital has been increased, improving quality of life.

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B. Youths at risk

1. Preventing Violence and Resolving Conflicts through Peer Mediation among Children and Youths in Situations of Social Risk (*Programa de prevención de violencia a través de proyectos de resolución de conflictos y mediación de pares en escuelas con niños y jóvenes en riesgo y en grupos de educación no formal*), Argentina

San Carlos de Bariloche

Fundación Alternativa Social y Educativa
(Foundation for Social and Educational Alternatives)

Background

San Carlos de Bariloche has seen its population triple over the past 30 years, bringing changes to its social fabric through an increase in the population at social risk and more restricted access to social services such as health, education, housing and opportunities for employment. These changes have also affected children and youths.

Like other cities in the region, schools in Bariloche have a problem with violence; harassment, mistreatment, insults, fights between students and, sometimes, aggression against teachers. More serious incidents involving the use of knives and guns have also occurred.

In 1997, following the shooting death of one student by another at the entrance to a school, the Fundación Alternativa Social y Educativa *(*Foundation for Social and Educational Alternatives) was created to conduct training and orientation among teachers and school officials to reduce violence in schools and communities through the promotion of dialogue as a form of conflict resolution.

This experience helped Fundación Alternativa members to understand one of the most urgent problems facing schools: the absence of tools available to teachers and school officials to address violence and encourage peaceful coexistence. Previously, the only response to aggressive youths was to exercise more violence by punishing and expelling them in an effort to protect others.

In response Fundación Alternativa created a program of *Peaceful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation* that is being incorporated into the city's schools.

This model of mediation features the intervention of a neutral third party previously accepted by the parties in conflict who does not have the power to take a decision on the eventual agreement that may be reached. The mediator's role is to help the parties in conflict, by facilitating the communication process, to explore the elements of conflict so that the parties involved find satisfactory solutions and can agree to the ways and means of bringing these about.

The program has been successful in entering schools, as boys and girls acquire new awareness of peaceful means of resolving conflict that they later apply in their homes and communities.

Challenge

Reduce violence –harassment, mistreatment, insults, fights, aggression armed gangs and even deaths– among students and against teachers in San Carlos de Bariloche schools.

Process

The program is administered in each school by a coordinating team of teachers, parents and students, who, with Fundación Alternativa guidance, prepare a specific work plan according to the types of violence present in the school community.

Based on this plan, the model follows the following series of activities:

Awareness workshops: School officials, staff, teacher and parents attend a workshop to explain the process and the importance of their active participation and support of student mediators. (Those demonstrating special interest in the process are invited to attend a complementary in-depth seminar.) Teachers include the *Peaceful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation* program in their curriculum as a means of presenting it to students and encouraging student to become mediators and use the methodology to resolve conflicts with classmates.

Students who enroll to become mediators (with parental permission) receive orientation and training. Students who successfully complete this stage and reiterate their willingness to act as mediators receive a certificate accrediting them as peer mediators and are presented to the school community.

Primary school students also receive training and can also opt (with their parents' permission) to "work" as mediators.

The first Mediation Center meeting is convened to determine the mediating teams, which disputes they will mediate in, and the location of mediation sessions. This is written up in an agreement signed by the parties in conflict.

One important task is to inform the school community about the *Mediation* Center. Peer mediators demonstrate the model to students of other grades, teachers and parents, and occasionally make presentations to the local news media.

Once the Mediation Center in a school is functioning, peer mediators start their tasks.

Experienced student mediators help train the incoming generation of new mediators in their own schools and in others. Fundación Alternativa holds periodic meetings with the coordination teams to analyze their progress.

Every two years, *Student Peer Mediator* seminars, coordinated by Fundación Alternativa, feature workshops to evaluate activities and discuss new proposals and methodologies.

While Fundación Alternativa seeks to consolidate this model of conflict resolution in area schools, its main objective over the medium term is for schools to employ it autonomously, without the need for intervention by the Foundation.

In 2008, supervision of the program in high schools was transferred to local Education Ministry officials, who are now responsible for monitoring program needs, with support from Foundation staff. This is a significant step forward in this direction.

Seminars and workshops for teachers, parents and students focus on socio-cognitive skills and age-appropriate strategies according to the responsibilities involved. Workshops cover conceptual material, attitudes and procedures.

Costs and financing

Funding comes primarily from the AVINA Foundation and Cooperart Cursos, with additional support from the Argentine Education Ministry and the city of Bariloche. Parents of school children have also made donations to the program.

Fundación Alternativa estimates an average cost of $ 30 Argentine pesos (US $ 8) to train student mediators; training of teachers averages some $ 100 Argentine pesos (US $ 28).

Social innovation

The most innovative feature of this program is that it trains school children and teens to mediate resolution of conflicts occurring among their peers. With support from teachers and occasionally parents, mediators help disputing classmates express their feelings and establish dialogue. Mediators try to uncover the story behind the conflict so as to explain the reasons for the dispute and propose a solution.

The mediation model rests on trust, discretion and students' willingness to accept negotiation as a peaceful means of resolving disputes. As in all negotiating processes, it is sometimes impossible to reach an agreement, despite the efforts of the student mediator. In these cases, school authorities must intervene. In the majority of conflicts, however, an agreement is reached.

Participants in the mediation process (both peer mediators and students involved in disputes) bring their experience with the negotiation process back home, thus promoting more harmonious family relations that can lower levels of domestic violence. Parents who have participated in program workshops also become agents of conflict resolution in their communities.

The role of teachers and school officials to this program is central. They are the ones who take the initiative to bring the program into their schools. Without their commitment, it is impossible to implement the program. Teachers become program coordinators and help student mediators and the Mediation Centers with any obstacles they encounter.

Lessons learned

Alternatives exist to stop escalating violence in schools. These include creating awareness of the problem, training teachers and students, involving students directly in conflict resolution as mediators, and obtaining support from school authorities to promote program success. This model of peer mediation is more successful than conventional methods of punishment and hierarchical exercise of authority.

Impact

Incidents of violence among students have decreased. Relations between students and teachers are more harmonious. In 2008 and 2009, more than 150 people received training. In 2009, the project expanded to include a new sports club consultancy. The program is being extended throughout the province and, in 2010, was operating in 21 high schools with the backing of Secondary Level supervisors.

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2. Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody (*Sistema de sostén para adolescentes tutelados*), Argentina

La Plata, Buenos Aires Province

Procuración General del Poder Judicial de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Attorney General's Office of the Judicial Branch)

Background

A study by the Attorney General's Office of the Judicial Branch of the Province of Buenos Aires found that between 70% and 80% of incarcerated adults had had contact with the court system as children or teens, most frequently in cases where they themselves had been victims of crimes.

With these numbers in mind, the Office began development of a model of attention for juveniles in placement centers (as victims of crime) or jails (as juvenile offenders) to eliminate these forms of institutionalization and help youths build future plans for a life within the law.

Prior to this initiative, no mechanism existed to ensure the social integration of teens after long periods of institutionalization (either protective or criminal). The effects of institutionalization on youths only deepens the circuit of marginality and delinquency in which they are immersed and makes reinsertion into society extremely difficult, if not impossible.

This critique of a custody system that aims to protect abandoned children and those in situations of social vulnerability through placement, but instead channels them to delinquency, gave rise to the concept behind the *Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody.*

This concept is to recognize the damaging consequences of prolonged institutionalization and avoid placement and detention programs by working with juvenile offenders and victims as active agents (not targets of protection) and break the fateful equation of "child in legal custody = adult offender." The alternative was to create a system that accompanies teens with training and teaches them to take responsibility for themselves.

Challenge

Avoid placement in custodial institutions and privation of liberty for juvenile offenders and victims of crime, and prepare them for the future with positive life skills.

Process

With the judge's authorization, lawyers can solicit the entry of the juvenile into the *Support System.*

This includes registration and entry interviews with a team of professionals (psychologists and social workers) who evaluate the subjective and social conditions that facilitate or impede the possibility of the applicant living independently, and the applicant's demonstrated desire for change.

The entry application is accepted or denied by the interdisciplinary team in charge of the applicant's case, and the decision communicated to the lawyer and judge.

The admission process lasts between 15 and 20 days, as some applicants in Buenos Aires province live more than 800 km from *Support System* offices and must appear there personally for the evaluation process.

Once the applicant is approved, he or she receives a stipend for living expenses and is assigned a mentor. The mentor is an adult (age 25 or older) who has been trained and certified by the Buenos Aires Province Education Ministry in support for social integration. This course covers relevant legal and institutional frameworks, adolescent psychology and the different options available to help youths develop the basic skills they need, plus training in interview techniques and preparation of case studies and reports.

The mentor and the teen draw up a schedule of meetings and appear before the *Support System* offices to sign a "Responsibility Accord" stipulating the rights and obligations of both parties, including the possibility of rescinding the agreement should these conditions not be fulfilled.

A key condition of this agreement is that the stipend recipient stay enrolled in the vocational training or academic studies that will allow him or her to find employment and live independently. The mentor works with the teen over a period of approximately three years (on average, depending on the development of each individual case), during which the teen must make specific plans for the future. Emotional support and financial help is provided to help achieve these plans. The frequency of meetings between the mentor and the accompanied juvenile are determined by the complexity of the case, and can take place daily, weekly or every 15 days. The mentor also compiles a support plan revised every 15 days by a supervisor responsible for coordinating and overseeing the mentors and ensuring fulfillment of program goals.

The support plan is designed to help the youth acquire as many strategies for self-reliance, within the limits of the law, as possible. This is achieved through vocational training and instruction and support in the exercise of and access to all civic rights, responsibilities and community services, including health, housing transportation, education and employment counseling.

Within the Attorney General's Office, the *Support System* program is composed of a technical team of four areas: support, legal, social and psychological.

The legal area monitors the legal status of juvenile offenders (legal proceedings and court cases, release, conditional liberty) and provides guidance in matters such as labor disputes, whereabouts of family members and, in cases where the juvenile in custody has children, paternity issues and visiting rights.

The social area is responsible for establishing contacts and agreements with public services and welfare agencies in the youth's local community, and advising the youth on whether and/or how to take advantage of these.

Both mentors and youth can avail themselves of the psychological area should problems arise to impede progress. Interviews are conducted to identify the problem or concern and youths are derived to therapeutic services in health centers or hospitals in the local community. When necessary (in cases of overburdened local services for example), private treatment can be arranged. In this case, the Association of Psychologists makes available the names of professionals charging minimum fees that youths can cancel in installments with their own funds.

Costs and financing

With its incorporation in 1996, the Support System program was granted its own budget for stipends. Today, the program is financed –with safeguards against duplication of efforts– by public funds for legal activities, health, education and vocational training. Most costs are covered by funds from the Judicial Branch for stipends and administrative costs. Additional funding to supplement stipends comes from the Renault Foundation and the Council for Children and Adolescents.

In 2009, stipends (totaling $ 621,600 Argentine pesos, or approximately US $ 154,000) and salaries for technical and administrative teams (totaling $1,760,000 Argentine pesos, or approximately US $ 463,000) accounted for 90% of the program's total costs. The cost per youth was approximately US $ 194.

In 2006, the cost per youth in placement centers was US$ 812, a cost significantly higher than those incurred under the *Support System*. This savings is one of the advantages of this model.

Considering the results in social and labor reinsertion, and the extremely low rate of recidivism, the *Support System* program is noteworthy as an initiative that not only saves the provincial government in future costs but also successfully accompanies youths in recovering their rights and their full agency as responsible and autonomous citizens.

Social innovation

The *Support System for Juveniles in Legal Custody* is an innovative approach to the de-institutionalization of juveniles in legal custody. Its entire focus is aimed at helping juvenile offenders and other youths in legal custody achieve their autonomy, complete their studies and build their own personal support networks.

The program's most innovative aspects are:

1. Conceptualization of adolescent victims and offenders as capable of assuming responsibilities and a commitment to a life plans of their own design, and not as objects of punishment, social sanctions or recovery through institutionalized assistance. The different stages of the program demonstrate this shift in approach: selection process, contractural agreeement of shared responsibilities, encouragement to take decisions, and respect for the choices made.

2. The figure and function of the mentor is innovative. This person is not a support professional in the traditional sense of guiding teens through integration, but rather an adult referent who helps teens to reflect and discover their rights and preferences in a situation of containment where they can design their own future. In addition to technical and logistical matter, the emotional support provided is an essential component of this work, whose goal is to develop the teen's full potential.

3. The stipend, as a means of developing the youth's capacity to make choices, is a key element to encourage these teens to take care of themsleves responsibly from the start of the process of social integration.

Lessons learned

An adolescent who has broken the law must take responsibility for his or her conduct. But incarceration, instead of contributing to the possibility of building new life goals, makes this even more difficult. The program demonstrates the need for a positive orientation, contention and the means to achieve these plans. The stipend is essential in allowing beneficiaries to live independently while they study and receive training.

In instances where youths face aggression and require protection, this should not necessarily imply institutionalization.

Impact

From its inception in 1989 through late 2007, the *Support System* program attended 1,892 adolescents in situations of vulnerability, of which 65% were girls and 35% boys . The program

offered these youths the option of reintegration without a jail sentence or placement in residential facilities that would only compromise the success of their eventual reinsertion.

In terms of juvenile offenders, the outcome is striking: through 2010, the program reported only four cases of recidivism (under 3%) out of a total of 175 adolescents with court cases in progress before entering the program. In cases of youths receiving protection, only three decided to abandon the program and return voluntarily to a residential institution; three suffered from psychotic episodes and needed temporary reclusion in mental health facilities; and two were remanded to drug addiction rehabilitation centers.

In summary, less than 1% of the juveniles admitted to the *Support System* program deserted. The great majority of youths discovered they were capable of living an automous life outside an institution.

In terms of the quality of their social integration, a survey conducted by the *Support System* program of 167 of its graduates provides information on their educational, labor and family achievements five years (on average) out of the program. At the time of the survey, 42% of those interviewed had completed high school; nearly 20% had obtained a university degree or some other post-secondary qualification: and 37% were still studying.

Most had formed families (68%); 14 % were living alone; 4% were living with their families of origin and 2% with an adoptive family. This demonstrates that adolescents originally lacking affective referents were capable of building their own networks and support systems. Those living with their families of origin had in many cases rebuilt these ties through contact with brothers and sisters.

More than 75% of the youths surveyed had held some sort of job. Some 45.5 % had steady formal employment; 32% were employed in commerce; 18% were independently or autonomously employed; and 4.5 % were intermittently employed.

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3. Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools *(Programa para la gestión del conflicto escolar, Hermes)*, Colombia

Bogotá and Cundinamarca

Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá (Bogotá Chamber of Commerce)

Background

In 1997, the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Inter-American Development Bank, launched the "Ariadna Weaving Strands of Peace" project for youths ages 11 to 18 to generate change in attitudes and responses to interpersonal conflict.

The project began in January 2001 in 10 schools in low-income areas. This was subsequently expanded to 47 public high schools and the involvement of 687 student conciliators, 582 youth advocates and 4,228 school community members (parents, administrators, teachers and students) introduced to conciliation techniques.

In 2006, an agreement with the Bogotá Education Department further expanded the program and incorporated it into district policy.

This model validated the leadership capacity of students to become conciliators and the concept of conciliation in response to a counterculture of aggression, threats and verbal and physical violence.

As the program developed, its proponents analyzed the types of conflicts and solutions found in the community. This gave impetus to a new methodological proposal to address specific characteristics in individual communities. This is the origin of the *Hermes Project for Conflict Management in Schools*, which takes its name from the messenger of Greek mythology.

The new model, which includes teacher, administrators and parents, focuses on the emotional intelligence needed to identify conflicts and develop the skills and abilities to resolve them.

Challenge

Provide the school community with teaching tools to transform conflict by dialogue and agreement in an environment of respect and tolerance for others.

Process

The program begins with a comprehensive contextual analysis that includes dimensions of inter-personal relationships; recognition of school community dynamics in regard to conflict; definition of a training plan for conflict management at individual schools; construction of participatory training exercises with school community members to develop conflict management skills and tools; administrative mechanisms; establishment of a negotiating table and coexistence committee to address conflicts within the school community; creation of participatory processes with parents as allies.

Once this is concluded and incorporated into the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce Biannual Strategic Plan, the *Agreement Phase* is initiated. Contacts are made with local district and departmental authorities and interviews conducted with school administrations, teachers and students to determine needs and characteristics in participating schools and communities. The possibilities for success, based on commitment to participation and the support demonstrated by the school community, are analyzed.

When interest in participation has been confirmed, a *Feasibility Survey* is conducted to analyze specific contextual elements of the community involved, the scope and internal organization of participating institutions, and levels of motivation to conduct and sustain the proposal.

The following criteria are used to select participating schools:

- The school must provide secondary education (grades 8 to 11) to students between the ages of 11 and 17;
- Teaching staff must support the program;
- The school must draw students from surrounding neighborhoods and have impact in those neighborhoods;
- Program beneficiaries should belong to the 0-1-2-3 socio-economic levels;
- The school must be a public school.

Results are analyzed by the program team to determine the viability of implementation and possibilities for success.

In the subsequent *Promotion and Dissemination Phase*, the proposal is shared with the school community. The program is presented to students, teachers and administrators, its objectives and scope discussed. Consensus regarding its relevance and viability is established.

Once the project has been approved by the community, leaders are selected and two working groups created: Teacher/Tutors and Students. These operate as support teams to promote program sustainability in the short, medium and long term. Individuals who take leadership roles accept the basic criteria of volunteer action and commitment as requisites of program implementation.

