

# Active Citizens, Accountable Governments

Civil Society Experiences

From the Latin America Partnership Programme Arrangement



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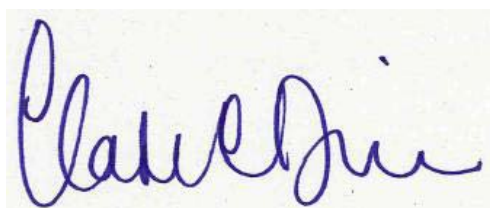
## Foreword

*As twelve agencies working with DFID in the Latin America Partnership Programme Arrangement (LAPPA), our shared experience is that active citizens are achieving real impact and results in Latin America, with empowered community groups bringing tangible improvements to the living conditions and life chances of the poor, and a reduction in poverty and inequality in the most unequal region in the world.*

*Children from favelas in Brazil ensuring that municipal budgets go to increasing investment in their schools, peasant-farmers in Bolivia doubling their income through improved animal health and marketing, coffee-growers in Nicaragua re-investing their profits into local amenities and training opportunities, are just a few of the myriad examples of what DFID, through LAPPA, is achieving.*

*Throughout Latin America a diverse range of interest groups - community associations, neighbourhood committees, voluntary agencies, churches and faith groups - form a vibrant and innovative civil society. These groups are the driving force behind progress towards greater transparency, decentralisation of decision-making and consolidation of democracy. In a region scarred by decades of authoritarianism and violations of citizens' rights, the voluntary sector is a motor for renewing the social fabric, building community cohesion and increasing poor people's capacity to influence their local and national governments. There is no better example of empowerment and accountability in action.*

*This portfolio of case studies demonstrates the role of civil society in holding public authorities to account and expanding opportunities for public engagement. We hope that the learning and the experience from LAPPA will continue to enhance DFID's work on promoting people's participation in decision-making processes and establishing accountable and responsive state institutions into the future.*



Clare Dixon  
Chair of the LAPPA Steering Committee

Supported by UKaid from the Department for International Development

*This material has been funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the department's official policies.*

## Cutting the cost of education in Latin America

How much does it cost to make sure a child can access the quality education they are entitled too? Since 2004 Save the Children have been able to answer that question using the 'Cost per Pupil for Quality Education Instrument' (CAQI), originally developed in Brazil by visiting over 50 schools and speaking with over 1,000 students, parents and teachers to find out what education should include and what is needed for children to attend and benefit from school. For example, if children live in the Amazon jungle, what school boat service do they need? How many children need more food so they can concentrate on their lessons?



*Aline, 15, foreground, attends the Monsenhor Arruda Camara School in Olinda, Brazil. Aline takes part in a Save the Children project which trains young people to monitor and influence how local government funds are allocated and spent. This includes expenditure on education.*  
Credit: L. Valverdes / Save the Children

To ensure local authority budgets are applying the lessons that have been learned and allocating funds where they should, Save the Children and their partners have trained young people with the skills they need to monitor the public budget in their municipality, using the CAQI instrument, to lobby for changes in how the budget is allocated so it reflects local concerns, and to ensure money is spent as promised.

Successes obtained using CAQI –or its national equivalent – include:

- Changes in local authority development plans on education: One school in Colombia's capital, Bogota, has used the tool to get the local community talking about what factors should be considered when planning an education budget that can deliver quality and inclusive education. As a result of this work, they were invited by the country's Inspector General and the National Planning Department to help authorities in other areas of planning; focusing on children's needs in protection and health so authorities can identify funding gaps more strategically.

- National advocacy and strengthening of national partners: By training partner organisations in applying CAQI, Save the Children have helped to strengthen national coalitions for the right to education. In Brazil, for example, the Campaign for the Right to Education brought together over 200 organisations. The campaign secured the inclusion and funding of pre-school provision for children aged 0–6 as part of the federal education system – a change that will eventually benefit more than 5.5 million children.

*"I have got so much from this group on monitoring the public budget. When I first came I hardly knew anything about the community or our society. One other thing I discovered was how to express my opinion. I used to think my opinion was not worth anything. I thought people around me were more experienced and knew more than I did. I could not express myself. But I can now.*

*"Lots of people don't know about the importance of monitoring the public budget. I think we need to raise awareness in the community of what the public budget is and why it is so important. If you compare a young person involved in this project with someone who is not involved in the social movement you will find that the young people here know and understand a whole lot more about public policy than those outside."*

Aline, 15, member of a budget monitoring project run through a community group in Olinda, north-eastern Brazil





## Improving the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services in Nicaragua

Plan UK, Plan Nicaragua, Foundation Xochiquetzal and the Centre for Health Investigation and Research, have supported young people in Nicaragua to play an active role in influencing and improving the delivery of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SHR) services.

Key achievements:

- Through the creation of formal and informal decision making spaces young people, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, local authorities, health service providers and teachers are working together to improve sexual and reproductive health services and rights.
- Young people are informed and participating in the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services and rights in their communities: 120 young people received, and replicated to 1300 peers, a diploma taught by CIES on sexual and reproductive health, citizenship and governance. They have led advocacy initiatives with their local health centres and the municipalities for improved sexual and reproductive health services.

