

LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



Photo Credit: Oscar Salvatierra, member of the local MSH Peru team

Activity: The Effect of Social Capital on Family Wellbeing in VRAEM, Peru

In VRAEM, Peru, where remnants of an armed conflict from the 1980s and 1990s and the illicit production of coca linger, MSH Peru is implementing a project and evaluating its effectiveness to address management and local community development. Based on a model of strengthening social capital as a driver of community action, the project, through participatory work, provides community leaders and families with tools to build a shared understanding of community challenges and priorities around health and wellness, sanitation, and protection against violence in the community. As a result, participants at both the household and community can take action to improve health and sanitation practices, and to protect against domestic violence, with a special focus on improving the lives of women and children.

Working together with local authorities and community neighborhood boards, the MSH Peru team conducts a series of community leadership and management workshops. Workshops entail reflecting on shared community values and history, conducting a community diagnosis, creating a community map, and drawing a “tree of dreams” to envision the future. These workshops also include practical dialogue on gender-based violence and the rights of children, among other topics.

Elected officials, district health authorities, and neighborhood boards work together to identify

KEY RESEARCH & LEARNING QUESTIONS

The base-line comparison and the final evaluation will explore the effectiveness of the intervention approach through a quasi-experimental design study and a pretest-posttest nonequivalent group design. **The core question that we are trying to answer through the investigation of our intervention is:**

- ✦ Are there differences in (1) social capital and (2) social welfare in maternal and child health, sanitation of the housing environment, and protection against gender violence in families that participate in the project in relation to those who do not?

joint actions they can take to promote social welfare, and the neighborhood boards take on the challenges of carrying out the community plan and collaborating with families to monitor their progress toward their own commitments. These strategies aim to create synergies with local health, sanitation, and domestic protection authorities, as well as establish sustainable mechanisms for community welfare improvement that communities can maintain over time.

The effectiveness of this approach will be assessed through a quasi-experimental evaluation (see sidebar for additional detail).

PROJECT PARTNERS

MSH Peru designed and implemented this project in collaboration with various actors. The synergies found in their work together are essential for sustainability.

- **National Commission for Development and Life without Drugs (DEVIDA)** is a leading government institution working in areas of social conflict. It aims to eradicate illicit coca production through producers' adoption of alternative products. It specializes in community management.
- **Local governments** in the intervention districts approve activities prior to implementation, and are responsible for advancing health, sanitation, protection against gender violence, education, and economic development in their districts, among other issues.
- **Operators of health services** provide health services at the community level, developing strategies to promote preventive health in women and children.
- **Operators of protection against violence against women and children** articulate preventive actions and management of cases of violence.

This study will contribute to learning about:

- The role of social capital in conflict and post-conflict social settings and in alternative development programs for the eradication of illicit coca production.
- The contribution of social capital to health and other changes in social well-being within socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.
- This study will apply a quantitative and qualitative mixed methods approach, drawing on household surveys with the household members, as well as exploratory interviews and focus group discussions with head of households, community leaders, and formal and informal authorities. Quantitative analysis will explore differences in social capital and social welfare outcomes in treatment and control families and communities. Meanwhile, qualitative analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the enablers and constraints behind any observed causal relationship.

ABOUT MSH PERU

MSH Peru is leading this project. Their experience includes:

- ✦ Working at the direct community level across **5 regions** and **800 communities** in Peru;
- ✦ Working with **community leaders, local authorities,** and **families;** and
- ✦ Implementing the **Moral Leadership and Community Management Program,** which is the basis of this intervention.

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