Specific interventions with group leaders begin in the *Conflict Recognition Phase*. Workshops are conducted to create a space for collective and individual reflection, for sharing personal experiences of conflict, and acknowledging these as real. These narratives describe specific contexts of conflict within specific institutional settings (neighborhood, district, school, peers, families). This stage paves the way for better understanding of the possibilities of transforming the realities that youths themselves have identified. It generates an initial degree of autonomy by presenting youths with the possibility of becoming agents of change in their own reality. In this stage, teachers and tutors participate as engaged observers.

The *Teaching Training Phase* fosters spaces for trust, self-recognition and acceptance of diversity among students. Teachers record their experiences and perceptions using a "self-directed" protocol developed for this purpose.

Once a basic level of awareness has been achieved from the students' perspectives and ways of relating established, the *Student Training Phase* begins.

Student teams take a leadership role in these interventions, permanently supported by feedback from Chamber the Commerce advisors. Methodological strategies coherent with the youths' stage of development are put into place, as previously determined in the *Conflict Recognition Phase*.

These spaces foster opportunities for dialogue where emotions, life stories and daily experiences can emerge and generate consensus about the values that infuse meaning into the lives of the protagonists.

They also provide opportunities to reflect on the responsibility of the Student Conflict Manager, facilitating integration of protagonists with new perspectives, expanding teacher viewpoints with those of the students, and creating more horizontal teacher-student relationships.

Youths develop new social skills and abilities for peaceful coexistence, conflict resolution and personal growth. This stage is implemented through structured workshops focusing on emotional intelligence and moral principles.

In the *Alternative Methods of Conflict Resolution Training Phase*, new concepts and tools are introduced and conflict is approached from the vantage point of transformation, integrating a personal vision with the social function that participants assume as conflict managers.

The methodology for this phase presents participants with diverse alternatives for managing conflict in the institution. Volunteers reaffirm their willingness to continue and to join the Negotiating Table, marked by a small ceremony in which the group reaffirms its participation.

Once training is completed, the *Specialization Phase* begins. Collective analysis and evaluation of the particular needs of each individual context is conducted, a method of resolving conflicts is determined, and technical training commenced. This stage provides opportunities to reaffirm the skills and aptitudes previously acquired through role-playing, case studies and similar exercises. Participants are trained to administer the Commitment Records and special emphasis is given to the social responsibility of negotiating table members, who become referents for the entire school community.

The *Certification Ceremony* is the meaningful moment when youths and teachers make public their commitment to becoming Conflict Managers and, by example, models of coexistence. The school conducts a public event to introduce its Management Board, which is inaugurated by its members. The Board places itself at the service of the community as the appropriate channel to resolve conflicts, inviting community members to abandon violence as a means of resolving differences. This represents the debut of conflict management system.

In the *Continuity Phase*, alliances are generated between coexistence committees and other administrative and student government groups to contribute to the permanence of the model. Based on the strengths and difficulties that emerge, a second level of specialization is developed. This allows Conflict Managers to cement knowledge and perfect their conflict resolution skills, improving performance and strengthening emotional intelligence and social and communication skills.

From this phase forward, the managers take full control over the mechanisms and promote options for managing conflicts in the schools to generate change in the institutional culture. They conduct awareness-raising activities on a permanent basis with the school community to promote the legitimacy of the Negotiating Table as a real option to diffuse the conflicts that surface on a daily basis from interactions among school community members. Administrative procedures are established and operational strategies developed.

Certified students become members of the *National Network of Student Managers and Conciliators (RENACEG)*, allowing them to work outside their school and conduct *Conciliation Workshops* at other schools where formal conflict resolution programs are not yet in place.

A key objective of the *Network* is to encourage conflict managers to see themselves as important actors at the community, local and district levels, capable of proactive participation in the construction of new models for healthy coexistence and the exercise of rights. The *Network* maintains its dynamism through regular meetings attended by two member teams from each Negotiating Table. Experiences are shared and new proposals developed.

Since many conflict managers participating in the program are in their final year of high school, the Chamber of Commerce supports schools by helping teachers and tutors identify new generations of students (known as "replacement groups") to continue the program. This is essential to maintaining the continuity and sustainability of the model over time and its ongoing adaptation to the specific circumstances of each school at any particular moment.

Costs and financing

In 2009, the program costs US $ 533,000, of which 77% went to the salaries of technical and professional staff. The cost per participating institution is approximately US $ 2,130. Training student conciliators has a cost of US $ 13 per person per year. Due to the program's broad coverage, its total costs are relatively high, but analysis of the cost per unit per participants trained and assisted demonstrates efficient economies of scale. Moreover, the bulk of the work is carried out by volunteers.

The program's main funding sources are the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, (which covers 80% of total costs) and the District Department of Education of the Bogotá Mayor's Office, through an agreement covering 50% of staff and materials costs for 36 high schools. A similar agreement is in force in Zipaquirá and other districts of Cundinamarca.

Social innovation

A key innovation of this program is that it places students in the role of main actors, not mere recipients of guidelines and actions developed by adults. Its comprehensive approach to violence is innovative because, while it works in schools, its impact extends to the community and families. Conflict management is in the hands of boys, girls, teens, teachers and parents. This generates empowerment and shared responsibility among the entire school community, as protagonists of the process.

Also noteworthy in this model is its explicit acknowledgement of the fact that teachers can also be agents of conflict and should be willing to appear before the Negotiating Table in that capacity.

The socio-constructionist methodology, based primarily on emotional intelligence, is an innovative contribution to conflict resolution in schools as it lays the foundation for coexistence based on dialogue and recognition of conflict without focusing on who is right and who is guilty.

This model departs from authoritarian systems of teacher control over undesirable behaviors by students, expanding the concept of authority to favor knowledge and understanding over potential sanctions. Dialogue among students in conflict reduces the sense of superiority of some students over others and the disqualifications that accompany violence.

Another feature of the program is that its phases of implementation facilitate replication. Its methodology allows for adaptation to different contexts.

Last but not least, the creation of the *National Network of Student Managers and Conciliators* as a space for sharing and exchange of experiences permanently enriches the learning process. The network has become a means of training mediators in educational centers that the Chamber of Commerce program cannot include, helping to consolidate this model. The network generates deep feelings of ownership and pride that strengthens mediators, both students and teachers.

Lessons learned

With adequate methodology, it is possible to train large numbers of people in the school community as conciliators and thus break the prevailing culture of violence. This method brings better results than punitive measures imposed by other models of conflict resolution.

Impact

The program operates in 251 high schools in 19 locations in Bogotá and 10 municipalities in Cundinamarca, Colombia. Between 2001 and 2009, the *Hermes* program created a network of

9,000 conciliators who reached 1,215,940 members of the school community and assisted in a total of 11,382 conciliation cases, with 94% of conflicts resolved in agreements through conciliation sessions, dialogue and negotiation. Participants in the process extend these behaviors to their homes and communities.

The positive results achieved have brought important increases in the number of participating schools, centers and negotiating boards. Many additional high schools would like to participate in the program but cannot, due to budget limitations.

To address this unmet demand, the *RENACEG Network* periodically conducts Conciliation Days in high schools without full programs. These sessions introduce students to mechanisms that can help guide them in developing mediation models for peaceful conflict resolution in their high schools.

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4. Prevention of Drug Use and Gangs in Marginal Urban and Rural Areas (*Prevención del fenómeno droga y mara en áreas urbano marginales y rurales*), Guatemala

Guatemala City and surroundings
Asociación Grupo Ceiba (Ceiba Group)

Background

Colonia El Limón, where *Grupo Ceiba* began, is an impoverished district of displaced people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Its impoverished residents have little schooling and elevated school dropout rates. Family disintegration is common, as are gangs. The young people growing up here are the children of upheaval, displacement and poverty –easy targets for recruitment by drug dealers and, prior to the 1996 Peace Agreement, the guerilla movement.

During the years of armed conflict, paramilitary groups would enter Colonia El Limón and assassinate youths identified by military intelligence as members of the guerilla movement. This practice was so common that a football field in the area is known as *Las Cruces* (The Crosses) because it was the place where they dumped the corpses.

In the post-war years, organizations linked to crime and drug trafficking have seduced youths with attractive recruitment offers, using them as messengers, drug "mules" and hit men. This has been facilitated in part by the absence of preventive measures, coupled with a school system that expels disruptive youths.

In 1989, pastoral work with youths at local Cristo Nuestra Paz Church and research on community social networks developed a proposal that launched the activities of what would eventually become *Grupo Ceiba*. In 1995, *Grupo Ceiba* received NGO status and opened its first office in space provided by the local neighborhood association, whose support made it possible to consolidate several programs already underway.

Challenge

Prevent drug addiction and gang violence and reduce the damage caused by the long civil war and social exclusion in marginal areas of Guatemala.

Process

Grupo Ceiba uses a participatory method that promotes process and is based on pre-existing social networks, with leadership training and programs generated by community needs. Especially noteworthy is its method of working with peers to demonstrate that a new life is possible.

Grupo Ceiba identifies three areas for intervention where its preventive proposals for children and youth at high social risk are applied.

1   *Street University:* Conducted by the Centers for Human and Technical Development, this area focuses on the investigation and systemization of the everyday life of the community and socialization of the *Grupo Ceiba* experience. This process involves meetings with youths and the community featuring video forums on social conscience, HIV/AIDS, human rights, reading and training workshops. The initiative acts as an open door to the whole community, both adults and children, without the need to become directly involved in *Grupo Ceiba* activities. Everyone has access

to the Ceiba library, computers and Internet for finding information, studying or simply spending a pleasant moment reading. This approach opens opportunities for computer literacy among people who were previously excluded.

2. *Alternative Formal Education:* Aimed at children and youths excluded from the formal education system, this area provides opportunities to reenter school through an alternative process that is innovative, instructional and empathetic, respecting the language and intercultural dynamics of the community. The program has developed its own curriculum (approved by the Education Ministry) to counteract exclusion, violence, street life and real and functional illiteracy among local children and youths. It reaches out to adults, workers, peasants and homeless people who, motivated by the desire to better themselves, can opt for an alternative educational approach that is adapted to their social dynamic in order to return to their studies. The program uses an experience-expression-learning methodology as a path toward a personalized process of learning and development.

This area operates three programs: the *Ceibita Care Center* for pre-school children; the *Luz y Esperanza* (Light and Hope) *Grupo Ceiba Alternative School* for primary and secondary education, with accelerated models completing either level in the shortest possible time with the same level of quality; and the *Grupo Ceiba Computer and Typing Academy* for technical training.

3. *Apprentice School:* This area supports youths with grants that allow them to study the technical training and cooperative skills that can provide them with access to independent productive processes by means of the Technical Services Cooperative or as an apprentice to an employer through the Office for Labor and Business Assistance. Two-phase training workshops are conducted with youths between the ages of 15 and 24, both on-site and in the classroom, with tutors, former students and peers, where advanced students help newcomers and those experiencing learning difficulties. The *Ceiba Integrated Cooperative for Information Services* was inaugurated in May 2010 with youths trained in this program. The cooperative was created to help young entrepreneurs who, given their history of violence and drugs, would have difficulty finding employment. It is a for-profit organization to commercialize technical services, with a formal Board of Directors legally registered with the Guatemala National Cooperatives Institute and Tax Board. Given the difficulties to access credit faced by youths who want to work independently, a business plan is being developed to provide access to funding. *Grupo Ceiba* apprentice program graduates are eligible to join the cooperative, pending approval by the board.

The training programs include distance-learning courses over Internet for people who work days or weekends, technical courses from the Apprentice School and courses from Mexico's Monterrey Institute of Technology. Some 1,500 students are enrolled in these programs.

The Employment and Business Training Office helps youths identify job and business opportunities and build the skills they need o go into set up their own businesses providing technical services.

Students receive grants for transport and meals, paid internships and job counseling.

Grupo Ceiba has also incorporated into its programs Urban Peace Platforms and Conflict Resolution Centers where youths and others participate conflict mediation processes. This is supported by a mobile mediation unit that has won legitimacy and the trust of the community. The unit, know as the *Burrita de la Paz* (Peace Donkey), was inaugurated on April 9, 2010.

Costs and financing:

Program costs in 2008 totaled US $ 320,000, of which 76% corresponds to activities, 23% to administration and the remainder to internships. The estimated cost per beneficiary per semester is US $ 437 (approximately US $ 73 per month).

Some 8% of *Grupo Ceiba* financing is covered by the Guatemala Education Ministry. The remainder comes from international development organizations, including the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and the Dutch foundation CORDAID, which each donate 24%.

Social innovation

A key innovation is a management style that promotes participation by program beneficiaries and the community at every stage of project development. This is not based on "lectures" from adults but in the work and examples of peers. Program beneficiaries and the community are the true protagonists of this initiative.

The directors of *Grupo Ceiba* act as facilitators and promoters of activities that spring from the needs and feelings of youths and communities. This model breaks with conventional welfare models where adults (generally from socio-economic contexts far removed from those of the young people they are working with) decide for youths what they need to do and how to do it. In the *Grupo Ceiba* program, the only requirement is that participating youths abandon drugs and gangs. Everything else is developed in consultation with participants.

The young people themselves –many of whom are former gang members– are the ones who approach other marginalized youth and show them, with the help of *Grupo Ceiba*, that it is possible to construct a law-abiding way of life that allows them to earn a living and establish real family ties.

Equally innovative is the way *Grupo Ceiba* links professional and technical training to employment by means of job banks with businesses that will accept these youths on the basis of their excellent training. The program has created opportunities for youths to sell their professional services through an associative model backed by *Grupo Ceiba* via its Technical Services Cooperative.

Lessons learned

Preventing youths from joining gangs and encouraging their exit from gangs involves understanding the extent of the social exclusion they have experienced. In many cases, youths believe that gangs are their only alternative. These are young people who have suffered forced displacement and family disintegration in marginalized urban areas lacking access to services or education. By the time these youths reach adolescence and see themselves without alternatives, gangs are an attractive option to acquire power, earn money and feel accepted within a group.

While technical training is important, formal certification of high school graduation gives youths an advantage in the job market.

Vocational training must be geared to real opportunities to either find employment or receive the support (such as that provided by *Grupo Ceiba* required to create micro-enterprises.

Impact

The project has great potential for extending its impact and the numbers of people helped. At its inception, *Grupo Ceiba* focused on Guatemala City's Colonia Limón. Shortly after, and in response to a request from a former gang member, *Grupo Ceiba* launched a program in San Juan

de Comalapa. Today, *Grupo Ceiba* works in eight municipalities in Chimaltenango, Escuintla, Izabal, Quetzaltenango, Sacatepéquez, and seven neighborhoods of Guatemala City.

While it is impossible to know what would have happened to these young people if the program had not helped them, it is possible to state that the program has improved the living conditions of the 20,000 socially vulnerable children and teens who have participated in these programs. Each area of the program currently attends more than 7,000 children and youths. Around 95% of youths active in gangs and abandon both gangs and drugs once they join the program.

Participating youths finish school and overcome the disadvantage of lacking the educational credentials that ensure better opportunities and a higher income. Vocational programs focus on imparting technological skills with possibilities in the job market. Youths trained by the Apprentice School have a high rate of employment. Those who prefer to establish their own small business receive the support they need to join a cooperative venture that makes their services more competitive on the market. Some 60% of youths trained in the program find stable work. Today, 947 students (40% women) have been placed in jobs. Some 30% of program graduates opt for self-employment. Thirty graduates have joined the Technical Services Cooperative. Currently, the main challenge is access to working capital.

Community members also benefit from *Grupo Ceiba* services by gaining access to libraries with Internet facilities when they can learn new technologies. Delinquency in these communities has dropped significantly, security is increased and the quality of life has improved.

Families of pre-school children receive the guidance they need to ensure that their children will not fall victim to organized delinquency in the future. Access to quality education and help for parents reduces the possibility of children dropping out of school or living on the streets.

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C. Rights-affirming projects: health care and education

1. Storytelling Grannies (*Abuelas cuentacuentos*), Argentina

Resistencia, Chaco province
Fundación Mempo Giardinelli

Background

The idea for *Storytelling Grannies* comes from Argentine author Mempo Giardinelli in response to his concern over the demise of reading for pleasure, especially in low-income sectors. The custom of reading bedtime stories to children had fallen by the wayside, and the transmission of love of reading from generation to generation had been broken.

In the mid-1990s, Giardinelli learned of an initiative in Germany where senior citizens made visits to dying people to read aloud and alleviate their pain with stories, novels and poetry. From this idea of "dying well," the idea of storytelling for a "living well" was born.

In 1999, *Storytelling Grannies* was launched on the premise that reading to children increases their access to books and their right to read. This task is championed by senior citizens who volunteer their time, guided by teachers and reading specialists, with financial support from private enterprise.

The importance of reading in a country that values inclusiveness, construction of democracy and respect for differences is the motivation behind the program. It relies on senior citizens who contribute their skills to benefit younger people by transmitting habits and customs from one generation to another.

Challenge

Stimulate love of reading among children through the skills of senior citizen volunteers, and expand inter-generational dialogue and the contributions of older people.

Process

Storytelling Grannies is administered by a small team of coordinators who link volunteers to schools. The program rests on the idea that telling tales is fun not only for the listener, for the reader as well.

The following steps summarize the process:

1.   Convene volunteer readers and participating schools

The invitation to volunteer is extended to senior citizens (both men and women, but answered almost exclusively by women, hence the title "grannies") and schools. Coordinators place announcements in the media explaining program goals, tasks and volunteer responsibilities. Those interested are invited to call for more details and attend an informational session.

Schools are selected by the grannies themselves. The volunteers approach school officials or classroom teachers about the possibility of participating, then decide on the frequency and schedule of the visits. The only prerequisite is that the schools serve lower income areas.

2.   Prepare reading materials

Program coordinators organize the materials for the school year, including books, supplementary texts on storytelling and reading, tracking forms for the database. Reading specialists from the Foundation select materials, which then become part of the program's library collection.