Impacts to date:

- Improved capacity of adolescents, adults and health service providers to participate in and deliver effective SRH services to young people. Youth organisations are taking the lead in running adolescents' spaces in local health centres (*rincones de los adolescentes*), youth clubs and Municipal Youth Commissions. Parents are informed on SRH and rights, and service providers have been trained on child-friendly service provision. In the municipality of Tonala, 1% of the municipal budget is entirely managed by young people. The budget has been used to provide health information and psychological support to young people.
- Strengthened community cohesion: In Santa Isabel and San Lucas, the youth organisations have played a significant role in addressing the expansion of gangs by integrating some of their members into their awareness raising trainings.
- Improved systems to monitor health data collection through the implementation of the national Family and Community Health Model (MOSAFC). Completion of health family sheets means that data collection is now systematised and regularly sent to the Ministry of Health. To date, 25,000 health family sheets have been completed. In addition, a tool to collect data specific to young people has been introduced.



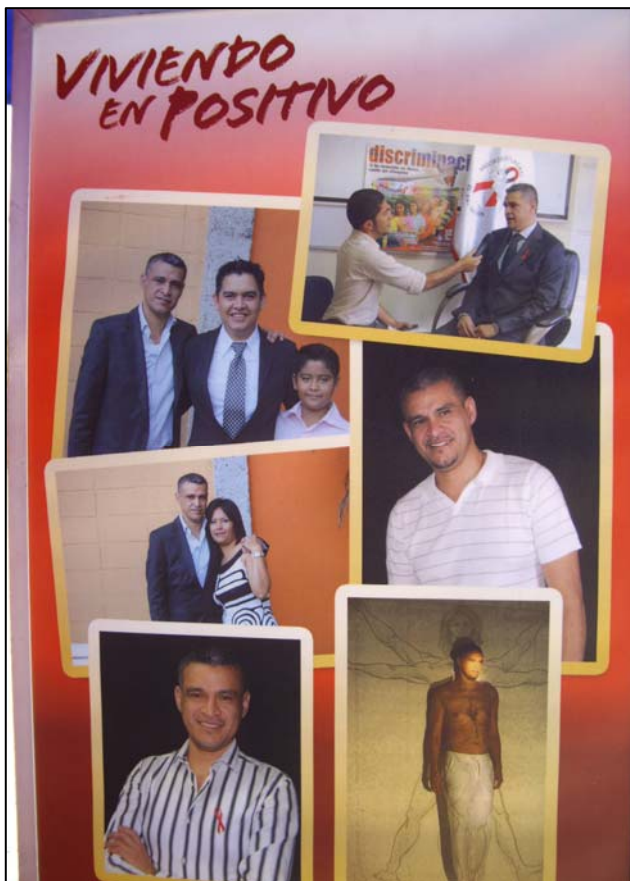
Anecdotal evidence suggests that teenage pregnancy has decreased since 2009.

## HIV & AIDS advocacy achievements in El Salvador

Odir Miranda, Director of Asociacion Atlacatl Vivo Positivo (Atlacatl), is one of the estimated 35,000 people living with HIV in El Salvador and was one of the first to face the resulting stigma and discrimination when he was diagnosed.

In 1998, HIV positive activists established Atlacatl to address the issues of human rights and access to health, education and employment for people living with HIV. That same year they presented the first draft HIV law to the Legislative Assembly and requested antiretroviral medication from the Social Services authorities.

In 2000, the government was still neglecting to provide antiretroviral treatment so Atlacatl took a legal case to the Inter American Court of Human Rights, denouncing the Salvadorian Government's failure to provide free access to antiretroviral treatment to people living with HIV. The case was discussed at the highest level in the United Nations and led the Salvadorian Government to provide Universal access to treatment to all people living with HIV.



Two years later, the Supreme Court of Justice finally announced a resolution of the case favoring the lawsuit presented by Odir Miranda of Atlacatl. Atlacatl are currently fighting to secure compensation for people living with HIV in El Salvador who were previously denied access to life-saving medication.

Atlacatl also led the amendment of the Labour code in El Salvador. In February 2005, the changes to the Work Code presented in July 2004 were approved and Article 79 was changed so that employers can no longer request a compulsory HIV test.

In May 2010, following a petition presented to the Salvadorian government by Atlacatl and with support from members of parliament, legislators united to declare 12th May each year the National Day of Solidarity with People living with HIV.

Atlacatl have marked several milestones with their advocacy work and have had an impact on HIV and AIDS throughout the entire region. Indeed, the success with the petition for antiretroviral treatment was a first in the region and now serves as an example to other countries. Following this victory, most Latin American Governments started providing access to treatment for people living with HIV, in order to avoid being put in the same position. Similarly, the Salvadorian government's support in favour of the petition for a national day of Solidarity with People living

with HIV is a first in the region and will hopefully serve as an example to neighbouring countries.

A key issue faced by key populations in El Salvador is the high level of stigma and discrimination. Atlacatl has been instrumental in changing Salvadoran labour laws so they do not discriminate against people living with HIV. People living with HIV now have access to free antiretroviral treatment and are protected from compulsory HIV tests by the changes to the Work Code.