3.   Train volunteers

Training covers the program's philosophy and goals, reading techniques and classroom norms. New volunteers receive practice texts and information on the importance of reading. Once the volunteer has studied these materials, she returns for a second session to clear up remaining questions before entering the classroom.

When a new granny starts in the classroom, she is accompanied for several weeks by a more experienced volunteer who knows the ropes. Some grannies prefer to work in teams, taking turns reading texts or working with different classrooms and grades.

4.   Visits to participating schools

Once a granny confirms her participation in the program, she informs the Foundation about the school she wants to visit. Initial contacts with school officials are made, materials explaining Foundation goals and the program are delivered, and a letter from the Foundation identifying the granny as an authorized volunteer is presented.

The volunteer asks school officials to complete a questionnaire about their familiarity with the Foundation and the Storytelling Grannies program. A contact person is assigned, visiting days and times set up, and the number of students established. The duration and frequency of visits is determined directly by the school and the volunteer.

School visits tend to be weekly, with reading sessions attended by two or three groups of 30 to 40 children. The sessions are referred to as "Experiences in Reading" and last an average of 50 minutes.

Sessions consist of reading stories, not inventing them. Reading material is selected according to the age of the listeners. This fulfills the central premise of the program: to stimulate a love of reading and books, introduce children to books as objects, and demonstrate in as many ways as possible (gestures, illustrations, writing words on the blackboard) that the stories that fascinate them come from books they can read and reread as often as they like and that will always be there waiting for them.

Each reading session closes with a conversation in which the story is discussed and connections made to previous readings.

The volunteer writes up a short evaluation of the session, noting the number and ages of participants, the text read and its emotional impact. The Foundation uses these evaluations to monitor program development.

5.   Communication and meetings

Program coordinators talk to volunteers on a weekly basis to keep track of their work, provide new reading material or meet specific training needs, and maintain close personal contact.

Contacts are also maintained with participating schools to supervise program progress. This provides support for the volunteers and builds enthusiasm and cooperation with schools.

The volunteer readers are invited to attend a monthly meeting to exchange experiences, expectations and evaluations with other grannies. They also share reading material to ensure a wide variety of texts.

Three of four times each year, training sessions are conducted with authors, actors and children's literature specialists to improve the volunteers' reading techniques. Each volunteer is evaluated once a year. This information is also used by the Foundation for its overall evaluation of the storytelling program.

6.   Follow-up and control

Coordinators track activities and measure effectiveness through a detailed registry of volunteers, participating schools and institutions and books read.

7.   Meeting demand for services

As the *Storytelling Grannies* become known and appreciated throughout the community, schools approach the Foundation to request visits. Coordinators seek to meet this demand without interfering in programmed activities, insisting that the visit be the start of a long-term program and not an occasional arrangement. This is particularly important as contact with volunteers opens the door to working systematically with new institutions.

8.   Publicizing the program

Engaging the interest of the media is a key element of program success and contributes greatly to the volunteers' self-esteem. Journalists receive regular news items and photos about the program. This is also a way of convening new volunteers and institutions to participate.

Costs and financing

The key to financing this program is its volunteer component. If the grannies received payment, costs would increase outside the range of funds available to the program. Contributions of reading material, places to meet and, occasionally, transportation also help to make the program possible.

In 2007, donations totaled USD $ 148,000, including coordination, library staff and volunteer hours. Some 71% of these contributions and costs are provided in-kind. (Value is estimated at standard market rates.) Just 3.3% of the costs are administrative.

Social innovation

The *Storytelling Grannies program* is innovative for its objectives and its management.

Its activities demonstrate solidarity through specific actions and material support, promoting reading as a foundation of culture. The program believes that reading is important for intellectual and civic development and for building key intellectual skills to develop the imagination and interests essential to individual liberties. Poor reading habits –attributable, in part, to the failure of schools to promote reading and to parents who face their own limitations– make it necessary to develop models to cultivate reading pleasure and enhanced comprehension and learning skills.

The program also enriches the lives of senior citizens, a true innovation in the local context, and creates spaces where they can contribute and are respected for their skills and knowledge. As life expectancy in Latin America increases, it is increasingly necessary to find opportunities for the social integration of older people in productive ways, as exemplified by this project.

The way in which the program is managed is also innovative. Assigning the job of coordinating with schools to the volunteers minimizes the need for extra administrative staff and allows both volunteers and schools the flexibility required to resolve specific issues. The system allows volunteers to take on responsibilities and feel appreciated.

One outcome of this flexibility is that the grannies themselves contact local authors to accompany them in reading sessions. Volunteers have recorded a CD with special readings for the visually impaired, organized Children's Day activities and been interviewed about their experiences on local radio stations.

The program also presents a new pedagogical model, fostering student interest and motivation by focusing on reading pleasure, not obligatory assignments. This approach aims to develop student autonomy.

The granny in the classroom presents students with a different model for student/teacher relationships. Grannies transmit affection, not only knowledge and culture. Children served by this program often have complicated home situations and appreciate the presence of an adult who gives them time, patience and understanding.

Lessons learned

Coordinated networks of volunteers (mostly older women) who share a common goal can have a positive impact on social indicators such as improved reading habits and, by extension, academic performance.

Impact

The *Storytelling Grannies program* has made significant social, educational and integrating impacts. It has made access to quality literature for children and teens a reality for students and families whose socio-economic contexts make this impossible or difficult. In doing so, it ensures fulfillment of the right to read and the right to equal opportunities, independent of social background.

Testimonies of specialists and teachers demonstrate the positive changes in children who participate in reading sessions with grannies over the years. These include increased development of the associative thinking skills that facilitate learning. Another measure of success is the increased number of books borrowed from school libraries.

While the program goal does not focus on the grannies, these volunteers also benefit. In addition to feeling useful, they redefine their social role and their sense of belonging. Grannies also enjoy the affection received from children and teachers.

The program has been widely implemented. In Resistencia alone, every week, 58 volunteers read to some 16,000 children in more than 60 schools or community centers. The program has been replicated throughout the Chaco and neighboring provinces, in 60 Argentine cities and six cities outside of Argentina. In Colombia, the Medellín Mayor's Office incorporated the program into its educational policies for disadvantaged groups after the Storytelling Grannies received the 2005 Medellín Award of the Latin American and Caribbean Competition for the Transfer of Best Practices.

Overall, the Foundation accompanies and supports some 700 volunteers who, in 2008, reached more than 200,000 children every week.

These results have earned the program many awards over the years, including fifth prize in the 2009 ECLAC/Kellogg Experiences in Social Innovation Contest, the 2007 Library Prize of the Argentine Librarians Association, and the 2006 UN Habitat-Dubai International Award for Best Practice.

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2. Our Footprints: An Experience in Intercultural Learning (*Nuestras huellas, una experiencia de construcción del aprendizaje desde la escuela tradicional hacia la interculturalidad*), Argentina

Tilcara, Jujuy

Dr. Eduardo Casanova Primary School

Background

For the villagers of Tilcara in northern Argentina, the early 2000s brought a revival of interest in their Kolla cultural heritage, reaffirming long-ignored ancestral traditions and knowledge. This was heightened when Quebrada de Humahuaca, where Tilcara is located, was designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2003.

The Dr. Eduardo Casanova Primary School, where most students (90%) are of Kolla origin, is located in a community where verbal communication predominates over the written word. In the families of its students, reading and writing is rarely employed, making it more difficult for children to master these skills.

To bridge the gap between the school's educational mission and the reality of local families and community, the school sought to develop "friendly" approaches to promote reading and writing as a tool of modern life among children and families. These strategies focused on respect and appreciation of local knowledge and cultural traditions, where families take a leading role in helping children learn, and the quality of education improves.

School officials and teachers explored different approaches, including workshops in communications, library and computers. These are proposals that can be implemented within the conventional educational system as alternative or complementary models.

But the desire to make a greater impact led to the idea that workshops could do more than merely complement existing educational perspectives. Instead, workshops could become a means of integrating contents between traditional classroom learning and emerging spaces for community participation. Using a broader methodological approach, greater integration could be achieved among subject areas, along with more participation by students and their families, greater school presence in the community, and greater community influence in the school. Using this new approach, the *Our Footprints* program was initiated and has continued to evolve.

Challenge

Improve conventional teaching methods and bolster reading and writing skills by incorporating community issues in a context where the students' Kolla cultural heritage, with its emphasis on verbal communication, predominates.

Process

The project began with workshops for teachers to develop intercultural materials that could relate ancestral wisdom and cosmovision to Western traditions. These workshops make use of library, Internet and communication resources to produce a variety of new teaching materials, including magazines and radio programs.

The workshops provide a space for reflection and decisions where outcomes are discussed with parents and consensus reached on the topics to be addressed. These agreements determine the subjects to be examined and their scope. Tasks are identified and responsibilities

defined. Once institutional coordination has been defined and the necessary resources obtained, subsequent activities foster exchange and dissemination of knowledge with the community.

Students make use of library resources and in-depth interviews with family and community members for their research projects. These interviews are shared with the public through publications (magazine, almanac, calendar), a radio program, interactive presentations, dramatizations, plays, artwork, etc.

The magazine is compiled three times a year by 6th graders and their families, with contributions from other classes.

The radio program is written and produced by students, with scripts developed from interviews and information collected from families and the community. It focuses on cultural traditions and diverse aspects of community life, and reflects upon their significance.

Students in the communication workshops transform this material into texts describing the myths, legends, costumes and opinions of the community. These written materials are used as teaching tools in the classroom. They are also distributed to the community, thus fostering integration between the two and strengthening this new approach to education.

Research into community traditions and knowledge is presented back to the community as leaflets, a cultural almanac and a calendar.

Students produce the calendar in three stages: 1) concept, planning and task assignment; 2) preparation of content and design, with inputs from research projects and contributions from the entire school; and 3) presentation to and evaluation by families and the community. The calendar presents the activities and publications to be conducted over the year.

Almanac production is in the hands of 7th grade communication and computer workshop students. Organized into groups of 10, the students select texts, design layout, revise and correct proofs, and prepare the manuscript for printing (donated by a local firm).

Evaluation is conducted at the end of every cycle systematize activities and gather feedback to identify new opportunities and improve existing ones. In addition, the plays written by students and their research projects are presented to the entire community.

Costs and financing

In 2007, the total cost of the program was $ 70,650 Argentine pesos (approximately US $ 18,000). Some 76% corresponds to salaries for teachers (which would be paid independent of program implementation). The only additional direct program costs are the production of teaching materials and the calendar, at a total of $ 5,000 Argentine pesos (approximately US $ 1,300).

Major funding comes from the Jujuy education department. Additional expenses are covered by in-kind contributions, including time spent by parents and printouts produced at school.

Social innovation

This program is an innovative response to a combination of special circumstances: a community that begins to rediscover its ancestral culture and a school's concern over scholastic performance and its lack of connection to families and the community.

This response began with a collective analysis by participating teachers. This involved them in the development of alternatives and reduced resistance to instituting change. The next step was to encourage family and community participation in student research proposals, and the transformation of these into texts and other publications. The active role played by the students and the channels used to promote writing and reading are innovative: students are not asked to read or write about materials produced by others –instead, they are invited to investigate their

own histories as a source of material for others to read. This form of intercultural education revives interest in ancestral traditions by employing the techniques and tools of modern culture.

Preservation of ancestral culture is complementary, not detrimental, to acquisition of modern knowledge. Students and families learn to appreciate their own histories, wisdom and legends while improving the communication skills that will prepare them for the challenges of the modern society in which they live.

Lessons learned

The methodological approach of coordinating subject areas and issues produces significant improvements in communication skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). The methodology also encourages camaraderie and solidarity among students.

Impact

The *Our Footprints* program addresses the gap between school, families and community by using the methodologies and activities described above to create channels for communication and joint projects. Success is demonstrated by increased family and community participation in school projects and activities. The fact that researched texts, plays and radio programs feature local histories builds community interest in education. Families are motivated to participate in activities that take them, and their culture, into account. At the same time, students feel increasingly in charge of their own learning and more capable of doing and creating.

Improved reading comprehension and greater use of writing in daily activities has helped decrease the number of students repeating the school year from 25% in 2000 to 8% in 2007. This has had a positive impact on keeping students in school. Students' capacity for expression (as measured by vocabulary, grammar, sentence construction, etc.) has increased from 30% in 2000 to 65% in 2007. Only 20% of students report continued difficulties in writing. Today, nearly three-quarters (70%) of families participate in school activities –including grandparents, who can be found in the classroom sharing their stories and experiences.

To date, 20 issues of the quarterly student magazine have been published; five posters on community know-how produced; written material from research presented publicly; and 15 plays written by students presented. The student calendar published since 2007 is completely designed and diagrammed by students using computer skills learned in the classroom.

The program awakens student interest in reading, as demonstrated by the 30% increase in books borrowed from the library. Student research projects increased from three in 2006 to 13 in 2007. The number of plays increased from one in 2006 to four in 2007.

Collectively written works are a space for inclusion where even slower students can make their contributions with confidence. This becomes a tool for addressing learning difficulties.

The program's pedagogical model has been adopted by the school as a permanent educational policy. As project leaders leave, incoming teachers take their place, with the support of more experienced colleagues.

In summary, this program has improved the quality of education by facilitating learning and communication skills required by modern society through rediscovery and renewed appreciation of a community's ancestral customs, wisdom, legends, beliefs and history.

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> ## 3. Family Housing for Students
> ## (*Hospedaje estudiantil en familia*), Bolivia
>
> La Paz and Potosí
> *Fundación Pueblo* and local municipalities

Background

In Bolivia, as elsewhere in the region, schools are located in larger villages and towns, often at a great distance from young students living in rural areas. The difficulties of getting to school result in high rates of desertion and repetition, even among primary students.

The challenge of keeping rural students in schools was first identified by Fundación Pueblo at the beginning of the 1990s in the municipality of Yanacachi, northeast of La Paz. Parents living in remote areas in this municipality told Fundación Pueblo that their children attended school to 5th grade only. To continue through 8th grade, the children would have to study in Yanacachi, a two hour walk each way.

Fundación Pueblo, in conjunction with community members, began looking for alternatives, including boarding halls. This was rejected for the high initial costs (construction, equipping, operation) and the fact that, to reduce the cost per student, dorms would have to draw from such an extensive area that it would be hard for boarding students to return home with any frequency.

At the same time, members of the community recalled a traditional Aymara practice known as utawawa in which rural families sent children to live with families near schools, exchanging child labor for room and board. Fundación Pueblo decided to revive this tradition but eliminate the child labor component as a form of payment.

To test the idea, Fundación Pueblo launched its *Family Housing for Students* program with private donations to pay host families to house students during the school week. Host families provide the student with their own bedroom and balanced meals, ensure their attendance at school and refrain from asking them to work.

Once the trial run was completed, Fundación Pueblo contacted local officials for matching funds to help cover costs. In some cases, the municipal contribution covers 100% of the payments made to host families.

Challenge

Ensure access to school, permanence in school and completion of primary school for rural boys and girls residing far from schools. Improve the quality of instruction in these schools.

Process

Implementation of the *Family Housing for Students* program consists of three stages:

1.   Preparation and planning

The process begins by identifying the towns and schools where the program could be introduced. Workshops with community members and city and school officials are conducted to explain the program, its requirements and the responsibilities of those participating. These activities take place at least six months prior to the start of the school year.

Municipalities interested in the program identify the schools where they want to implement the program and the tentative number of students. Fundación Pueblo visits schools to ensure they meet prerequisites and then prioritizes them based on funds and human resources available and the possibilities of municipal support.

Once municipal funding is secured, Fundación Pueblo signs an agreement with the city and the district educational department to implement the program.

2.   Implementation and installation

Once the first payment is received, Fundación Pueblo installs an office in the local school, hires a manager and a promotional assistant, and acquires the household items it lends host families to equip them to lodge student boarders.

The promotional assistant conducts awareness activities in the town and surrounding communities to identify potential host families and students. For a student to be eligible, parents must request a sponsorship, explaining the reasons why, and identifying potential host families, if they have recommendations.

Student selection is conducted by a commission of Fundación Pueblo, parents and school representatives. Applications for host families and lunchroom cooks and are also reviewed.

Distribution of student boarders among host families is based on conversations with parents and decided collectively by officials, parents, hosts and community members. Criteria include keeping siblings together and placing children in the homes of families who their parents trust. Once the details are arranged, all parties sign a Scholarship Agreement contract.

The local program manager is in charge of finding a place where the sponsored students can go after school to receive help with schoolwork, play games, play music and simply have fun.

Before the school year begins, sponsored students and their parents come to town to meet with the local program manager and get settled into host homes. The children bring their own personal items, bedding and school materials. The parents contribute US $ 4 a year for shared medical supplies and a monthly lunchroom fee of US $ 3 for boys and US $ 2 for girls. The lower fee for girls is intended as an incentive for families to send their daughters to school.

3.   Operations

The local program manager maintains permanent contact with parents of boarding students, monitors their academic progress, and ensures that host families fulfill their obligations and treat young boarders with respect. Payment is calculated on the number of days the student attends school, a way of ensuring that the host family monitors school attendance and checks for unjustified absences. In school, attendance is checked daily.

The program manager also supervises the quality of meals served in the lunchroom and participates in after school activities with the children.

Monthly meetings are held between the program manager and parents to report on the students' academic progress and behavior in the host home. The managers are key to program's success, as they monitor boarding arrangements to ensure student safety and uphold the prohibition on child labor.

In each town, Fundación Pueblo arranges for a facilitator (usually a teacher) to train teachers in more participatory, entertaining and individualized teaching techniques. Training takes place in workshops or in the classroom, with facilitators accompanying teachers in the implementation of new techniques. Some schools have instituted programs such as the House of the Professor initiative, which makes library and audiovisual materials available to teachers for class planning and contribute to better quality instruction.

Overall supervision of the program is conducted by Fundación Pueblo (or, where the program is instituted by municipal government, by local officials) through local or regional coordinating commissions. In both cases, permanent contacts are maintained with municipal authorities and district education department officials to monitor progress.

At the end of the school year, an evaluation workshop is conducted with all participants and recommendations received for the coming year.

Costs and financing

In 2007 in the five municipalities in northern Potosí where the program is being implemented, total costs amounted to approximately US $ 115,000. Some 54% correspond to scholarships (payments made to host families, lunchroom, school materials, etc.) and 25% to coordination, regional activities, workshops and materials.

Promotion, preparation and coordination costs of family housing versus traditional boarding halls are similar. But in terms of investment, the latter is considerably more expensive, with infrastructure costs of US $ 100,000 or more.

Financing for the *Family Housing for Students* program comes from two sources: monetary contributions (from Fundación Pueblo, municipal governments and the GTZ German cooperation agency) and volunteer contributions of community members and parents, with in-kind contributions of office space, materials, etc.

Social innovation

The foremost innovation of the *Family Housing for Students* program is the creation of a model that is based on traditional community practices but eliminates the child labor component. Widely accepted by the community, this model is more economical than conventional boarding halls and it facilitates the maintenance of family ties, as boarding students visit their families on weekends. The program also creates a source of income for host mothers –in many cases, the family's only steady monetary income over much of the year.

The program is easily replicable in other regions of Bolivia and anywhere in Latin America and the Caribbean where similar challenges occur.

Lessons learned

Traditional practices can be adapted to the benefit the entire community. Eliminating child labor as a form of payment for room and board creates job opportunities for women in rural areas where the possibilities for employment are virtually non-existent. Increasing the level of school attendance can also bring improvements to the quality of education in remote areas.

Impact

In 2006, the *Family Housing for Students* program ensured access to a complete primary education to 37 children from Yanacachi and 244 children from northern Potosí. The program awarded 1,331 scholarships between 1997 and 2007. In 2006 in four of its six focus areas, the number of girls attending school increased from 32% in 2004 to 45%.

The program has significantly improved school attendance by sponsored students, and the likelihood of children staying in school has doubled in the program's focus areas. Academic knowledge and performance of sponsored students has improved, as has the general educational level of schools where the program is implemented

The program has created new sources of income, giving steady work to 80 indigenous women employed as host mothers or cooks.

The growing number of girls receiving scholarships demonstrates the program's success in earning the confidence and support of the educational community. School officials and teachers appreciate and support the increase in students and quality of instruction. Participating communities see the program as necessary and contribute to it by building lunchrooms and places for children to meet after school. This success is also demonstrated by the increase in contributions from municipal governments, covering up to 60% of direct costs in certain localities. In the village of Coataca, for example, the program has been operating autonomously since 2007, when the municipality and community took full responsibility for its implementation.

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4. Community Health Actions in the Tapajós National Forest (*Ações de saúde comunitária na Floresta Nacional do Tapajós*), Brazil

Municipalities of Belterra, Aveiro and Santarém, Pará State

Centro de Estudos Avançados de Promoção Social e Ambiental (CEAPS, Center for Advanced Study of Environmental and Social Promotion*), Proyecto Salud y Alegría (PSA, Health and Happiness Project*).

Background

This program serves the population of Brazil's Tapajós National Forest, a region of 600,000 hectares along the Tapajós River in the Amazon Basin. These are some 1,100 families living in rural settlements spread between five and 15 hours by boat from the nearest city. This geographical dispersion complicates, if not impedes, links between the communities, interaction with public agencies and provision of services, with the corresponding impact on health conditions in the region.

The residents of these villages support themselves by hunting, fishing, gathering, subsistence agriculture and limited trade.

The Tapajós River, a major tributary into the Amazon River and the main source of drinking water, is polluted by biological debris from the forest itself. The meager productive activities of the villagers result in nutritionally poor diets. The settlements lack basic sewage treatment, and the area's geographic characteristics make the construction of sewage systems virtually impossible.

This situation, coupled with the difficulty of timely intervention, aggravates the possibility of treating even simple illnesses. Infant mortality from preventable causes (including diarrhea, chronic respiratory infections, malnutrition, anemia, parasites and certain contagious diseases) is high. Additional obstacles to accessing public health services (historically absent from these villages) include limited means of communication and transportation to larger towns and a lack of resources and trained personnel.

Persistent high rates of maternal-infant morbimortality and infectious disease reflect the absence of clean water and sewage treatment, the overcrowded living conditions and the inability to satisfy basic needs.

Challenge

Ensure access to health care for women and children in 143 isolated communities along the Tapajós River in the districts of Santarém, Belterra and Aveiro.

Process

The program is structured along a network of geographic areas organized by the *Health and Happiness Project* (PSA). Responsibility for each sector is determined by its specific needs.

Activities are planned in conjunction with community leaders, municipal representatives and the government officials responsible for the management of the Tapajós National Forest and related public policies.

The *Health and Happiness Project* is responsible for presenting proposals for the integrated development of these communities, using criteria of innovation, sustainability, adaptability to local realities, and existing public policy.

The PSA team (both paid staff and volunteers) includes health professionals, educators and specialists in social communication, community organization, development, employment and income generation. This team works during all phases of the process, employing different methods of assistance to meet emerging needs. The team engages with the public sector and local communities to perfect these methods and encourage a sense of ownership by the community.

The program improves the living conditions of area residents by working in three areas:

1.   Education, prevention and community mobilization

Education, prevention and community mobilization are the heart of the project. Volunteers from the community are trained as community health agents to treat common ailments, give advice to families, monitor community health and give notice of situations requiring intervention.

Community health agents receive a fixed wage, paid by the municipal government, to ensure a permanent presence of trained personnel in the region. The *Health and Happiness Project* assists local governments by training agents, strengthening their capacity for action and provision of services to the local population.

Many of the diseases present in these villages are preventable. Education campaigns address personal and family hygiene and community sanitation, including simple systems for safe drinking water using solar energy and salt; home remedies against dehydration from diarrhea; community action for garbage collection and treatment; and household sewage disposal, among others. Vaccination campaigns are conducted four times a year, in coordination with public health agencies, and the health of children under age 5 is monitored.

Local women are convened to form maternal-infant health groups trained to prevent malnutrition by using native plants with high nutritional value. Schoolteachers are trained to teach students to pay attention to personal hygiene (such as brushing their teeth), to collect and properly dispose of garbage and to control local sources of environmental contamination.

Two main activities are organized to reach the local population and introduce them to the program. The first is the *Great Mocorongo Circus*, which uses the idea of happiness as the motor to build connections between the technical team and the communities. Health issues and solutions are addressed through games, music, dance, poetry and theater. The circus facilitates dialogue to define local problems, identify solutions and support the learning and assimilation of material presented.

The second is the local *Mocoronga Network* of radio, TV and print news programs delivered by young people trained as rural reporters. (Some 40% of the local population is between the ages of 6 and 24). Youths become local replicating agents for the production and dissemination of educational material, promoting communication within and among these communities.

The name of the circus and network has a special significance. *Mocorongo* is a pejorative term used throughout Brazil to refer sarcastically to a person or an object. But it also refers to people from the Tapajós River area. The name was chosen to build a sense of collective identity among these settlements and offset the negative connotations of the term.

Other issues are used to mobilize the community, including income generation, support for local handicrafts, ecotourism development, and prizes for health promotion and sport and educational competitions.

2.   Access to safe water

Due to th*e problem of biological contamination of the Tapajós River, the Health and Happiness Project* gives financial and technical help to implement (with the volunteer labor of beneficiaries) simple systems for supplying communities with safe water. The most common

system employs sodium hypochlorite (kitchen salt and a process using solar energy to produce potable water for home consumption. Community health agents distribute salt to each home.

Local committees take responsibility for creating and managing the sewage treatment infrastructure, including cesspools, water filters and micro-systems for the distribution of clean water. This reduces dependence on the public sector while generating local capacity to solve infrastructure problems. The result is shorter delays for equipment repair and fewer periods without water. Community management and the work of community health agents build self-sufficiency, an important asset for the community and the municipality.

3.   Healthcare

Health personnel refer special cases to public health clinics and hospitals in Belterra or Santarém, depending on the complexity. Community health agents use radios provided by the *Health and Happiness Project* to alert medical personnel. Transportation arrives in the form of the project's Ambu-boat, a barge equipped with medical supplies and personnel who can provide emergency aid during the journey. The Ambu-boat, which also has facilities for basic dentistry, makes periodic rounds to different riverbank communities to attend to less urgent medical needs.

For more complex cases, the PSA operates the Abaré floating clinic, obtained in 2006 with help from the Dutch branch of the international NGO *Terre des Hommes*. This floating clinic attends 73 riverbank communities that are home to some 2,785 families (a total of 15,000 beneficiaries). Its mission is to provide access to basic health programs such as prenatal care, family planning, vaccinations, dental care, minor surgery, ambulatory services and routine exams. Between medical and dental attention and disease prevention, more than 18,000 consultations are conducted on board each year.

While the Ambu-boat and Abaré floating clinic transport the itinerant healthcare professionals, each community has its Local Integrated Health Commission (CLIS) composed of a *rezadeira* (person who prays for healing), a *mateira* (healer who uses medicinal plants), a *puxador* (bonesetter) and a midwife. These traditional practitioners command great respect among local residents and are often the first to be consulted for health problems.

Community associations also provide a space for participation, exchange and replication of activities among the villages and settlements along the river. Active participation by the community ensures the cultural appropriateness of these activities, their acceptance by the community and their incorporation into daily life, ensuring their permanence over time.

Costs and financing

The annual cost per person for healthcare is approximately US $ 70 (R $ 118), which covers fixed expenses and the stipends paid by the municipalities to community health agents. The cost of the sanitation component is US $ 1,400 (R $ 2,500) per unit, with 144 cesspools built at a total cost of US $ 214,000 (R $ 360,000) or US $ 20 (R $ 35) per person. Health agent training, seminars and related costs total US $ 550 (R $ 931) per beneficiary.

While these costs are higher than those of health centers that attend more compact geographic sectors, in this instance, the communities serviced are extremely disperse and virtually without communication.

Social innovation

The *Tapajós National Forest community health program* is an innovative model of healthcare for river settlements located between five and 15 hours by boat from the nearest city. The model builds on community and forest resources and creates opportunities for community interaction with officials responsible for public policies in the Tapajós National Forest. The program encourages

popular participation through its use of a circus that links happiness to health. Simple techniques are employed to achieve basic improvements, like safe water. A river barge is transformed into a mobile health service that attends the entire region and is supported by the activities of local community health agents.

Lessons learned

Primary health care systems can be adapted to local realities by combining technical know-how with popular knowledge, optimizing the use of existing human, material and natural resources. A simple organizational structure that takes the opinions of the local population into account makes it possible to attend the health needs of remote, disperse communities.

Impact

The program enhances public health policies in a region with limited access to health services. Despite the geographic obstacles, the program provides solutions to major health challenges (reduction of morbimortality rates; sewage treatment) and generates participation and social mobilization. The emphasis on popular participation has meant that the program, instead of remaining static, has been consolidated and expanded by community support.

The program has expanded coverage from 25 communities and 5,880 beneficiaries within the Tapajós National Forest in 2005 to more than 150 communities in four municipalities with some 30,000 residents in 2010.

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5. The Four Leaf Clover Program to Reduce Maternal, Perinatal and Infant Mortality (*Trevo de Quatro Folhas – Estratégia de Redução da Morbimortalidade Materna, Perinatal e Infantil*), Brazil

Sobral, Ceará
Sobral Department of Health and Social Action

Background

With a population of 183,000, Sobral is the third largest city in the state of Ceará, located some 240 km from the state capital of Fortaleza. In 2004, the UN Development Program ranked it among regions of medium human development, with a Human Development Index (HDI) between 0.5 and 0.8. Nonetheless, half of its population (49.30%) lives in poverty and suffers from increased levels of inequality (from 0.59 in 1991 to 0.63 in 2000).

The municipal health system of Sobral has been part of the General Development of a Single Health System (SUS) since 1998. The Mayor's office assumes responsibility for health promotion with federal funds from the Health and Social Action Department Secretariat.

Sobral's health network is composed of 118 mobile units, nine laboratories and six hospitals. Seventy units are accredited by SUS, of which 46 are public and 24 are private. Most municipal healthcare units are mobile. Sobral has 31 units with 48 teams distributed over 28 areas. Each team attends between 600 and 1,200 families, depending on location, social profile and epidemiological profile.

The Health and Social Action Department organizes primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services. The model of care is based on the Family Health Program, whose goal is to reorient services from the conventional curative model that focuses solely on individual care to primary healthcare activities that focus on health promotion and analysis of all determinants affecting community health.

Infant mortality has been declining since 1997 due to specific programs and investment initiated by the municipal government. With the expansion of the primary healthcare system, significant reductions in death from diarrhea have been achieved. Implementation of universal access to healthcare and community health agents by under the Family Health Program has enabled early intervention in complex illnesses and overall decreases in mortality. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, infant mortality in Sobral has dropped from 43 per 1000 live births in 1996 to less than 20 in 2005, placing it at levels below the averages for state and the country.

Challenge

To reduce the rate of maternal and infant mortality in the municipality.

Process

Health officials noted that some infant and maternal deaths were not attributable to failures in medical protocol. Interviews with relatives of the deceased helped identify the problems. Officials pinpointed a series of failures in healthcare provision, including: delays in educating pregnant women to initiate prenatal consultations; difficulties in accompanying pregnant women during consultations; failure to conduct required lab tests; pregnant women's failure to rest due to lack of social or family support, coupled with the inability to identify risks; absence of social and

family support for mothers, including those mothers at clinical risk; communication problems among the three levels of healthcare provision (primary, secondary and tertiary); failures of care during birth and post-natal supervision.

Infant deaths were also due to multiple factors, including failures in care for mother and child; failures in identification and follow-up procedures for newborns at risk during home visits; high rates of neonatal infection; insufficient attention to ensure breast-feeding among women exhausted by their domestic chores and/or the need to care for other children.

The study, conducted in conjunction with families who had suffered a maternal, fetal or infant death, concluded that a policy to integrate the three levels of healthcare was missing. In response, the Sobral Health and Social Action Department Secretariat developed the *Four Leaf Clover* strategy to address this need. Implemented in December 2001, the program promotes the conditions women need to exercise their right to maternity, reduce maternal, post-natal and infant morbidity from preventable causes, and guarantee their right to life.

As a family health program, the *Four Leaf Clover* approach helps pregnant, post-natal and breast-feeding women and their children (up to age 2), with a focus on families at social or clinical risk. The program is based on a vision of health promotion and self-care.

Families attended by the *Four Leaf Clover program* reside in rural or urban areas of high social risk and precarious housing in conditions of poverty and social exclusion. Families are identified by municipal officials according to social or clinical risk criteria established by the program and include factors such as illiteracy, lack of family support, unwanted pregnancy, teenage mothers, and pregnant and post-natal women or children with pre-existing illnesses. Four Leaf Clover program beneficiaries are mostly teen mothers with little education, and children under age 2.

The program combines three strategies: 1) care management during the four phases of care (prenatal; birth and post-natal; newborn and neonatal; the first two years of life); 2) surveillance of maternal and infant illness and deaths; 3) support from "social mothers" and "social godmothers and godfathers" and the implementation of an inter-sectoral network for life skills.

The organization of maternal and infant services begins with constant supervision and evaluation of quality indicators, such as analysis and classification of maternal, newborn and infant deaths. Nurses of the *Four Leaf Clover program* visit maternity and neo-natal units of public hospitals and private clinics every day to talk to new mothers and the care they received during pregnancy and/or delivery. They evaluate the information for mother and child recorded in hospital records. They gather information on high-risk pregnancies and hospitalized infants. This information is used to organize home visits and define, with a nurse and community health agent, a specific care plan.

Monthly reports submitted to Family Health Centers consolidate and cross-reference this information with information gathered by the Four Leaf Clover program, the Primary Healthcare Information System (SIAB), Live Births Information System (SINASC), Prenatal Care Information System (SIS-PRENATAL) and Mortality Information System (SIM) for feedback to health centers and the Four Leaf Clover program.

Monitoring health services is the responsibility of the Maternal, Perinatal and Infant Mortality Prevention Committee, which works with diverse institutions represented at the municipality's three healthcare levels. Also involved in this process, which is coordinated by the *Four Leaf Clover* team, are local advisory councils for health, rights of children and adolescents, and women's rights. The process is educational and advisory. The analysis of deaths begins by identifying possible failures in care given to mother and/or the child. Deaths are classified in accordance with criteria of "preventability" established by the Sao Paulo State Data Analysis System.

Social support is assured through coordination by local, state and federal systems and civil society through the figures of the "social mother" and "social godmothers and godfathers," and by donations from individuals and companies.

The social mother is a woman from the community who helps the family at risk, in the hospital or at home. Her work varies in accordance with the needs of the family being assisted. This is paid work that for eight to 12 hours a day.

Social mothers are identified by family health teams and selected by a *Four Leaf Clover* technical team through a group session, personal interviews and a profile analysis. Training emphasizes health promotion, community culture and gender perspective. The training employs constructive, participatory methods that value local knowledge to prepare independent, critically aware individuals who are versed in the ethics of care and can identify signs and symptoms of risk from pregnancy through the post-natal period; benefits and difficulties of breastfeeding and good nutrition. Other topics include the value and defense of human life, ethical behavior toward the families assisted, respect for mothers and children as citizens, and commitment to improving the quality of life for families.

Also important in the *Four Leaf Clover* team are the social godmothers and godfathers. These are individuals or companies who are committed to the strategy and who express their solidarity through a monthly contribution. This is paid into the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to ensure transparency and social control of these contributions. Donations are tax deductible. Donations of food and clothes are also accepted. A team of social promoters helps publicize the program and increase the number of supporters.