To Atlacatl, these changes in legislation not only serve to better protect the human rights of people living with HIV but also represent important steps in the effort to reduce the levels of stigma and discrimination that persist in Salvadorian society.

## Citizen voice and action in Brazil

World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) increases dialogue between ordinary citizens and organisations that provide services to the public, thus empowering communities to influence the quality, efficiency and accountability of public services.

This pilot project aimed to facilitate the political participation of children (aged 8-12) and youth (aged 12-18) in Brazil, within the particular ambit of monitoring government policies on investment in childhood through adapting the CVA methodology specifically for a younger audience. This is the first example (to the best of our knowledge) of a methodology to encourage the political participation of children in Brazil. For the youth, the focus was on building leadership through training in citizenship, human rights and political participation.

Summary of key achievements:

- 60 representatives from 40 organisations and 20 youth trained in monitoring public investment, in the first Public Investment in Childhood Focusing on Ethics workshop.
- 12 workshops on public budgeting, helping young people understand the Brazilian budgeting process and create intervention strategies to influence it.
- Development and dissemination of the Public Budgeting and Sociopolitical Education Manual to 12 groups.
- Creation and testing of "The Educator's Handbook", a teaching aid designed to promote the participation of children aged 8 to 12.
- Creation of three supporting booklets (political education, public budgeting, and legal and constitutional tools) and a video (CVA).



*Participants of CVA in Nova Iguaçu create their communication plan for the process of community mobilisation.*

Credit: Maria Carolina da Silva / World Vision Brazil

Over 120 youth from 13 cities were trained in CVA methodology, building capacity for community based budget and public service monitoring. A further 240 youth engaged in community mobilization actions, ensuring their communities benefit from improvements in public services related to water distribution, garbage collection, health care and education.

The Virtual Learning Community allows youth to share achievements and challenges. Testing of the Educator's Handbook led to improved school performance and behaviour of children; now rolled out to a further 34 municipalities where WV is working.

A Pre-meeting on Child and Youth Participation Methodologies (July 2010) brought together representatives from over 10 organisations and networks, from 6 Brazilian states, representing a step forward in promoting political participation of children and youth on a wider scale.

Long term benefits include increased autonomy and self esteem among children and youth, realising they have a valuable contribution to make to political life in their community. Local groups and communities learn to recognise young people as capable of working towards community well being. Resources for monitoring public services and promoting political empowerment (written in youth-appropriate language) can easily be used by other organisations and is currently being expanded to 2 other states in Brazil.

This is leading to a generation of youth interested in resolving local problems through dialogue with public authorities, community groups and other actors to improve the services in their community.



## From protest to proposal: older people negotiate a social pension in Peru

In Peru, HelpAge International and partners worked at the local level to strengthen older people's associations to know and claim their rights, and to build their technical know-how on pensions. This facilitated their interaction with local authorities and participation in local development plans. Simultaneously at the national level there was heightened engagement by the National Association of Older People (ANAMPER) with congressmen, parliamentarians, the media and key NGO platforms on concrete proposals for a financially and politically viable non contributory pension in Peru.

These two approaches combined to ensure pressure at all levels and a groundswell of support in government and civil society for a social pension. 15,000 people, 90% of whom are older people, have directly participated in this project.

Summary of achievements:

- A new law establishing a non contributory pension which will provide a direct benefit for 163,000 older people over 75 in extreme poverty by the end of 2011. This is the first social pension ever in Peru and the direct result of evidence gathering, lobbying and influencing by HelpAge International and partners.
- The project also strengthened ANAMPER's capacity to lobby for change and hold leaders to account, which led to its recognition and participation in opinion forming and decision making spaces with government and NGO coalitions.

The beneficiaries of the new social pension are poor older people and their families in rural and urban areas of Peru. An initial pilot will target 5,000 older people and progressively expand. They will receive the equivalent to US\$35/month as a basic social pension. The pension, called "Bono Gratitud", recognises older people for their contribution to the country, and as an important proportion of Peru's poor who need to be included in poverty reduction programmes if the country is to progress.

Long term benefits:

- Access to a social pension means poor older people remain net contributors to their households. The injection of cash into poor communities stimulates local markets, strengthens consumption and can have positive effects on economic growth, along with improving access to basic needs by the families of those receiving their pension.
- The aim of the programme after the pilot phase is to reach all 163,000 people over 75 in extreme poverty. HelpAge International's position is that the pension should be universal. The new social pension in Peru is a significant first step towards that goal.



*Members of ANAMPER march to demand a basic social pension in Lima, 2010.*

Credit: Jaime Castilla / HelpAge International



## The *Ficha Limpa* in Brazil

In April 2008, a campaign was launched by a coalition of 44 civil society organisations to form the Movement to Combat Electoral Corruption (MCCE) – of which CAFOD’s partner, the Brazilian Justice and Peace Commission (CBJP), is a founding member – and other Church-linked grassroots organisations, unions, and professional associations.



*Collection of signatures in the Praça ‘Tres Poderes’.*  
Credit: CBJP (Comissao Brasileira de Justiça e Paz)

CBJP worked tirelessly utilising Catholic Church networks, holding meetings, debates and lectures in churches, schools, and NGOs, conducted training sessions and distributed materials to raise awareness amongst civil society of the importance of participating in the Ficha Limpa (Clean Slate) campaign to approve the unprecedented Ficha Limpa bill in Parliament.