Social support provided by *Four Leaf Clover* includes food and clothes, with a basket of food delivered monthly to families at risk or suffering from nutritional deficiency, and an Expectant Mother's Kit, with baby clothes.

Each assistance plan is developed with the family in need which, for its part, agrees to fulfill certain commitments. In this way, the idea of joint responsibility is fostered, in which the health system is not solely responsible for ensuring the health of the individual or the group.

Assistance from *Four Leaf Clover* is guaranteed for the time it takes to resolve the identified risk.

The program is administered through a joint planning process of collectives appointed by the municipal secretariat. Decisions are taken during regular meetings with representatives of the different services and with coordinators and managers from all three levels of health services.

The management of *Four Leaf Clover* meets twice a month to organize the service and ensure the continuing education and integration of the team. Participatory planning is key to motivating personnel and is useful for evaluation and feedback of annual goals.

The program's technical team is made up of a social worker, a psychologist, an obstetrician, two nursing technicians, two pediatric physicians and a record keeper.

Costs and financing

The program has been adopted by municipal health policy, with most of its financing coming from the Municipal Health Fund, as stipulated by the law.

Total cost of activities in 2009 was BRL $ 675,000 (around US $ 338,000). Payments to social mothers, who receive minimum wage account for 8%. The average annual cost per family assisted is BRL $ 480.97 (around US $ 240).

A comparative study carried out in 2004 determined that the average cost of hospitalizing a newborn in the post-natal unit of public facility in Sobral was BRL $ 907.95 (US $ 525).

In contrast, the cost of hospitalizing a child at risk under the Four Leaf Clover program was BRL $ 288 (US $ 166), a reduction of over 50%.

Social innovation

The most innovative aspects of the *Four Leaf Clover program* are:

- The social mothers and their impact on maternal/child health. The fact that social mothers are from the same community strengthens the ties with beneficiaries and serves as a source of employment.

- The model of joint responsibility for health, shared between the health system and beneficiaries. The strategy focuses on families and principles of health promotion. It assists families at risk but seeks to encourage self-care and autonomy.

- A high degree of consolidation based on the commitment and participation of multiple stakeholders from the various branches of municipal health system in the management of the project.

- Creation and strengthening of the Maternal, Perinatal and Infant Mortality Prevention Committee, with a high level of participation by all sectors.

- Exchange of information among the three levels of healthcare, through reference and counter-reference systems.

- Service protocols for the four phases of care (pregnancy; labor and birth; perinatal; first two years of life).

- Shared responsibility for financing between the municipal government and civil society. Donor support and the growing number of social godmothers and godfathers demonstrate the solidarity awakened in the community and the excellent work and commitment of the social promoters.

- The inter-sectoral care plan based in a holistic vision that incorporates clinical and social aspects.

- The database up-dated daily to provide precise information for the execution, assistance and evaluation of the project.

- Production and systemization of documents (i.e. clinical protocols, ID and personal records) reflecting local realities.

- The conceptual change at a collective level that has replaced trivializing the death of mothers and children with a vision that guarantees the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related agreements and conventions.

The *Four Leaf Clover Program* constitutes an effective strategy for reducing of maternal and infant mortality. Its main characteristic is its work with municipal government, civil society, local communities and the private sector, an approach that fosters its consolidation.

Lessons learned

Socio-economic determinant of health must be taken into account in health promotion and the prevention of illness. Joint efforts among diverse social actors ensure support and promote effective results in small and medium-sized communities. The care given to mothers and children at risk saves lives. The program is financially sustainable, with community, business and state support, and average costs below conventional models. The program is supported by the local community, which ensures its survival as a public health initiative.

Impact

From its implementation in 2001 to 2010, the *Four Leaf Clover program* attended 10,419 families and has reduced the infant mortality rate to 18.5 per 1,000 live births in 2009. From 2002 to 2008, the neonatal mortality rate from premature births decreased from 68.7 per 1000 live births to 65.9. Infant mortality after the neonatal period decreased from 17.2 per 1,000 live births to 15.9. The perinatal mortality rate declined from 28.4 per 1,000 live births in 2002 to 16.5 in 2007. Average costs are lower than in conventional healthcare models, and the need for hospitalization is also reduced.

Despite decreases over recent years, maternal mortality continues to be a challenge. The Responsible Motherhood Project has been implemented to address this sensitive indicator. Other initiatives have been introduced to address the greatest number of possible causes for illness and death among families in Sobral. An example is the Battle against Maternal and Child Hunger project, an initiative to reduce the risk of maternal and infant morbimortality from nutritional deficiencies with some 9,698 food baskets of food provided to pregnant and breast-feeding women and children under age 2 between 2002 and 2009.

An interesting impact is the increased self-esteem among beneficiaries, as reported by social mothers.

The distribution of the Expectant Mother's Kit at maternity units not only serves a need; it has been instrumental in motivating the participation of pregnant women in educational activities. More than 670 kits were supplied in 2009.

The commitment of social godmothers and godfathers to the *Four Leaf Clover* strategy is evident. At the beginning of the program, just 13 social godmothers and godfathers were enrolled. Today, they number 147, three companies and 15 social promoters.

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6. Making Mischief (*Pintando o sete*), Brazil

Senhor do Bonfim, Bahía

Grupo Jovem de Assistência Social del Senhor do Bonfim
(Senhor do Bonfim Youth Group for Social Welfare)

Background

The *Senhor do Bonfim* Youth Group for Social Welfare (GASSB) was created in 1995 by business administration students who sought to contribute to community development through volunteer work.

In its organizational phase, and accompanied by students with visual impairments, GASSB decided to concentrate its efforts on helping students with special needs. This idea grew in importance in 2001 when the new mayor of *Senhor do Bonfim* created the city's Special Education Coordinating Office.

According to the Brazilian census of 2000, a total of 14.5% of the population reported permanent difficulties in performing activities related to hearing, sight, mobility and physical or mental health. For children age 9 years and under, it was equivalent to some 490,000 children.

While the city of *Senhor do Bonfim* reports a relatively high proportion of residents with visual impairments, no special services were available to them. With the exception of a single ophthalmology clinic, specialized services were all located in the state capital, some 300 km distant and largely inaccessible to people from low-income sectors. In response to this need, GASSB, in conjunction with the Brazilian Association of Educators for the Visually Impaired (ABEDEV) and Education Ministry's Special Education Secretariat (SEESP), created the Teaching Support Center for the Visually Impaired (CAP).

In 2003, the Teaching Support Center surveyed the scope and magnitude of visual impairment among students in the city's public schools. The survey also examined existing infrastructure, including the services of the *Senhor do Bonfim* Psychopedagogical Institute, which was operating outside the public school system. This situation created an obstacle to fostering the inclusion of people with visual impairments and other disabilities into the community.

The survey also revealed lack of preparation and sensibility among classroom teachers. This meant that children with special educational needs were largely viewed as problematic, especially in rural schools.

These findings led to a plan of action to ensure attention to the special needs of visually impaired students. The plan outlined a three-tiered approach: partnership with schools; awareness training for families; and direct support for visually impaired children to help them develop their psychomotor, cognitive and sensory potential.

Challenge

Guarantee quality education and the opportunity to fully develop personal potential for students with visual impairment in low-income rural areas. Providing stimulus within the public school system is essential to helping these students develop their psychomotor, cognitive and sensory potential.

Process

The *Pintando o Sete* (Making Mischief) program conducts teaching and play activities for visually impaired student throughout the school year within regular classrooms using specialized tutors who travel from school to school.

At the start of each school year, teachers evaluate students for sensory (hearing, sight), motor and cognitive skills, including reading, writing and simple math (addition and subtraction).

This information is sent to the *Senhor do Bonfim* Special Education Coordinating Office to identify students for follow-up testing of sight-related motor functions and visual perception.

Students are examined at the Municipal Health Secretariat to determine the nature of their difficulties and possibilities for treatment. Interviews are conducted with their families to learn more about their personal circumstances and to develop a plan of activities.

Strategies for individual attention are developed from this medical diagnosis and family interview. These consist of special attention in the classroom from visiting tutors, special teaching materials and support in accompany children to medical appointments and treatment.

The tutors work with children on visual stimulation, optic nerve training, sensory development, Braille literacy and other reading aids (special inks, big letters, optical resources), psychotherapy and development of life skills (eating, getting dressed, personal hygiene) to increase self-esteem and autonomy and facilitate social integration. Orientation and mobility are keys to reducing social barriers and achieving access to educational and social opportunities.

Parallel to this, the program works with the school community (administrators, teachers, general services, parents) to build awareness of how to address visual impairment in the schools and the community. Visiting tutors help teachers improve their classroom management and teaching skills. Tutors and teachers help parents support child development at home, providing continuity to the work being done at school and accompanying children to reinforcement sessions when necessary.

The Teaching Support Center also does community outreach through presentations, workshops and information meetings using movies, music and stories about visual impairment. Building awareness is key to reducing the stigma faced by special needs students in schools. Encouraging classroom teachers to take special needs students into account and adapt their teaching methods to include them can been a challenge. And so can helping students without special needs relate to their special needs classmates. It is often necessary to address the parents of non-special needs students to explain the program and assure them that educational standards will be maintained. Once this is achieved, students accept one another as friends and classmates to play with and share their interests.

Student evaluation and program planning is conducted in several stages. Students are observed in class and recreation on a daily basis by their regular teachers, who monitor advances or setbacks. Teachers share their observations twice monthly in meetings with the program's technical team. At six months, the classroom teacher conducts an overall evaluation, meets with parents, and plans activities for the second semester.

Teachers and the CAP resource team hold planning meetings every two weeks; the CAP staff meets weekly, and the GASSB board of directors meets monthly. The process is also evaluated by every six months by beneficiaries and parents, and the necessary adjustments are undertaken.

Costs and financing

Since 2007, the *Senhor do Bonfim* Youth Group for Social Welfare has received financing from a variety of sources, including donation from international agencies and individual and proceeds from the sale of merchandise. These cover annual operating costs totaling some US $ 4,000.

Students and families do not pay for tutoring services. These have an annual cost per student of some US $ 300 and are covered by the municipal education budget through an agreement with the Education Secretariat that includes administrative costs, staff resources and CAP office rent.

Resources also come in the form of contracts and donated time from medical centers and specialists, and the volunteer work of psychologists.

Social innovation

One of the great challenges for education in Latin America and the Caribbean is the integration into regular schools of students with disabilities. This program provides a model of inclusion that does not diminish the quality of regular classroom instruction nor significantly increase its costs. Key to the program's success is its use of visiting tutors who provide support not only to visually impaired students but also to the entire school community. Tutors help regular classroom teachers learn special teaching techniques and overcome any fears about being unable to respond to the challenges of educating students with special needs.

This program does not invest in special rooms or equipment, and its resources go to teaching staff, classroom materials and healthcare. This enhances the possibility of its replication elsewhere. Linkages created between the government, health centers, schools and families create a model that increases community social capital.

Lessons learned

Including students with disabilities in regular classrooms is possible using a model of traveling tutors who work with students, professors and the school community, supported by resources from health and education services.

Impact

The direct impact of this program in the community is the inclusion, retention and increased learning capacities of students with disabilities (in this case, visual impairment). This builds self-esteem and the skills these children need to conduct their daily lives and participate in the regular school system. Inclusion contributes to the climate of respect and solidarity within the school community. The costs per student of this program are greater than those of students with no special educational needs but less than the model for care provided by separate facilities.

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7. Integral Healthcare for Migrant Indigenous Population (*Atención en salud integral a la población indígena altamente móvil*), Costa Rica

Coto Brus

Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (Costa Rica Social Security Administration)

Background

Twenty years ago, members of the Ngöbe-Buglé indigenous community from Panama began migrating to neighboring Costa Rica to work in the coffee harvest. Often, workers would migrate with their entire families.

The Ngöbe-Buglé community is deeply impoverished, with low levels of education and lack of fluency in the Spanish language, especially among women. Its epidemiological profile presents preventable diseases already eradicated in Costa Rica. Maternal and infant mortality rates and malnourishment in the population under the age of 10 are far higher than the rates found in Costa Rica.

Complicating this situation was the fact that the Ngöbe-Buglé, through ignorance or fear over their irregular legal status, generally seek medical help only in emergency situations. As a result, epidemiological indicators of health in Coto Brus registered a significant decline, with the reappearance of diseases and causes of death that had previously been eliminated. The costs of operating healthcare services in the district had skyrocketed to the highest in the country. But greater operating costs were covering emergency care only, and not improvements to the living conditions of the Ngöbe-Buglé.

As part of Costa Rica's healthcare system reform in the early 2000s, the Coto Brus Health Service was asked by the Social Security General Administration to develop a model to improve health conditions among the Ngöbe-Buglé and help safeguard the health of their Costa Rica neighbors.

Its first action was to set up a mobile clinic at the border area. But staff, infrastructure and equipment costs were high and the indigenous population continued to stay away from the clinic, which was only open when most of the workers were on their jobs in the fields. Neither did community members visit regular healthcare centers elsewhere.

This situation led authorities to look for more cost-efficient alternatives. The solution they developed is to enlist the cooperation of farm owners and provide healthcare services at the coffee farms where migrant workers and their families live and work.

It is worth noting that the coffee harvest is central to the Costa Rican economy, and migrant workers are needed to carry out this labor.

Challenge

Provide comprehensive healthcare that is adapted to the living conditions, customs, language and cosmovision of the Ngöbe-Buglé indigenous community as it migrates from Panama to Coto Brus, Costa Rica for the coffee harvest during six months of the year.

The specific objectives are:

- Provide primary healthcare in the coffee farms where this population is employed, during hours adapted to working conditions, and refer patients needing more complex care to appropriate health services.

- Conduct health promotion and disease prevention activities using audio-visual methods adapted to the community and in its native language.

- Coordinate with employers and public services to guarantee the rights of this migrant indigenous community, as established in the international treaties to which Costa Rica is subscribed, during their stay in that country.

- Conduct activities to create awareness among public officials and the general population to avoid discriminatory actions (intentional or not) against the Ngöbe-Buglé and foster their full integration into national life.

Process

Once the decision was made to attend these migrant workers at the farms where they work and live, an inventory was conducted of the farms employing the greatest number of migrant workers. Agreements were reached with farm owners to attend workers on site at programmed intervals.

The first attempts were not entirely successful as health teams of doctors and nurses arrived at the scheduled times but found only a few people in the migrants' barracks.

The teams, led by doctors, then rescheduled the visits in order to attend farm workers after working hours (after 5 p.m.) from Monday through Friday. But overtime pay increased program costs. Moreover, it soon became apparent that doctors were not required to provide the healthcare services most needed in the fields.

A new team was created of primary health technicians supervised by a nurse. Its conducts interviews, inspects basic environmental hygiene, administers blood pressure tests, monitors for signs of contagious disease and provides regular check-ups (with emphasis on nutrition, growth and vaccines) to children, the elderly and pregnant women.

The teams hold information talks about personal hygiene, safe water, domestic violence, human rights and first aid and administer parasite medicine and distribute painkillers and condoms. They identify cases requiring immediate medical attention and hospitalization, and derive other cases to the nearest medical center.

To address the socio-cultural divide, health teams also train Ngöbe-Buglé leaders who have lived some time in Costa Rica as community health educators to identify people with special health needs and promote disease prevention.

An important task of the community health educators is to provide feedback to health teams and identify any weak points that may be keeping the system from achieving healthcare outcomes similar to those of the non-indigenous population. Community health promoters are given the title of Cultural Advisor.

The program works with the United National Population Fund (UNFPA) in Panama, which runs health training programs for the Ngöbe-Buglé community there, to identify people with training who have migrated to Costa Rica, thus avoiding duplicated efforts.

Meetings with coffee farm owners, public officials and the general public are important to create awareness of the situation of Ngöbe-Buglé migrant workers and rectify any actions that might limit the full exercise of their rights.

One example of this collaboration is the work being conducted with farm owners to improve conditions in the camps where the migrant workers reside and sanitation facilities in the fields. A Healthy Farm award, based on farm size, employment generated, living conditions for migrant workers and the willingness of farm owners and administrators to collaborate with the program, gives recognition to the farms that improve living standards for migrant workers and meet labor, social and environmental norms. To date, 12 farms have received the award.

Costs and financing

Financing comes from the regular budget of the Costa Rica Social Security Administration. Since its inception in 2003, the program has received US $ 152,000, of which 67% comes from national funds. The remainder comes from World Bank funds administered y the International Organization for Migration. The national funds are used for providing healthcare in the field, and World Bank funds support the Cultural Advisors and Healthy Farm programs.

In 2009, the operating costs for healthcare provision totaled US $ 28,000.

Social innovation

A fundamental innovation of the program is its interpretation of the concept of caring for the migrant population, which is equally based on respect for human rights and the need to protect community health. Under the previous system, the health problems of Ngöbe-Buglé migrants were viewed primarily from the perspective of the potential threats these could pose to public health in Costa Rica.

A second innovative aspect is the program's capacity to adapt health services to the characteristics of its target population, incorporating new elements and modifying others as needed.

Key to the success of the program is the training of Cultural Advisors to effectively transmit health promotion and disease prevention messages by taking cultural differences into account.

Training public health officials in Ngöbe-Buglé language and culture to improve services for them is also innovative.

The program's strategy of human resource optimization, which reduced costs by replacing physicians with more appropriate healthcare providers in the field, is also noteworthy.

Lessons learned

Flexibility and the ability to adapt to the needs of the population served are essential to program success.

Careful evaluation of the types of professional support required can prevent misallocation of financial and professional resources on tasks that can be best carried out by technical personnel.

Improving community health is not just matter of medicine. Conditions in the home and on the worksite also reduce disease and promote health. Employers also have responsibilities in this task, especially where they provide housing for workers.

Impact

In Coto Brus, thanks to the preventive aspects of this program, hospitalizations have been reduced by 20% and the cost of emergency care has dropped by 37%. Infant mortality has decreased from 17 deaths per 1000 live births to nine.

In just the first year of the program, costs of hospital care decreased by more than US $ 200,000.

The program has served more than 8,000 people (some 30% of migrants from Panama's northwestern zone) since its inception.

Coffee farm have improved conditions in the camps where migrant workers and their families reside during the harvest. Forty Ngöbe-Buglé Cultural Advisors have received training in preventive healthcare and help facilitate acceptance and communication with the community.

Government officials have received instruction in Ngöbe-Buglé language and culture to increase their understanding of this indigenous people

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8. Community Health Program: Health is Everyone's Responsibility (*Programa comunitario de salud – Salud responsabilidad de todos*), Paraguay

Fram, Itapúa
Local Health Council, Fram, Paraguay

Background

At the start of the 1990s, the Health Center in Fram was barely operational. Poor roads made it inaccessible to the rural population most of the year, its staff of just five people (a doctor, a midwife, two nurses and a statistician) could not provide 24-hour care, and it lacked basic supplies and medicines. The funds it did receive had to be transferred first to the Health Ministry and only reached the center, after long delays, in amounts inferior to those required.

Maternal and infant mortality rates were higher than the national average. Most births took place at home without the prior controls necessary to anticipate and treat complications. The population receiving Pap exams was extremely low, as were the numbers of children receiving vaccinations. Local residents did not make use of the Health Center, as they were paying for services that did not meet their expectations.

In 1993, the Health Center administration created a Health Commission composed of representatives of the Mayor's office, the health service and community leaders. Its task was to support the Health Center and find ways to improve the quality of its services and, by extension, the health conditions of local residents, both rural and urban.

The first task of the commission was to conduct a health survey and analysis of morbi-mortality whose results were analyzed with the community. With support from UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization and the Health Ministry, the Commission and the community drew up a Local Health Plan.

To launch the Plan, the Commission decreed that Health Center services were to be free. (In Paraguay, users pay for public medical care unless they have coverage from social security.) It also assumed responsibility for building and equipment maintenance and the purchase of supplies, using resources collected from community activities (bazaars, raffles) and donations. Decentralization enabled expanded coverage over 24 hours. At the same time, the Commission began to develop a model of Community Health Insurance.

In 1996, Law 1039 created the National Health System, charged with decentralizing health care through regional and local health departments and Local Health Councils (CLS) with responsibility for local health centers. The new Council was given supervisory responsibility for the Fram Health Commission.

Challenge

Improve the health of the residents of Fram by developing and implementing a model of health care that ensures quality and equitable access in a community where just 10% of the population received health insurance coverage.

Process

This long process began with the creation of the Health Committee and community participation and the implementation, based on the Health Census, of free health care services. In 2000, the

community assembly fused the existing Committee and the Local Health Council (established by law in 1996). While the policy to provide health care services at no cost is maintained, a new strategy is implemented to raise funds based on solidarity and the voluntary contributions of users the medical and dental services.

With support from the Development Information and Resource Center of Paraguay (CIRD), a Community Health Insurance program is created as part of a new Community Health Program. The insurance is offered within the framework of the Local Health Plan and includes a package of basic solidarity services for the entire population. A supplementary package was also created at a maximum monthly cost of US $ 3.20 per family unit, with no limit on the number of beneficiaries. This insurance model, plus voluntary contributions, brought about the increase in resources required to improve service provision, increasing the confidence of the community in the Health Center.

Following these changes, beneficiaries began to see their voluntary contributions and health insurance payments reflected in improved quality of the care. These resources are supplemented by funds from local, departmental and national agencies, which are used to finance major projects.

The lack of a legal framework for the system of voluntary contributions was cumbersome, as it required collected funds to be deposited with the Finance Ministry. This situation was resolved in 2004 through an agreement with the Health Ministry, and formalized in a 2006 law.

In 2008, the Fram *Community Health Program* extended its services to other districts in Itapúa. Today, residents of neighboring municipalities can enroll in the insurance program and receive health care. The Local Health Council has an agreement with the municipality of La Paz to provide attention to 10 residents per month (especially pregnant women and children under age 5) in the Fram Health Center. In addition, a system to extend coverage to local students has been developed.

Costs and financing

Before decentralization, resources generated through service fees were deposited with the Finance Ministry, then transferred to the national Health Ministry, then transferred to its regional offices, and then sent, as supplies, to the local Health Center. The process took more than six months and the supplies received generally did not correspond to those required for good service.

With the 2004 Decentralization Agreement, the national government began transferring technical and administrative responsibilities and resources to Local Health Councils, which are responsible for carrying out Local Health Plans. In this legal framework, all resources collected through fees, budgets, donations, etc. are deposited directly into a Local Health Council account.

Co-payments by affiliates for services (appointments, medicines, ambulances, in-patient care) represent more than half the resources generated by this decentralized model, with medicines generating 25% of these funds. Through co-payments and insurance payments, beneficiaries contribute 55% of total financing.

In terms of costs, the decentralized model resolves most health care needs of Fram residents and brings services closer to the community. In this respect, there is an overall economizing impact.

At the same time, a broad range of services is provided, including in-patient care, diagnostic services and medical specialties. Some services are purchased at costs lower than those offered by the private sector. Administrative costs are reduced. Together, this local system provides health care at a lower cost than conventional models operating in the region.

Social innovation

This program has instituted a number of innovative practices in health care provision, beginning with the participatory role of the community, close contact with service users and new financing mechanisms. These are all elements that can be replicated throughout the region. One of the initial innovations was the creation, with diverse social sectors and local authorities, of a Health Commission that proposed free provision of health care services.

The key characteristic of this model is that it is participatory and built on consensus, including all members of the community who wish to participate, and that it is generated from the municipal public health department.

The other main innovation is the creation of a Community Health Insurance plan. This consists of a Basic Solidarity Package (for the entire population) and an optional Expanded Package (with a supplementary co-payment for additional benefits) contracted through a monthly payment per family group. The Health Center and affiliated establishments, both public and private, provide services.

Lessons learned

Participation by residents, health professionals, local officials, NGOs and the Health Ministry is the key to this process. These linkages achieved the administrative decentralization and community self-management that increased access to health care and ensured a greater, more agile flow of resources.

This is a clear example of the benefits of decentralization in facilitating a better relation between service provision and community needs.

Impact

Following the implementation of this program, prenatal care increased by 74%; the number of births conducted in medical centers increased by 100%; vaccination coverage was available to all children; infant mortality rates decreased to 50% of the national average; well-baby checkups increased by 90%; and the use of family planning services increased by 35%. The success of this model of decentralized administration has led to its replication in 171 municipalities across Paraguay.

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D. Volunteering and community participation

1. Freshwater Cup Environmental Football League, Belize

Punta Gorda, Toledo district
Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE)

Background

The program is being developed around Punta Gorda and the outlying villages of the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor (MMMC), close to the Guatemalan border.

The area is surrounded by three ecologically protected areas: Port Honduras Marine Reserve, Paynes Creek National Park, and TIDE Private Protected Lands. But designation of these protected areas was not accompanied by educational programs or technical assistance for local residents, who continue to use traditional, unsustainable agricultural and fishing methods that threaten the reserves. The problem is exacerbated by widespread poverty, low levels of education and increased population and tourism in the region.

The Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), which is responsible for protecting the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor in the Punta Gorda district, realized that it could not fulfill its environmental protection goals without enlisting the help of the local population. So it turned to soccer, a popular national pastime, to mobilize the community around the diversity of its natural habitat and the need for protection.

Soccer and the *Freshwater Cup* provide the context in which educational and environmental awareness programs are developed for local people to learn about resource conservation, sustainable fishing and forestry practices, and the regulations in place to protect species threatened by extinction.

Challenge

Foster community participation and development greater knowledge of the rich biodiversity of the Maya Mountain Marine Corridor (MMMC) and raise environmental awareness in the Punta Gorda district, using soccer as a catalyst.

Process

TIDE representatives approached community leaders to share their idea of using soccer to mobilize the community. With their positive response and commitment, the creation of the new Environmental Soccer League was announced in all local villages, along with the prerequisites for participation and the terms of the *Freshwater Cup* competition.

Comprised of players from local villages, each team must design and carry out an environmental project that responds to a need identified by the local community.

At first, only men's teams participated. In 2007 and 2008, children's and women's teams were incorporated. From the start, the soccer games provided the opportunity to working with the entire community in environmental education, awareness and the importance of community and individual participation.

So enthusiastic was the response to create new teams for the soccer league that it outstripped the capacity of TIDE to cover the costs of team uniforms, rental of soccer fields, referee fees, and technical assistance for environmental projects.

1.   The Environmental Projects

Once a team has defined its environmental project with the local community, TIDE officials review and supervise its implementation.

Projects are small and include activities like cleaning illegal garbage dumps, coastlines and rivers; planting trees; designing and installing billboards along highways and beaches warning about the environmental dangers of garbage pollution; theater presentations in primary schools and community meetings on environmental conservation, etc.

Project implementation is conducted by the soccer team members but also enlists families, friends and neighbors, thus ensuring greater participation and awareness. TIDE evaluates the completed projects and selects the top three prizewinners, which received cash awards. All participating teams are then eligible to compete in the *Freshwater Cup*.

The environmental clubs created during the *Freshwater Cup* competition conduct activities throughout the year, fostering community commitment and individual actions for the protection of natural resources.

2.   Sporting Activities

Freshwater Cup games take place between January and June each year. The adult teams play on Sunday afternoons and the youth games are played during the week. Each team registers the names of its players and its environmental project. This inscription fee is later redistributed among the teams that complete the tourney and their environmental projects. At present, there are two leagues; one for adults and one for youths. Each league is divided into two divisions: Maya Mountain North and Maya Mountain South.

During the first year, Freshwater Cup games rotated through the towns of participating teams. But the small size of these towns (many are villages with no more than 1,500 residents), and their lack of resources limited the environmental work that they could carry out. For the second year, the tourney was played in Punta Gorda, the district capital and a central location convenient to all.

The championship involves the community in a healthy, family-based recreational activity. The games become the motor community mobilization around environmental awareness and sustainable practices. The sale of foods and drinks at the soccer games also provide poor families with additional income.

Costs and financing

In 2008, the total cost of the program (including administrative and operational costs) was approximately US $ 27,000. Some 55% of the total corresponds to the environmental project activities, including project visits, follow-up, and prizes. Transportation is the most important cost for participants, as the area's bad roads makes it necessary to travel by riverboat.

TIDE receives financial and technical assistance from international organizations, private companies, the public sector, and individual donors, as well as the in-kind and volunteer donations of local communities in logistics and materials.

Initial funding was provided by Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Systems, a regional organization, with support from the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility. The Coca Cola Foundation has been the second major sources of funds. Next comes TIDE, which has earmarked some US $ 10,000 to the program, in addition to staff costs from program coordination and evaluation. Participation by the Belizean Financing Agency's Program for Conservation of Protected Areas has also been important.

Social innovation

This program uses the local passion for soccer as a catalyst to develop and consolidate environmental awareness at the community level. All participating communities have now acquired the capacity to design, conduct and maintain environmental projects and their residents have successfully introduced simple conservation habits (like recycling and household waste disposal) into their daily lives.

This project has achieved a profound awareness among all community members, regardless of age, sex or ethnic origin, of their collective responsibility to respect, protect and take price in the natural environment local residents now transmit this concern to the many tourists who visit the region, raising their awareness of the environmental riches they have come to enjoy but must also conserve.

At the same time, this sports program increases access to recreational activities that have been inexistent or infrequent in this remote, impoverished region.

The main virtue of this program is its mix of easy implementation, high impact and relatively low operating costs, despite the obstacles to communication and transportation.

The model for this program can easily be replicated in urban and rural zones using any other sport as a catalyst. With just one activity –a soccer championship– this program has succeeded in mobilizing entire communities.

Lessons learned

In the first place, community participation in environmental protection and solutions is both necessary and possible. The project is an excellent model of economic viability in cost-benefit terms. Engaging young people to generate environmental awareness is the best way to teach new practices to adults

Lessons learned that similar projects can benefit from include the following:

- Activities conducted in a protected area, park or nature preserve cannot ignore the needs of local residents. Prior to the creation of protected areas, models for income generation and better living conditions for local people must be developed and put in place.

- Environmental awareness efforts must transcend talk and develop specific examples of how conservation can benefit everyone.

- Building environmental awareness must include all local residents, especially young people and children, and should focus on their collective responsibility for the conservation of their shared surroundings. There is no better way to transmit new sustainable practices for daily life than from children to parents.

- These types of activities always offer a better cost-benefit relationship than traditional models of meetings and conferences.

- Active involvement by a government office or NGO is essential in carrying out programs of this kind, to organize and coordinate sports activities and provide technical assistance for the development of local environmental projects.

Impact

The program has successfully removed most of the garbage and solid waste previously littering beaches, main roads and the coastal zone, kept the area clean and helped conserve the mangroves that line the estuaries and coastal areas of Belize.

Groups of volunteers established in communities are committed to protecting the area and eliminating unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. These volunteers work to beautify the local landscape and show tourists how to keep coastal areas free of garbage. These environmentally friendly activities become daily habits put into practice throughout the year, and not just for the duration of the championship.

Today, residents throughout the Punta Gorda district are proud of the environmental wealth that surrounds them and are prepared to invest in its maintenance and enlist the support of tourists in their efforts. A clear example of this is the community of Emery Grove –winner of the environmental challenge in 2007 and third place in the *Freshwater Cup*– as its team continues to train hard to become league champion while maintaining its community clean-up projects.

Among the environmental achievements of entire community, and especially young people, are the following highlights:

- Garbage collection in six communities, in parks, along rivers, highways and beaches.

- Reforestation in five communities to prevent erosion and beautify the community landscape.

- Educational campaigns on environmental protection in five communities that designed and distributed posters with environmental protection messages, and meetings in schools and community halls to discuss local environmental issues.

- The launch of two ecotourism programs in two communities with construction of footpaths and the design and placement of posters on environmentally friendly activities.

- Creation of the Environment Club, led by mothers in the community of Jacintoville.

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2. Program to Eradicate Child Labor and Protect Girls and Young Women Working in Domestic Service in Belo Horizonte (*Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil e Proteção dos Adolescentes no Trabalho Doméstico em Belo Horizonte*), Brazil

Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais

Circo do todo mundo (Everybody's Circus) *Centro Recreação de Atendimento e Defesa da Criança e Adolescente*

Background

According to UNICEF, some 150 million boys and girls (ages 5 to 14) work around the world, and Brazil is no exception. The Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute indicates that, in 2006, 5.1 million young people between the ages of 5 and 17 held some sort of employment.

The Brazilian NGO *Everybody's Circus* (*Circo do Todo Mondo*) creates social awareness of child labor.

Awareness of child labor is created through research, debates and campaigns to mobilize public sector institutions, private enterprise and other entities, the communications media and schools.

Everybody's Circus uses an intersectoral approach to foster integrated action between civil society, government, private sector and international institutions. With long-standing support from the International Labor Organization (ILO), it convened the network of 33 institutions (known as the Inter-Institutional Allies Group) responsible for the Campaign to Eradicate Child Domestic Labor, first launched in 2003.

A key goal is to ensure that children and youths who work (despite all the efforts taken in their defense) have access to healthcare, psychological support, legal and social orientation, literacy programs, education and recreation. *Everybody's Circus* also supports the creation of micro-enterprises, loans to families and access to government programs (i.e. Family Job Bank) as income-generating alternatives to eliminate the need to put children to work.

The family structures of many working children explain the need for these multiple approaches. As determined by interviews conducted by *Everybody's Circus*, just 2.15% of working children are orphaned. The remainder have at least one living parent. Most of these parents (69%) also entered domestic service before the age 18. Nearly 10% of mothers and 6.5% of fathers of these working children are illiterate. While they allow their children to work in domestic service, 75% would prefer to see their children leave this employment. All the child and teen workers interviewed say they work to help their families, pay for school and earn their own resources. By entering domestic service however, they narrow their chances of staying in school.

The study indicates that 100% of youths in domestic service do housework or care for young children every day of the week. Nearly 70% had no notion of their rights and fewer than 10% were familiar with the institutions that offer legal and social protection to domestic workers.

Challenge

Make visible and end domestic labor by children and teens in Belo Horizonte. The program's goal is to guarantee rights and access to education to at least 80% of the domestic workers under the age of 18 identified in Belo Horizonte.

Process

This program is divided into two sections. For children under age 16 (the legal working age in Brazil), resources are sought to help the family replace the income generated by child labor, remove the child from domestic service and guarantee schooling. This is achieved by facilitating the families' access to conditional cash transfer programs from the government and ensuring school enrollment.

In the case of youths over age 16, the objective is to normalize their labor situations and ensure that the employer comply with obligations established by law. Working teens are instructed in their rights and receive legal aid when their rights are violated.

The program has four facets:

- *Prevention*: Conduct information campaigns, cultural and income and employment-generating activities for youths under age 16 and their families.

- *Eradication*: Identify situations of risk and cases where the law is being violated; take legal and protective measures.

- *Promotion*: Present new legislative proposals to strengthen the rights of child domestic workers.

- *Direct attention*: Deliver educational, recreational and training activities, and legal and social orientation.

The first phase focuses on locating the girls, boys and young teens who are working for wages. These children are invited to attend the *Everybody's Circus Cultural Center*, where they participate in wide range of workshops in circus arts and other forms of artistic expression. Children can also use the library and computer resources in the center's Paulo Freire Hall of Knowledge.