The campaign collected 3.6 million signatures over a year and a half (1.6 million handwritten and over 2 million online signatures) to create ‘a better Brazil’ by petitioning for the anti-corruption bill, ‘Ficha Limpa’. The MCCE also utilised the power of online media networks such as [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org), and created a video on how to participate to increase social mobilisation on the issue. As a result, political awareness has increased amongst civil society, and

a recent survey showed that 85% of the Brazilian population now know what Ficha Limpa is. The campaign was successful in gaining over the 1% of the 136 million handwritten electorate signatures needed according to the Congress’ popular initiative clause to take the bill to Congress.

Through popular pressure the Ficha Limpa Bill was approved in Parliament on June 7th with immediate effect, and the law 135/2010 was made valid for the recent presidential elections in October 2010. This progressive law bans politicians who have been convicted or are in the process of being tried for crimes such as racism, murder, rape, drug trafficking, and fraudulent use of public funds from running for office for at least 8 years.



*The historical moment of the submission of the 1.6million signatures in Congress.*  
Credit: CBJP

For the recent October national and municipal elections, 4,922 names of candidates suspected of misusing public funds were submitted to the electoral court, and it is estimated that just less than 25% of the total 22,500 candidates running for election were at risk from expulsion. For example: as a result of the new law, the former governor of Sao Paulo state, Paulo Maluf, who has been convicted for fraud, conspiracy, and theft was ruled ineligible for running in the October elections.



Long term benefits are:

- The Executive and Legislative in Brazil will be more accountable to its citizens and transparent in the way that they manage the country’s political affairs, which will have a knock on effect on good governance and the utilisation of public funds.
- The Brazilian public will have more faith in Congress, which will dramatically change Brazil’s perception of corruption in their government from 3.7 (10 being the least corrupt) on the Transparency International perception scale.

## Women measuring and improving the impact of the *Maria da Penha* Law – Brazil

The *Maria da Penha* Law came into force in Brazil in September 2006 and changed the Brazilian Penal Code to curb domestic violence. The law states that a perpetrator can be arrested not only in the act of committing an offence, but also preventively, if they are determined to be a threat to the victim's life. The perpetrator is no longer to be punished with alternative sentences, and the law increases the maximum sentence from one to three years, and provides for measures ranging from removing the abuser from the home, to banning them from the proximity of the women and children attacked. The law also establishes social measures to assist women. For example, those at risk may be included in government welfare programmes, and the law provides for the inclusion of basic information on violence against women in school materials.



*Workshop on Measuring and Improving the Impact of the Maria da Penha Law in the municipality of Mirandiba, State of Pernambuco, Brazil.*

Credit: Ana Paula Ferreira / ActionAid

ActionAid Brazil and three different partners together developed and implemented a monitoring project for the *Maria da Penha* Law. This process was conducted with women and leaders from the following organisations: Centre of Women from Cabo in Pernambuco (*Centro das Mulheres do Cabo*), Culture House of São João de Mereti in Rio de Janeiro (*Casa da Cultura*) and the Brazilian Women's Articulation (*Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras*). The main objective was to incorporate the views and opinions of women on the success of the law, and work towards giving the women from these communities the skills to monitor its implementation at local level, as well as the creation of social control networks to monitor the law at national level.

Implementation of the law has been slow and uneven across the country because of a lack of social control, inequality of priorities across States and insufficient public resources for law enforcement. Many municipalities are without shelters for women, lack special police stations and provide no specialised psychological help to women who are victims of domestic violence.

A network of transparency has been set up to tackle this issue; here women invite the public authorities to talk about the issues locally and then work together to organise at a national level. The network seeks to improve women's understanding of the law; to understand how it is being applied and how it impacts on the lives of women. Women monitor – and if necessary challenge – public authorities to make the necessary provisions under the law.

Questions asked by women in transparency networks about the *Maria de Penha* law to analyse and understand its content and application:



1. What does the *Maria da Penha* law mean for me?
2. Are there any actions regarding the application of this law in my municipality? How is it being implemented?
3. What has changed in my life and in my community after the law?
4. What aspects of my life I would like to change?

Among the impacts are a noticeable difference in women's ability to critically reflect on their disadvantaged position in society and a heightened motivation to fight for equal rights. Women have also created social control networks to discuss issues at local and national level and have secured increased dialogue with the public sector.

Credit: Ana Paula Ferreira / ActionAid

The main lesson learned is that public policy is only valid – and is improved – if citizens can take ownership of policy content, ensure its implementation and improve its mechanisms. This process has been

developed in just a few municipalities. There is scope to use it elsewhere in Brazil to reinforce the demand that the law must be implemented everywhere. The methodology can be replicated, modified or adapted to other contexts.



## Tackling maternal mortality in Peru

Peru has extremely high levels of maternal mortality, especially in remote rural areas. The great majority of health professionals are concentrated in urban areas while access to health services is seriously limited in rural areas, mainly due to discrimination and inadequate or poorly implemented public programmes. The health of the poor will not be improved only by technical interventions. User participation is crucial to improve service provision. Only if the poor become more involved in shaping and monitoring policies and programmes, then access to inclusive and quality services will improve.