Most children overcome any initial mistrust of participation and engage immediately in these activities. These serve as socializing channels that encourage school attendance by children who have been working and helps minimize friction with their families, reducing the possibility that these children will leave home. Children are also encouraged to talk with other children about the realities of their lives as workers, in a space that acts as a bridge to greater social inclusion.

Work with the families of laboring children is essential to this program to create a new awareness of their role as caregivers and providers, reinforce the importance of schooling to their child's development, and inform them children's rights. At first, the program faced considerable resistance from parents, many of whom refused to acknowledge that their children were working, or viewed work as a form of apprenticeship or defended the importance of receiving their children's wages.

Access to different subsidies helped change those attitudes, as did aiding families to link up to guidance and socio-family support services, literacy training, loan and income generation programs, plus workshops on legislation, rights, gender, health, ethnicity, education and more. Most parents participate in these activities, which also encourage their direct participation in the program.

Media participation in awareness-building activities is also important to counteract the deep-seated acceptance in Brazil of child and teen domestic labor.

Everybody's Circus has made a significant impact on public policies and legislation. It created the Parliamentary Front for the Defense of the Rights of Children and Adolescents and, in 2004, held public hearings at the Legislative Assembly.

The program has obtained changes in the design of the Child Labor Eradication Program, whose original version did not include child domestic services as one of the most egregious forms of child labor.

Costs and financing

The annual cost of the program is approximately US $ 200,000. Funding comes from COPSE (Development Cooperation for Emerging Countries), Petróleo Brasilero SA, VISA, UNESCO and Brazil's Ministry of Culture.

Support from the Learning Bank (Bolsa Aprendizagem) program, with funds of nearly US $ 145,000 annually, has been essential to helping families. Also important are donations of food, office space and utility payments from the Belo Horizonte community.

The program attends some 220 child domestic workers every year. Its monthly cost of US $ 18 per child is relatively low compared to similar programs.

Social innovation

Networking with public and private sector institutions to generate income for families and help them abandon child labor is one of the program's most innovative aspects. So are its efforts to safeguard the right to education in order to break the vicious circle of poverty. Also noteworthy is the program's work with employers of over-16 year olds to formalize labor arrangements, keep the young workers from dropping out of school, and ensure respect for their workers' rights.

This integrated approach links families, schools, government, society and young workers in the effort to address child and teen labor, ensuring spaces for recreation and building self-esteem through *Everybody's Circus Cultural Center* activities.

Lessons learned

Solutions to child labor must go to the root of the problem – poverty. Creating a space to receive, support, monitor and denounce violations of young workers' human rights helps improve their situation. The methodology of direct attention builds agency, self-esteem, citizenship and the defense of rights. The program demonstrates that, for workers over age 16, it is possible to study and work. What's important is to find the balance that allows these teen laborers to perform these duties in ways that do not violate their basic rights.

Impact

From its start in 2006, *Everybody's Circus* has attended to 570 children and youths from 300 families. In that period, 100% of those under age 16 have left domestic service and entered school.

The institutional network against child labor has been strengthened by agreements with 39 public agencies, NGOs and businesses. This Inter-Institutional Allies Group meets monthly and supports program implementation in diverse ways, such as sponsoring scholarships or publicizing activities.

Other achievements include the presentation of reforms to legislation against child domestic labor before the Legislative Assembly; prevention campaigns; identifying violations of the law and implementing legal protections; increasing school attendance by working teens.

The *Everybody's Circus* program no longer needs to go out looking for child domestic workers: the NGO and its center have become a key reference on the issue in Belo Horizonte, drawing youths on the advice of their peers, schools and children's rights organizations.

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3. Maringá Social Observatory (*Observatório social de Maringá*), Brazil

Maringá, Paraná State

Ethical Responsibility Society (*Sociedade Eticamente Responsável, SER*)

Background

In 2000, the residents of *Maringá* learned of an incident of fraud involving the misuse of public funds by the municipality. More than US $ 57 million (R $ 100,000) were misappropriated by the Mayor and one of his secretaries for parties and personal purchases. The authorities went to jail but the funds were never returned to the city.

This scandal mobilized civil society to organize itself to fight against corruption.

Joining the cause were the local commerce and industry associations, the Brazilian Bar Association, Rotary Club, Lions Club, representatives of the National Revenue Service *(Receita Federal),* municipal and state Education Departments, the Paraná State Development Council, several universities, the Maringá Cooperative and other institutions.

They began raising awareness about the issue but soon realized that, while public awareness was indispensable, they needed to conduct preventive audits of public spending by the local administration. This gave rise to the creation of the *Sociedade Eticamente Responsável* (SER, Ethical Responsibility Society).

Within SER, the Maringá Social Observatory was created to rigorously monitor all bids and expenditures conducted by the Mayor's office and the city's legislative council. This project develops a model to implement oversight of public funds and tax payments through an efficient mechanism of social control.

Challenge

Create a tool for social control that prevents misappropriation of funds and misuse of public resources by guaranteeing transparency.

The Maringá Social Observatory seeks to create means of exercising social control over the use of public resources, raising public awareness of the social and economic importance of taxes and of the composition of income, consumer and property taxes.

Process

The project employs a small team of officials who coordinate volunteers (mostly retired professional and university students) to accompany all municipal bidding processes from formulation to product delivery, and to analyze the operating costs of the legislative council. It also conducts public awareness activities, including programs in schools and universities.

The program operates as follows:

1.   Accompanying bidding processes

The *Observatory* monitors the entire bidding process, revising calls for tender, the publication, receipt and analysis of proposals, and delivery of the services or goods contracted. The first task is to review and register the data bases of all open bidding processes, to track the companies that register and the contents of invitations to tender.

The next step is to study criteria and budgets. Special attention is placed on detecting whether bids are being pre-directed to a particular firm, that the prices of goods and services correspond to market values, that quality and technical specifications are established, and that delivery is acceptable. Firms are encouraged to participate in order to promote healthy competition.

The efficiency of the process is enhanced by use of special software that allows for monitoring in real time.

2. Monitor Municipal Legislative Branch activities

This activity adds transparency to the work of the municipal legislative council and its expenditures. Studies are prepared and reports are presented to cover:

- Frequency of Council sessions and frequency of committee meetings;
- Projects approved during each session;
- Public impact of these projects;
- Campaign promises of each council member in relations to laws and reforms presented and voted upon by those council members;
- Travel by council members, verifying objective and costs;
- Communications costs, especially mobile phones;
- Staff hiring, with and without public application process;
- Answers to requests for information from the *Observatory*.

3. Optimize Public Administration

This area conducts activities to:

- Propose new municipal legislation (i.e. the Inventory Control law adopted in Maringá);
- Support municipal committees, with input and training, in the preparation of notifications and Terms of Reference for bid;
- Promote (in conjunction with the Brazilian Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprise, SEBRAE and trade associations) participation by micro and small enterprise in bids. The Observatory informs business of tenders for bidding. If companies have doubts about the process or system, Observatory helps them organize information meetings with SEBRAE;
- Organize training and motivational events with businesses to encourage participation in the bidding process.

4. Conferences

To build awareness of fiscal responsibility, the *Observatory* has created a university course on Fiscal Education for: cities interested in launching local observatories; primary and high school students and teachers; public officials; members of community service clubs: the general public. The course covers actions and impacts, awareness and mobilization for citizen fiscal oversight and the role of volunteers in monitoring work.

5. Applied Research Competition

The competition is open to university and post-graduate students of areas related to citizen audits. Submissions, in the form of journal articles, are reviewed by an Expert Committee made

up of *Social Observatory* volunteers. Five winning monographs are posted on the *Observatory* website and presented as abstracts in seminars or specialized publications.

6.   Essay Competition

The essay competition on citizen audits is aimed at encouraging public and private school students in the Maringá region to reflect upon, and write about, the social and economic importance of taxes and the need for transparency in public spending. More than 66,000 essays have been received over the past four years.

Costs and financing

In 2009, the total cost of the program was R $ 338,000 (some US $ 144,000), a minimal amount compared to the savings it achieved in public resources. Operational costs account for 63%; volunteer work and university internships are valued at 20% of the total; and paid staff (comprised of the 11 professionals who coordinate the program and negotiate with public officials) account for 57%.

The program's total costs between 2004 and 2008 were approximately R $ 900,000. Over the same period, the program was responsible for R $ 12,000,000 in savings through its promotion of more efficient use of resources. These figures are testimony to the value of this investment.

All funds for the *Observatory* come from civil society organizations, including the local chambers of commerce, cooperatives and universities.

Social innovation

The principle innovation of this program is the active participation of the private sector and organized civil society in the oversight of public funds. This occurs in the context of greater awareness of the importance of paying taxes as a civic responsibility. The main impetus of the program is its close work with people of diverse sectors and institutions outside of partisan political interests, including officials from diverse levels of government, professors, students, federal judges, auditors and others.

The conduct of public affairs is replete with legal suits and studies of corruption and misappropriation of public funds. But once this occurs, even in cases where those responsible have been tried and found guilty, restitution rarely takes place and the State never recovers these funds.

Another innovation of this model is that it works to prevent corruption by building awareness of the issue, training citizens to monitor public spending and fostering public sector collaboration in the monitoring process.

The role of volunteers in all stages of this project is also noteworthy. These are members of the community, including many university students and retired professionals, who work actively to eliminate corruption and prevent the loss and misuse of tax revenues.

Lessons learned

Organized society is capable of creating control mechanisms to prevent corruption and the misappropriation of public funds through a process of monitoring and follow-up of public tenders.

Impact

The *Maringá Social Observatory* was responsible for saving the public treasury a total of US $ 7,300,000 (R $ 12,000,000) during the 2004-2008 period. This was achieved through

restitution of funds, cancellation of fraudulent acquisitions, reductions in the prices of bid offers and redefinition of quantities, among other actions.

In addition to accompanying public expenditure processes (bidding, human resources, oversight of contracted services), the program conducts fiscal education (importance of taxes and social control of public spending) through conferences, seminars, research and essay competitions, documentary films and theater. In 2008, some 18,000 students, professors and families participated in its Citizen Audit Essay Competition. While it is difficult to quantify the impact of fiscal education, students who acquire greater awareness of civic responsibility in these areas will demonstrate more ethical conduct.

The competitions and other *Observatory* activities have received broad coverage in the press, radio and TV (*Globo, Folha de Londrina, CBN Universidad FM, Diario*). This has generated great interest in other cities and, to date, 10 cities in Paraná have launched versions of the Social Observatory based on the Maringá experience. Similar processes have been initiated in the municipalities of Santa Catarina, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro. The Observatory model is currently being replicated in more than 50 cities in Brazil.

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4. From Shantytown to Neighborhood: Implementation of participatory working groups by shantytown residents and A Roof for Chile volunteers in the Metropolitan Region
(Del campamento al barrio: Implementación de mesas participativas de trabajo en los campamentos de la Región Metropolitana por parte de los pobladores y voluntarios de Un Techo para Chile), Chile

Santiago Metropolitan region
Un Techo para Chile (UTPCH, A Roof for Chile)

Background

In 2007, the number of precarious settlements (shantytowns) in Chile totaled 533 and housed 28,000 families, according to the National Settlements Survey of the Roof for Chile Social Research Center.

Housing in these settlements is characterized by the absence of one or more basic services and irregular land ownership. Shantytown residents live in a situation of exclusion that affects every aspect of their lives.

The *Roof for Chile* program began in 1997 as a mission by university student volunteers led by Jesuit priest Felipe Berríos to build emergency housing. Known as *mediaguas*, these are one-room wooden structures measuring 6x3 meters and roofed with a sheet of zinc.

This group set for itself the challenge of combating the problems of poverty by using a decent roof to live under as a starting point to help destitute families overcome exclusion in all its forms.

Central to the *Roof for Chile* program are the university students who volunteer their time, become familiar with the reality of poverty and build connections between their own networks and shantytown families. They receive support from a team of young professionals, many of whom are also recent university graduates. Financing is provided largely by private enterprise. Program implementation is modeled along public policy guidelines, with specific objectives for constructing housing units and reducing poverty.

Challenge

Eradicate precarious settlements and obtain permanent housing while generating social capital and sustainable, cohesive communities.

Process

The *Roof for Chile* methodology fosters relations between volunteers and the communities they assist, encouraging the social insertion of shantytown residents through a model of participation and action.

This framework promotes social adaptation and the creation of communities that are sustainable over time. The process is guided by a tool known as the Road Map, which outlines a set of actions to break the permanent circle of exclusion. This tool for systematization outlines the process from shantytown to neighborhood, including integration of volunteers into the community, team building, creation of participatory working groups and housing committees, and the construction and consolidation of new neighborhoods.

The stages of work conducted in the shantytowns are as follows:

1.   Emergency housing and incorporation into the community

This stage focuses on building emergency housing, beginning with a diagnostic review and work plan conducted by program volunteers and the community. Trust and camaraderie between beneficiaries and volunteers encourage the former to become active in working groups composed of volunteers, elected community representatives and Roof for Chile staff. The groups make decisions based on the input of community representatives.

As part of this stage, a Training Center and Library are built in the community. These serve as meeting places for the Education and Work programs.

2.   Social adaptation

The UTPCH program defines social adaptation as "the set of programmed activities through which the community is capable of acquiring tools and developing skills that will allow it to improve its quality of life." Participatory working groups are the central mechanism for planning and community action where decisions related to the process of acquiring permanent housing are taken.

Social adaptation includes the following elements:

Education: Tutoring children to improve academic performance; remedial work with adults who did not have the opportunity to finish school; literacy training for adults who have not learned to read or write.

Contacts are established with local educators to support activities in the shantytown. Popular education workshops are conducted and community members share their vocational experiences.

Educational activities are reinforced by a network of libraries especially adapted to encourage reading and culture. The libraries are run by local residents who receive training in organizing cultural activities with the community.

Health: Health is addressed by community monitors trained to inform their neighbors of the benefits and rights they are entitled to in the public health system. Monitors also provide information on health issues such as dental hygiene and childcare.

Support for local production: Steps are taken to encourage productive activities among shantytown residents, providing training, consultancies and small collective loans. A savings plan is instituted to encourage families to meet the savings goals necessary to relocate out of the shantytown.

Legal aid: The legal program aims to improve access to justice by monitoring cases in the court system and conducting workshops on the legal aspects of acquiring permanent housing.

3.   Permanent housing

In this stage, the Roof for Chile program creates a Social Housing Administration Unit (*Entidad de Gestión Inmobiliaria Social, EGIS)* and a Technical Assistance Service Provider Unit (*Prestadora de Servicio de Asistencia Técnica, PSAT*). Both mechanisms focus on developing permanent housing projects for shantytown families, from locating land to final delivery of housing units.

During the previous stages, the housing situation is analyzed and the process for application to the Housing Ministry's Solidarity Housing Fund is prepared. Additional workshops are conducted to encourage the active participation of all families.

Once housing applications have been submitted, the *Roof for Chile* team works to assure distribution of the government housing subsidy payment and the viability of the community's proposed housing project. The education, health and job programs noted above continue, with special emphasis on the savings plan that will eventually permit payment of basic household utilities. Construction commences according to the plan developed with the community.

Once families are installed in their new neighborhoods, they are encouraged to strengthen formal contacts with public service and social networks now made more accessible to them in their new context.

Costs

In 2007, the program had a budget of US $ 7,000,000 to carry out the activities outlined in the Road Map. Funds come from donations by private enterprise (72.3%), individuals (25.7%), and donations from Roof for Chile staff (1.9%).

Social innovation

The most innovative element of this project is its incorporation of university student volunteers in shantytown work, a feature that has mobilized over 15,000 highly motivated university students to help eradicate precarious housing in Chile.

A second innovative feature is the active participation of shantytown residents in the construction of their new lives through the social adaptation process toward the acquisition of permanent housing. This creates social capital through the democratic election of community representatives and development of leadership in the face of obstacles. It also generates the networks of contacts that can help the community to achieve its goals.

The final stage of construction and consolidation of the new neighborhood involves municipal officials, the central government (through the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism) and the private enterprises that establish accords and make donations, in addition to the volunteers, community leaders and neighborhood residents.

It is important to mention the prestige that the Roof for Chile program has earned within Chile, as demonstrated by the fact that the government assigned it a major role in building emergency housing for those made homeless by the devastating February 2010 earthquake.

Lessons learned

The enormous potential of organized volunteers –of thousands of university students with a common goal– can produce results that make a positive impact on a country's social indicators. Volunteers can motivate beneficiaries to start the processes that will one day allow them, as protagonists, to pull out of extreme poverty.

Work begins with the construction of decent shelters for families in precarious conditions. The second stage builds up the community's social fabric through the creation of participatory working groups of elected community representatives, volunteers and a Roof for Chile professional. The final stage consists of building permanent housing, from finding land, organizing subsidy applications and representing the community before the institutions involved.

Impact

To date, the *Roof for Chile* program has built more than 50,000 *mediaguas* throughout Chile, including emergency housing after the February 2010 earthquake. Some 7,500 shantytown residents have received basic vocational training; 50 community libraries are in operation;

20,000 volunteers join construction teams each year and 2,500 work year-round; over 200 professional staff have been hired; and 1,500 loans have been extended to micro-enterprises. Some 250 working groups are in operation; 120 housing projects are underway; 600 units have been completed and 2,000 are under construction. A total of 3,000 families have applied to the Solidarity Housing Fund.

The program is being replicated in 18 Latin American countries as "*A Roof for My Country*," under the permanent supervision and support of the Chilean program.

The program is also being evaluated by the World Bank to determine the impact of emergency housing on the quality of life in shantytown residents in El Salvador, Uruguay and Mexico.