At national level, CARE and ForoSalud have been focusing on influencing policies, managing to shape the national dialogue around inclusion and rights of users, and providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Health, managing to raise the profile of neglected newborn health.

At decentralized level, citizen surveillance of health service delivery managed to produce evidences of users' rights violations that are regularly discussed with local health authorities in periodic meetings.

In 2005, ForoSalud together with other human rights organisations obtained 100,000 signatures for the proposal of the "Health Services Users' Rights Law". This was the first proposal of a law initiated by civil society organisations to make it to congress and be approved.

As result of the technical assistance to the MoH, the "manual of the community health worker" was approved and is now used at national level.



CARE, ForoSalud and the local ombudsmen office have signed agreements to monitor on a regular basis rural health units and provincial hospitals. Between the three regions, approximately 160 women have been trained and accredited to monitor health facilities and services delivery. Citizen monitoring has produced evidence of violations of users' rights (e.g. poor services and treatment, especially of illiterate indigenous women, long waiting periods, reduced opening hours of health centres, charges for medicines which should be free); and as a result there have been some positive changes in the quality and cultural appropriateness of service delivery. Health staff are obliged to wear identification card in a visible

Credit: Ariel Frisancho / CARE International

position; supply and availability of medicines has improved; charges are made in accordance with official regulations including the reduction of illegal charges for birth certificates; prices of health services are displayed publicly; and culturally appropriate health practices are being promoted. Women involved in the monitoring feel empowered, have greater individual, political and civic consciousness, have a role recognized by the community and confidently act in public spaces.

More broadly, this initiative has been taken up by the MoH as a reference for replications in other regions and for designing a national proposal on Social Monitoring of Universal Health Insurance.

The long term expected impact is a decrease of maternal mortality rates in the regions where the project is implemented, and indirectly at national level. Through empowering indigenous women to get more involved in shaping policies/programmes and in monitoring service delivery, access and the quality of the health services will improved, leading to better health indicators.



## ‘Live Economy’ in Brazil

Making a livelihood from the informal economy is often a huge challenge. Focusing on marginalised women, World Vision have aimed to enhance their enterprising initiatives using the principles of Solidarity Economy.

Though supporting producers to organise, enhancing the quality of goods and services produced, and increasing producers’ knowledge of and ability to respond to consumer demand, significant gains were made in increasing family income through producers making their products or services more profitable.

Over 24 months of implementation, the following was achieved:

- A 30% increase in the volume of sales of products / services of entrepreneurs
- Organisations of local producers into productive sectors focused on food, clothing, handicrafts, and freelance services
- Joint marketing strategies implemented in target communities (for example holding trade fairs)
- Exchange of knowledge and experience between producers, strengthening networks
- Partnerships established with government and nongovernmental organisations supporting and promoting collaborative enterprises
- Local entrepreneurs have been supported in setting up funding partnerships with businesses (eg. \$19,000 was raised to build 3 kitchens).
- Capacity of producers enhanced to provide better quality products and services, while increasing their knowledge and understanding of local consumer demand.



*Product fairs.*  
Credit: Vivian Gomes / World Vision Brazil

The direct beneficiaries are vulnerable women and their families, enabled to generate increased income through producing quality products and services that meet consumer demand. The increased volume of sales of products and services allows parents to have greater access to goods and basic services for their families. The improved quality of products and services offered to consumers leads to community residents choosing to purchase goods and services locally. The women producers enjoy greater self esteem which positively influences family life.

The organisation of producer groups has created a culture of sharing challenges and collective decision making to support one another. These local entrepreneurs have been supported to expand the production capacity of products and services through use of production spaces and access to credit by linking them to the microfinance programme offered by the Bank of Northeast Brazil.

The long term benefits include the revitalization of deteriorated public squares that now serve as locations for product fairs where residents meet and socialise. There is increased participation in local political life as producers contribute to the development of municipal and state policies of solidarity economy.

Additionally, civil society is strengthened through networks and forums of the Solidarity Economy movement. This allows more enterprises to participate in marketing and exhibition events, opening up opportunities for new business and funding partnerships.



Credit: Vivian Gomes / World Vision Brazil

## Transforming lives through small scale business in Nicaragua

Soppexcca (Society for Small producers, Exporters, Marketers and Buyers of Coffee) is a true expression of how communities, with some support and no handouts, are able to be in charge of their own development, meet their own needs and benefit their whole community.

Soppexcca is a business and a cooperative owned by the coffee farmers who supply it. It looks not only to maximise profits, but also to consider the social and environmental impact of all its work. Their commitment to fair and just practices is demonstrated by an integrated business approach.

Over the past decade, Soppexcca, with Christian Aid's support has:

- Provided credit and loans to over 650 producers for coffee seeds, fertilizer, coffee processing equipment and land
- Improved coffee processing: All 18 of Soppexcca's member cooperatives now have their own basic equipment, allowing members to process their beans to international 'export quality'.
- Bought coffee beans from members up to double the market price (£37 per 100kg compared to £18.5 per 100kg).
- Provided access to global markets: Soppexcca's sales are soaring and it now exports more than the full Fairtrade allowance. Cooperatives are spending these premiums on schools, health centres and pharmacies.
- Raised labour standards: Unlike many of Nicaragua's factories, Soppexcca's processing plant affords better working conditions including better pay (around 20% higher than the minimum wage).
- Soppexcca has set up the first ever co-operatives that include female coffee workers in Nicaragua, providing access to land for women (normally owned by men).
- Protected the environment, e.g. reduced water use from 2,500 litres to 1,000 litres per 100lbs in coffee thanks to their improved wet processing plants. Per harvest this translates into millions of gallons of water saved.
- Set up youth projects, including 'Coffee Kids' so that hundreds of children can also take part in the cooperative. Children gain skills in sports, leadership, painting, music, coffee tasting and quality control.

In 1997, with Christian Aid's support, Soppexcca helped 68 coffee farmers begin to produce and export their product internationally. Within a year the number increased to 158, leading to the 650 producers today, who are organised in 18 cooperatives in 22 communities. Soppexcca is now a business in its own right, impacting the lives of 13,000 beneficiaries.



Farmers have gained greater social power by combining forces and funds. For example, some groups pool money to provide emergency funds for community members to access when in dire need. Some also join together for greater effect to lobby local and national governments for improved social services. The new schools provide a great source of pride and are considered 'a more dignified place for the children to study' than the dilapidated buildings used before.

Although most of the coffee farmers have little to no education, the focus on education and youth means some of their children and grandchildren are now escaping poverty and funding their own way through university.

With continued Christian Aid support, combined with strong leadership in the communities, communities continue to draw inspiration from those who have achieved more progress. The children of cooperative members represent a new generation who have an improved standard of education, range of choices and the power to determine their own futures, free from poverty.

*Manuel, 20, joined Soppexcca's youth training scheme when he was just 12. After years learning the trade, he's now a successful coffee taster, recognised as one of the best in the country. 'Without Soppexcca, I wouldn't have a job, and so I wouldn't be able to go to university'.*  
Credit: Sian Curry / Christian Aid

## Planting and selling the best quality food in Bogota, Colombia

This case study demonstrates how small-holders and NGOs have developed their capacity to influence and change public policy and agriculture in the open market of food products in Bogotá. Successes are outlined below:

- Bogotá's local authority plans on food security, food supply and food distribution reflect fairer prices for producers and for consumers: Oxfam, ILSA and the producers' organisations developed a strategy to influence sectors within the city council. The group defined a set of 12 criteria to modify public policy on Bogotá's Food Security and supported the proposal by celebrating public monthly markets in Bogotá. A total of 15 municipalities started the experience. The organisers generated the political pressure and the Council influenced the mayor of Bogotá to consider and approve the proposal. The producers participated in all the debates with their own statements and evaluations.

- Replication of Bogotá experience by other regional authorities in bigger cities like Medellín and Barranquilla; the programme involved producers' experiences from Cundinamarca and Tolima. Through seminars and national and international forums the model started to be replicated in Nariño and in the Atlantic Coast.

- Regional advocacy and knowledge transfer within Oxfam Livelihoods programme for the Latin America region; the results and the evaluations of the outcome have been used to think about rural-urban realities in other big Latin American cities. The Bogotá 'model' became an important point of reference.

There have been impacts in two major fields: policies and organisational, as explained below.

### Policies:

- Bogotá's Master Plan was changed. Decree 315/06 allowed the direct participation of small scale producers in the Plan's Board of Directors. It recognised the small holders' products as ideal for the Plan.
- Agreement with the municipal government to implement policies proposed by the family producers.
- The local government created a specific budget for family producers of COP\$1.000.000.000.
- Around 47% of the trading committees got support from their own municipalities to finance transport of products.
- Political agreements with some of the candidates; many of them became mayors and this generated stronger support;
- The project is demonstrating that family producers' policy proposals are feasible.

### Organisational:

- The organisations managed to create the CICC, involving 12 organisations;
- They produced policy proposals based on strong documentation and research and they got the support of more than 40 municipalities;
- Our plan was publicly debated involving producers and consumers;
- The public markets became a new and creative way of farmers' mobilisation;
- Credibility among the many actors involved was gained;
- Producers are represented in the Board of Directors.

### Long term benefits:

- At the policy/national level: a new policy space has demonstrated to be feasible, involving family producers as key players.
- At the individual level: the poorest family producers and consumers became the main beneficiaries of the initiative.



*Selling the best quality products in Plaza de Bolivar in Bogotá.*  
Credit: Jesús Abad Colorado / Oxfam



## Rural livelihoods: working for a better policy on animal health in Bolivia

CAFOD has been working with Bolivian partner CIPCA – the Centre for Rural Research and Promotion – in programmes to support small peasant farmers in the Bolivian highlands to improve their production, to gain access to local markets, and to get better prices for their produce.