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5. From Garbage to Recovery, Hope for Integration (*De la basura a la rehabilitación, una esperanza integradora*), Chile

Elqui, Coquimbo

Unión de Padres y Amigos Solidarios
(UPASOL, Union of Parents and Friends in Solidarity)

Background

The Union of Parents and Friends in Solidarity (UPASOL) was created in 1998 to provide for the needs of people with disabilities from low-income sectors by guaranteeing rehabilitation services through an economically sustainable model.

The rural town of Vicuña (Elqui province, Coquimbo) where this program was launched has high unemployment and limited access to health infrastructure, especially for the treatment of disabilities.

Parents and friends of people with disabilities joined forces to seek solutions and promote a better quality of life for children and teens who need special care. With support from city authorities and local businesses, they opened a small office to assist a limited number of people with services and transportation.

From the beginning, UPASOL's founders sought collective solutions to the local absence of specialized medical care and equipment, a problem compounded by the difficulty of attending regional hospitals in La Serena or Coquimbo.

Surveys conducted by UPASOL indicated that while 12% of the rural area's 108,220 residents suffer from some type of disability, only 2% have access to therapy.

UPASOL compiled information from the clinical care system on cases in Chile and around the region. As a result, several local children were able to receive surgery and a prosthetic device. The group also began providing transportation for these patients, using volunteer drivers in their own vehicles.

Meanwhile, the group looked for alternatives to avoid transportation to distant rehabilitation centers and establish a treatment facility in Vicuña that could provide therapy and dispense medication.

UPASOL applied to the National Disabilities Fund (FONADIS) and was awarded funds to rent an office, purchase physical therapy equipment and hire health professionals, supported by several volunteers. Patients who previously had to travel regularly to centers far from Vicuña could now receive quality care locally. This was the beginning of the UPASOL *Rehabilitation Center*.

With support from Vicuña municipal authorities, the district hospital and other local institutions, the Rehabilitation Center now provides local low-income children and youth with the possibility of therapeutic care.

As demand for these services has increased, and with it, the need to acquire modern equipment, UPASOL has continued to apply for funding from national and international sources. But its goal has always been to generate the income it needs to finance its working capital. Physical rehabilitation is a long process that must be continuous if progress is to be achieved. To guarantee the sustainability of its services over time, UPASOL came up with the idea of creating a recycling center as a permanent source of income.

In 2000, the founders of UPASOL started asking the relatives of *Rehabilitation Center* beneficiaries to separate, sort and recycle their household garbage in exchange for physical therapy services.

Since then, the recycling project has been so successful that it has spread from the households of direct beneficiaries to a wide network of individuals, businesses and other cooperating institutions that recycle waste through UPASOL. For its part, UPASOL has embraced this expansion by acquiring special equipment to process household waste –paper balers, glass crushers, presses, compacters and a truck– in its ample and efficient collection and processing center.

Challenge

Ensure access to quality services and social inclusion for low-income, rural children and teens with disabilities in the Elqui district through a *Rehabilitation Center* whose sustainability is achieved by its enterprising recycling activity.

Process

This project features a chain of production based on the collection and sale of recycled materials generated by the community to finance the UPASOL *Rehabilitation Center*. The idea is to obtain the greatest amount of recycled material in order to guarantee access to quality treatment and services. The emphasis on marketing and operations seeks to involve the greatest possible number of providers in the process.

The initial chain of production was based on inputs of recyclable material from the families of the beneficiaries as a form of payment for professional treatment. This simple exchange has gradually expanded into a five-stage professional operation where recycled products are the form of payment for services.

The first phase concerns residue collection. In the beginning, only the relatives of beneficiaries of the Rehabilitation Center were involved. Over time, social organizations, public offices, private enterprise, schools, businesses and community members familiar with the Center and its means of support have joined the collection process.

To encourage this support, UPASOL offers workshops and training sessions on recycling and environmental protection. It works with the community to develop recycling plans for different waste providers. Households collect glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, copper and old appliances; offices contribute paper waste; and social organizations collect glass and plastic bottles.

In the second phase, the collected waste is transported by providers or picked up and taken to UPASOL collection centers in Vicuña or La Serena. Here, material is sorted according to the needs of the recycling companies (glass, plastic, etc.)

These products are converted into processed prime material, contributing added value prior to its sale and thus obtaining higher prices. Processing this material requires the use of special machinery, such as glass crushers, baling machines for plastic and paper and briquetting presses for plastic. This processing allows UPASOL to market recycled materials cleanly and efficiently, reducing the volume of waste and increasing storage capacity at the collection center and during transportation.

Classification and processing of collected material is performed by people who have reduced possibilities for employment, such as schizophrenic youth in treatment at the La Serena Hospital Division of Psychiatry who need occupational activities to achieve social integration, or parents and caretakers who have lost jobs or whose caretaking role does not allow them to hold steady employment.

The third phase involves commercialization of recycled material. Over the years, UPASOL has developed an efficient sales model for its recycled material based on diverse business plans. UPASOL has found the niches that produce the greatest profits in terms of volume and operational costs. It currently sells recycled materials in Santiago (the Chilean capital, located 450 km to the south) where it receives significantly higher prices than in the provinces. It has also sold recycled material for export.

The fourth phase involves investing profits from recycling operations. UPASOL covers the fixed and variable costs of its recycling business, such as labor, basic inputs and occasional access to special materials or machinery to improve the production process.

Once production costs are covered, the fifth phase is to convert UPASOL's profits into the financial instrument that achieves its institutional goal –quality physical and psychological therapy services for low-income children and teens with disabilities.

Costs and financing

UPASOL financing comes from three sources. The first is composed of subsidies, public funds and awards, like those received from UNICEF and ECLAC. The second comes from recycled materials. A third (and lesser) amount corresponds to donations from the community and project beneficiaries. Income from recycling covers 100% of operational costs, including taxes. Donations are used for modernizing and improving therapeutic service and training.

Average costs per beneficiary vary according to many factors, including the type of disability, professional care required and frequency, distance from the Rehabilitation Center and the support networks of beneficiaries.

The *Rehabilitation Center* is located on land donated by the Ministry of National Assets. Associated expenses (utilities, housekeeping and security staff) cost CHP $ 200,000 (approximately US $ 380) per month. Payments to therapists, whose services are the heart of the program, total some CHP $ 600,000 (approximately US $ 1,300) per month. Transportation and supplementary services cost CHP $ 88,000 (approximately US $ 170) monthly. In 2008, total costs, including taxes, amounted to CHP $ 16,500,000 (approximately US $ 32,000). With 180 persons aided that year, cost per beneficiary was CHP $ 92,000 (approximately US $ 176).

Social innovation

Recycled materials have become the main form of payment for *Rehabilitation Center* services. This model mobilizes users of the center, their families, friends and community members to support recycling activities and foster a sense of loyalty that encourages sustained support. Low-income families facing economic limitations gain access to broad social networks that work for their benefit.

The model also contributes to environmental protection in the region by promoting recycling as a socially responsible activity with philanthropic ends among the high-income social sectors (who are the main producers of recyclable waste). Recycling income allows the project to operate a Rehabilitation Center with the equipment and professionals whose services are essential to its therapeutic goals.

In addition, families of children with disabilities receive help when applying for pensions, subsidies and training opportunities available to them, including opportunities to generate income.

Another innovative feature is the way the project addresses two different areas of vulnerability: social prejudice against people with disabilities, and environmental degradation. Its application of economic criteria translates into sustainable financing for two dissimilar services

–rehabilitation and recycling– in mutually sustainable ways. Recycling pays for the therapeutic services offered by the *Rehabilitation Center*, which raises awareness about disability. The high public profile of this Social innovation contributes to greater environmental awareness and recycling practices. People undergoing rehabilitation also find job opportunities in the Recycling Center which allow them to develop their skills and, at the same time, generate income.

The project cultivates long-term relations of support with community members. UPASOL estimates that if the program were to operate using conventional payments, beneficiaries would be able to access one operation or purchase only, and contact between the program and its clients would end there. But through recycling, a more durable relationship is established over a longer time. The quantity of funds generated by a typical client likely exceeds the sums charged for a therapy session or treatment. The project and overall system are strengthened financially by this mode of compensation in an innovative way that consolidates and guarantees provision of services.

The community's important role in this project breaks with the traditional approach to community organization by adopting an entrepreneurial vision of the need to generate economic resources without diminishing its social mission, thereby gaining independence from government and other types of funding. It incorporates a variety of social actors, not only families, and its collection efforts extend beyond the households of its beneficiaries to local businesses, offices, hotels and other providers of sizeable quantities of cardboard and plastic.

Lessons learned

Mobilizing families to make contributions within their means and enlisting community support is a successful strategy for generating funding. This model of solidarity also contributes to environmental protection. It makes provision of quality services available to people with low-incomes who would not otherwise receive the treatments that allow them to integrate socially and productively.

Impact

Over the past two years, the number of people assisted has doubled and new services (physical therapy, speech therapy, educational workshops) have been added. Increased environmental and social awareness on the part of the general public has made it possible to attend more than 100 people with disabilities from low-income sectors, using recycling as a means of financial support. Recycling has increased by 90%.

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6. Community Defenders: A Community Response to Domestic Violence (*Defensorías comunitarias: Una respuesta comunitaria a la violencia familiar*), Peru

Cuzco
Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL, Legal Defense Institute*)*

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Background

A Pan American Health Organization study conducted in 2000 revealed that domestic violence affects 69% of women in Cuzco; 25% had been injured more than five times. These statistics are the highest of all the countries included in the study.

These statistics prompted the Legal Defense Institute (IDL, *Instituto de Defensa Legal*) to undertake its work in Cuzco. Around the same time, a local man killed his wife, the sister of a community activist. This activist (also a woman) began organizing other women to prevent the recurrence of such violence. This sad coincidence prompted the IDL to work closely with local women and support their resolve to end domestic violence.

One of the main problems of domestic violence is that it is so often invisible to others. Women are reluctant to report violence against them for many reasons.

Some women believe that husbands, fathers and even brothers have this right, justifying the aggression against them as something they deserve for some sort of wrongdoing. As children, most witnessed beatings as normal behavior in their own homes. But even women who do not accept aggression give many reasons for not filing a complaint: for example, because the judge is a friend of their husband (or common-law partner), not only will he refuse to help, he will also inform the aggressor. Battered women are afraid. What's more, many of these women speak only Quechua, complicating their communication with Spanish-speaking government officials.

The program combines the IDL's legal and psychological experience with the fervent desire of community women to learn and take action. The association of the two led to a model of community defense with volunteers from the community itself. Many volunteers are Quechua speakers trained by the IDL to support other women. And the first issue they address is that violence be viewed as a violation of women's rights, not as something the aggressor has a right to inflect upon others.

These community volunteers, known as *defensoras* (defenders), must be capable of providing support to victims, encouraging (but not obligating) them to denounce abuse, accompanying them and subsequently monitoring the process.

The process leads women to understand that there is a solution to their situation, endowing them with a sense of empowerment over their own lives. It also empowers the efforts of volunteer defenders, who comprehend the importance of their work for the welfare of these women and the community.

The *Defenders* began their work fighting *machista* and discriminatory stereotypes held by countless judicial officials, eventually winning their respect. Legal training transformed them into legitimate intermediaries before the judges. Now versed in women's rights and legal procedures, they could no longer be ignored. Today, the relationship between defenders and judges is one of increasing respect.

Although the project works with indigenous and non-indigenous women, its efforts focus on the Quechua and Aymara women who make up a large proportion of Cuzco's population.

It is widely recognized that these women are often the object of double discrimination –on account of gender and indigenous origin– making them one of society's most vulnerable and excluded groups.

Challenge

Foster the concept among women that violence is a violation of their human rights, that violence must, and can, be stopped, and that women can defend themselves from the aggressor. This approach makes domestic violence visible from a perspective of rights, citizenship, democracy and gender equity.

Process

Implementation is a process that involves several stages.

The first step is to train the volunteers who want to become Defenders. (Nearly all participants are women. Men are welcome to join the program, and their numbers are increasing, but they currently make up only 1% of those involved.)

This includes awareness-raising activities to encourage the community to make a commitment to the defense system. These activities also enable the IDL to define criteria for selecting individuals to train as Defenders. Workshops provide orientation tools to potential Defenders, who must understand the challenges and obligations they will encounter. Other activities include radio spots in Quechua and in Spanish informing the community members of their right to be free of violence and publicizing the work of the community defenders.

This is followed by an assessment to determine the degree of consolidation of local organizations seeking to participate in community defense work. The assessment also evaluates potential support and commitment of public officials and access to services required for viable case referrals.

Next comes the selection of participants. The follows set criteria developed in conjunction with the volunteers. The profile of the community defender is defined by the community assembly.

Defender teams meet to share experiences and train to create their defense system *(defensoría).* In training sessions conducted over three days, participants develop skills, capacities and a commitment to protect the rights of girls, boys and women of their community. They receive general psychological orientation for aiding women in crisis situations and basic legal training to interact with public officials.

The most significant stage of the process is the creation of the community defense system. This includes developing internal operational rules, choosing a team leader, asking the community or municipal government for office space and equipment, and registering with the Ministry of Women's Affairs National *Defensoría* Office. During this stage, the IDL makes frequent visits to the teams to guide and support them with these steps and in their negotiations with public officials.

Once the *defensoría* office opens, the IDL accompanies the defense teams with orientation activities to strengthen their capabilities. This takes place in periodic meetings where defense teams discuss their work and receive guidance on how to handle cases, build their management skills and bolster their working relationships with local officials.

Development of support materials for a population with little formal education, minimal reading skills and for whom Spanish is the second language is always a challenge. Printed and audio materials in Quechua and Spanish, including a manual for defenders, help reinforce workshop content and bring volunteers up-to-date on current legislation.

Another area of action is the defenders' work with public officials and community leaders. It is critical for public officials to become more conscientious and create opportunities for training and dialogue, leaving behind their biases and find channels for working with community defenders in order to end domestic violence. Widely-held prejudices about domestic violence and lack of familiarity among court officials with the procedures to address this problem remain a major obstacle. Many public officials still view aggression as an expression of a husband's legitimate right over his wife.

The final step is to monitor defense teams and their activities through surveys that assess user satisfaction, the cost of services and changes in defenders' self-image. Databases with this information are created to evaluate program activities.

It is important to bear in mind that every volunteer *defensora* is also a member of the community, which means that she is likely to be a friend, neighbor or acquaintance of the woman denouncing aggression. The defender comforts the battered woman, listens to her, encourages her to file a complaint and accompanies her in this painful and difficult process. The defender also monitors the legal proceedings to make sure that the victim is accorded due process and that the case is not shelved.

Defense groups of the various participating communities have organized a Network to facilitate the exchange of experiences, publicize their work and exert public pressure to achieve greater recognition and backing from judiciary and executive branch officials at local and department levels.

Costs and financing

Over the first year of implementation, the principal source of funding was UNICEF, for the creation of the first defense groups. A total of US $ 128,000 was allocated for this phase, which included studies to comprehend the situation regionally and implement the awareness-building and training stages. During its second year, the program received support from the British Council to create 20 additional defense groups, at a total cost of some US $ 106,000. Funding from both UNICEF and the British Council enabled the defense groups to furnish their community office space. The Irish cooperation agency TROCAIRE contributed US $ 214,000 over three years to help consolidate the defense network.

Clearly, the most invisible expenditure is the volunteer work of the *Defenders*, which is their personal contribution toward the construction of a more equitable society.

Social innovation

One of the most significant innovations is the presence of community defenders who are organized to support women who suffer from domestic violence. Also novel and worthy of replication is that it trains women –many with little formal education– to address legal authorities in the defense of women and families who have been subjected to domestic violence.

The *Defensorías* program is a simple but efficient strategy that requires fewer financial resources to promote denunciation of domestic violence than do programs employing external agents. The program also helps the judicial branch intervene in remote localities previously beyond its reach.

Lessons learned

Models do exist to confront domestic violence and obtain legal rights in a judicial context. The model achieves positive change in vulnerable communities by linking children, spouse, police,

judges, teachers and local leaders through training and a work plan adapted to the realities of each local context.

With public sector support and, above all, volunteers resolved to improve their own lives and lives of other women, it is possible to make progress in reducing the scourge of domestic violence. In villages where the defenders are present, potential aggressors are decidedly more likely to control aggressive behavior against wives and families for fear of being denounced and indicted.

The willingness of the volunteer defenders to give time every day to support abused women indicates the commitment of the entire community in the face of a problem of this scale.

Impact

The *Defensorías* program has raised the visibility of domestic violence in a region of Peru with the highest incidence of the problem. It is expected that, over the medium-term, the project will break or at least reduce the intergenerational cycle of domestic violence. Boys and girls who grow up in homes where domestic violence is denounced learn that this violence is not acceptable behavior. The program empowers women (both victims and volunteer defenders), in activities that transcend the domestic sphere, raising their self-esteem and enabling them to exercise their rights. Defenders take on a key role in their community that gives them pride and a sense of belonging.

The number of volunteers has soared from the first 87 participants to 418, and interest continues to grow. The Cuzco Defense Groups Coordinating Board (CODECC), created in 2002, has successfully fostered development of regional policies, participated in program decision-making, and spearheaded the creation of new community defense groups throughout the department.

Permanent training opportunities and accompaniment has resulted in a high rate of permanence by volunteer defenders in the program.

Once a battered woman understands that her situation can be resolved and that change can take place in her life and her children's lives, a paradigm shift takes place and her children grow up with a different view of violence in the home.

The *Defensorías* program has been adopted as a model for public policy in the Department of Cuzco and has been replicated in Venezuela and elsewhere.

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Web site

To access the summaries, analysis, contact information and links related to the 72 social innovation experiences, please visit the section "Bank of Experiences" of the web site: http://www.cepal.org/dds/innovacionsocial/portada_i.htm

This document is also available in Spanish.