CAFOD, along with CIPCA, started supporting 16 indigenous Aymara farming communities in the municipality of Guaqui near Lake Titicaca in the Bolivian highlands to upgrade their agricultural production. The communities worked together to improve people's access to water for drinking and irrigation, improving soil conservation, seed quality and storage of staples such as potatoes, as well as health and quality of their livestock; cattle, sheep, llamas, pigs and horses. Animal-rearing represents on average 43 per cent of family income and disease causes serious economic losses in communities where over 90% of the population lives in poverty. CIPCA also supports the people of Guaqui to strengthen their community organisations, helping them gain the self-confidence and skills to ensure local government are responsive to the needs of local citizens. Alongside programmes of leadership training, courses in marketing and quality control, CIPCA carried out vaccination campaigns against livestock disease and trained animal health promoters.



*Luis Riquez has seen the milk yield of his cattle increase significantly as a result of the CIPCA animal health programmes in Guaqui, Bolivia.*  
Credit: Karen Luyckx / CAFOD

Bolivian legislation, particularly the law of Popular Participation, has brought decentralisation of government funding to municipal level. This law presents an important opportunity to the communities in countering and remedying the lack of national government policy on animal health or budget to support policy implementation. Based on the experience from CIPCA's initial vaccination campaigns, communities decided not only to lobby their local government to take animal health seriously, but actively participated in the design of an animal health policy and an implementation plan.

After negotiation with the communities the municipal government, in coordination with CIPCA and community animal health promoters, carried out vaccination campaigns targeting common diseases, parasites and rabies as well as providing vitamin supplements in all 16 communities of Guaqui. Family incomes increased from approximately £180 p.a. to £450 p.a.

Learning from the Guaqui experience, Aymara indigenous leaders of neighbouring communities decided to lobby their own municipal governments so as to adopt similar policies. The communities of Guaqui which form a Marka – an indigenous community-based organisation - joined together with another 8 Markas forming a provincial level indigenous organisation representing all communities of Bolivia's Ingavi Province which comprises 7 municipalities, and a population of nearly 100,000.

After much hard lobbying work, all seven municipal governments have now approved animal health policies, and committed funds to their implementation. Furthermore, accompanied by CIPCA, leaders have managed to get the departmental government also to contribute funding to the work so that the local contribution to the programme represents a threefold increase on the funding committed by CAFOD through CIPCA.

Aymara farmer organisations in Ingavi province, representing nearly 18,000 poor families who draw their main income from livestock, have now convinced their local governments to adopt global, coordinated animal health policies. As a result, over the next five years 600,000 animals are expected to be treated regularly against parasites, foot and mouth and other diseases, with only minimal support needed from CAFOD.

## Varzea project, Brazil

The Varzea project is a long-standing socio-environmental initiative in Brazil, leveraging WWF's technical expertise in freshwater and project oversight together with the Institute of Environmental Research in the Amazon (IPAM)'s experience of working with and educating local communities.

At stake is the ecological and social future of the floodplain network of the largest, most biologically diverse, river system in the world, including 40,000 people living in very simple communities with limited income, health and education provision. The Varzea is extremely productive ecologically and its fishery plays an important role both to the regional economy and in providing food and income for its inhabitants. As a consequence there has been significant over-harvesting of stocks.

The project started in 1994 at a single lake in the Amazon floodplain, working on informal fishing rights with a small group of local communities. Today, the Varzea project encompasses 180 communities and around 35,000 people. It has a very strong community engagement programme: IPAM host workshops on fisheries management and have trained over 200 local fishermen in management and conservation techniques and survey methodology. As a result, all communities within the project area now have functioning fisheries management plans. Crucially, where lakes are better managed, associated increases in fishing catches of around 60% have been observed.

As a result of the training programmes, one local fisherman, Rivelino, became a councillor for the local government. And one of IPAM's staff is now Secretary of Fishing at the state government. These are great personal success stories but also important for the project since they can positively influence the new institutions which they work for from the inside.

WWF have also recognised the need to influence policy at the highest levels, to ensure that communities are really able to achieve empowerment and control. This year, in June, the project reached a critical milestone. The 15 community fishing areas were finally granted status as Agro-Extractive Projects (PAEs) by the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), with fishing rights legally adopted as part of the PAE's management plans. This status confirms by law the right for PAE management organisations to impose rules on all residents, as well as those visiting from outside.

A recent event on San Miguel Island provides a good example of how empowered local communities now feel. Living on a floodplain, one of the problems that local fishermen faced was that in the dry season, local ranchers moved into the floodplain area, with their cattle damaging what would be refuges for the fish habitat during the flood season. One rancher who frequently broke management rules was invited to a General Assembly where the legality of the community rules were restated by INCRA. The president of the PAE, Oscar Vinhote, declared that "an unprecedented event took place, for we have never before called the ranchers for a conversation". The rancher himself acknowledged that "based on the clarifications made in this meeting, I can join other community members to construct a new relationship of friendship". Teaching local communities how to engage in collective action has often aided communities to progress projects in other fields such as health and education.

INCRA has been very impressed by the results. This year, it declared that the provision of rural credit in 20 other PAEs (outside the scope of the project) will depend on environmentally-sustainable PAE management plans being submitted. WWF are determined to secure the long-term legacy of the project. So, in the next phase they are committed to continuing their engagement with key institutional partners such as INCRA.



*Fisherman with Pirarucu fish –  
Varzea, Brazil.*  
Credit: Juan Pratinigestos / WWF

## Defeating illegal loggers in Honduras

Hector and Romelio have farmed the land in Olancho, Honduras all their lives. But what was once a lush, fertile environment is now barren, and the two men, like many others struggle to support their families.

*'Look at this land,'* said Hector, pointing to the hillside that was once forest, but now stands bare. *'This soil used to be so rich,'* he says. *'Now it is dry and tired. My family has lived off this land for years. Today, we're struggling to grow just enough food to survive.'*

The trees disappeared almost overnight, the men say. Illegal loggers came, cut them down and took them away leaving environmental and economic devastation in their wake. *'Twenty years ago the climate was much colder,'* says Romelio, *'the rain was plentiful, the harvests more fruitful. But with the arrival of loggers our forests have been pillaged, the soil ruined. Only poverty and a feeling of neglect remain for those of us who live here. We ask ourselves, "What will we leave our children? A desert? More misery?"'*

For the sake of their children and in a bid for a better future, Hector and Romelio have fought back against the power of the loggers – and won. They joined forces with the Environmental Movement of Campamento (CAM). Together they've successfully lobbied for a new law to protect Honduras' precious forests.

*'The law by itself will not resolve anything, but it gives us the tool to fight the corruption in this country,'* says Hector. *'We will not let those people steal our resources again.'*

The law gives local communities the power to administer and protect their natural resources, such as the forest. Though it won't bring back the ancient forest around Olancho, it will hopefully protect other Honduran farmers like Hector and Romelio, from the onslaught of illegal logging.

This case study demonstrates how effective civil society engagement is able to change national legislation for the benefit of the poor –and ensure its implementation.

The project supports community initiatives which deal with the mitigation, protection and recuperation of their environment. It does this by defending the right for Honduran community members to be able to live in a sustainable and healthy environment.

Progressio's development worker, water engineer, Francisco Hernandez supported CAM on drafting and promoting a new law to protect the forests and national parks of Honduras.

CAM campaigned to government at local, departmental and national levels and managed to develop alliances and influence decisions of policy makers. After nine years of struggle, the civil

society of Olancho, represented by CAM, managed to put through a draft for the Forestry, Protected Areas and Wildlife Law that was approved by Congress on 13 September 2008. The second phase of the project is the design, approval and implementation of the supplementary legislation of the Law.



*Romelio.*  
Credit: Progressio



## The road to development: building a policy case from the grassroots in Colombia

In Latin America, infrastructure development has been justified mainly as a necessary means to achieve better integration between countries and to alleviate poverty in marginal areas. Nonetheless, negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts, such as deforestation, disturbance of fragile ecosystems, unplanned settlement and social conflicts are more evident than benefits, particularly at the local level and in highly vulnerable ecosystems such as the Amazon. If infrastructure development is to truly contribute to poverty alleviation and sustainable development, the environmental and social impacts (direct and indirect) must be considered in the design and implementation of infrastructure projects. Local communities and indigenous people need to be involved in and consulted at all stages of infrastructure projects to ensure that their livelihoods are not threatened. And effective governance mechanisms must be put in place. These safeguards may enable local communities to benefit from the opportunities some projects can offer, and to minimise negative impacts.



*The Pasto-Mocoa Road in Colombia.*  
Credit: Juan Carlos Espinosa / WWF

WWF has been working on the ground to ensure benefits to poor people from infrastructure projects, such as roads, and at the same time to influence policy and have a wider impact on implementation of infrastructure projects at the national, regional and even global levels.

In Colombia, WWF has been working since 1995, to support and implement a conservation vision for Colombia's Amazon region. They have worked with local communities, organisations and institutions. When advances were made towards the creation of a new, much-needed road between Pasto and Mocoa in the province of Putumayo, in southern Colombia, WWF and their local partners were concerned about the potential social and environmental impact on the area's important forest ecosystems and communities, which included indigenous reserves and protected areas.

WWF have considerable experience working with local partners in this and other vulnerable areas to strengthen effective civil society participation in decision making. With local work and partnerships, complemented by their strong presence in Bogotá and their international network, they are well placed to promote constructive engagement between civil society, government and international

donors to ensure that local social and environmental concerns are central to road planning and building processes.

As a result, analysis of environmental and social impacts of the Pasto-Mocoa road has been stronger. And improvements in compensation and mitigation plans and funding have been significantly greater than is usual for this type of project. What's more, their work to improve the quality of local-level consultation and participation has strengthened existing social processes and created the conditions for strong monitoring during the implementation stage.

As a result of WWF's programme, communities living along the proposed new road are informed and have actively participated in discussions with the regional and national governments and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), who are funding the road, and their voices have been heard. The IDB has agreed to change the loan arrangement so that 6% of the entire loan for the road is allocated to social and environmental concerns (compared to 1% on equivalent projects). All of this funding was transferred up front, so that the environmental safeguards are in place before the road is built, rather than at the end. The potential positive impact is huge: safeguarding communities, two national parks and indigenous territories. The Government of Colombia has agreed to this loan structure, setting a precedent for future infrastructure development.