

IDRC in Peru

For several decades, IDRC and its Peruvian partners have worked together successfully to tackle a range of national and international issues. They have generated research to help the Peruvian government and regional bodies make decisions on social, economic, and trade policy. IDRC-supported researchers have found ways to address Peruvian development challenges such as bio-piracy, the effects of mining on communities, and HIV/AIDS prevention among youth. Over the years, IDRC, together with other donor agencies, has helped to expand Peru's general capacity for research and to strengthen many of the country's institutions.

Perhaps the most far-reaching effort IDRC has supported in Peru is that of the Consortium for Economic and Social Research, a grouping of several dozen universities and research centres. The Consortium's mandate is to promote evidence-based decision-making, raise the level of public debate about economic and social issues and, as a result, contribute to better policies. IDRC's support boosted the policymaking relevance of the academics' research by fostering networking and collaboration, and in particular, by providing researchers with opportunities to participate in policy debates with senior public officials. A second phase is building on these successes.

Another series of IDRC grants has supported experts in the Latin American Trade Network to generate research, which Peruvian public officials and the Andean Community of Nations use in international trade negotiations.

IDRC support also extends to Peru's cyberspace. The Instituto de Educación y Salud (education and health institute) is involving adolescents and youth in the creation of a portal where they can advise other young people about sexuality, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. As well, Peru's Asociación Civil de Investigación Tecnológica y Cultural KHIPU (association of technological and cultural research KHIPU) received a grant from an IDRC regional program to help develop information and communication technologies for small and medium-sized businesses. The association is demonstrating how small, local tourist enterprises can compete in a highly computerized and global industry by cooperating in a network, Red Inka, that uses e-commerce technologies and joint marketing.

IDRC has also teamed up with partners in Peru and in the region to promote sustainable and equitable development. IDRC is supporting the Group for the Analysis of Development, a research centre studying racial and ethnic inequities in health among Peruvians. Another grant is supporting an Ecuadorian organization's drive for increased gender awareness in research on biodiversity and the management of natural resources in Ecuador and Peru. The Centre is

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also assisting research carried out by the Instituto del Bien Común (common good institute) in remote Indigenous communities to bridge the gap between national law and customary norms in the management of water and fishery resources.

IDRC has long focused on the links between sustainable development and Indigenous rights. For instance, the Centre supported the Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA, Peruvian society for environmental rights) in its efforts against biopiracy — the unlawful or unethical appropriation of genetic materials, such as plant species, and traditional knowledge about how to use them. In 2005, SPDA achieved a significant victory: the signing of a landmark agreement with the Andean Community of Nations (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) to take practical measures against biopiracy, including raising public awareness about the issue and improving patent-granting procedures for genetic resources.

The Instituto de Promoción del Desarrollo Sostenible (IPES, institute for the promotion of sustainable development), based in Peru, has participated with IDRC and other donor organizations, in presenting evidence throughout Latin America of the significant contribution urban agriculture can make to food security among the urban poor. Close to 150 institutions from 27 countries exchange information, through the IPES-managed Aguila Network, on how to use such tools as city planning, microcredit schemes, and wastewater treatment to promote urban farming.

IDRC has also supported research on Peru's mining industry. Several partners have studied the environmental, health, and economic impacts of large-scale mining. One such research activity carried out in the early 1990s by Labor, a non-governmental organization (NGO), helped to sway the Southern Peru Copper Corporation to reduce the pollution it emitted and invest in environmental projects. Labor's efforts also contributed to the passage of a national environmental regulatory framework for mining activities.

Over the last eight years IDRC's Mining Policy Research Initiative has supported applied public-interest research, networking, and knowledge dissemination on how mining can better contribute to sustainable and equitable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Several Peruvian NGOs and an Indigenous peoples' organization conducted case studies on artisanal and small-scale mining to explore such issues as the policies that can support this sector, the technology these miners employ, their environmental impact, occupational health and safety concerns, and access to credit.

IDRC has supported development research in Peru since 1971 and has allocated some CA\$64.5 million to 219 projects. Eight are currently active and represent an allocation of CA\$11.6 million. Francisco Sagasti, the President of the Lima-based organization, FORO Nacional/Internacional, which promotes dialogue, debate, and consensus on critical development issues, has been a member of IDRC's international Board of Governors since 1999.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Research to Improve Public Policy-making

The Consortium for Economic and Social Research is a private Peruvian umbrella organization of 32 research and teaching institutions. Its mission is to mobilize the country's research community and raise the level of national debate on economic and social policy issues, thereby contributing to Peru's development.

From 1998 to 2005, the first phase of support from IDRC and the Canadian International Development Agency, the Consortium became a forum for policy debate among centres that did not necessarily share political or economic views. It funded research initiatives, fostered inter-institutional collaboration, and hosted seminars, policy roundtables, workshops, and conferences. It also published books, articles, and working papers. The Consortium has made it easier for

its scholars to influence policy-making. It achieved a level of prestige and visibility that allowed it to participate at senior levels in public policy debates. In addition, individual researchers supported by the Consortium have, while acting as government advisors, played a direct and active role in policy design, for example for the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Labour and for two special commissions — state reform and labour.

IDRC is continuing to support the Consortium to enable it to strengthen and consolidate its institutional capacity as well as assist the academic community in the production and dissemination of knowledge useful to analysts and decision-makers, civil society, academia, and international cooperation agencies.

(Project # 102321, Strengthening the Peru Consortium for Economic and Social Research — Phase II; Duration: 2004–2009; IDRC allocation: CA\$1 000 000; IDRC contact: Brent Herbert-Copley; Research partner: Carlos Aramburu, Consorcio de Investigación Económica y Social, Calle Antero Aspíllaga 584, San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru; Tel.: 511-421-8082; Fax: 511-421-7968; Email: aramburu@consorcio.org; Website: www.consorcio.org)

Online HIV/AIDS Help for Youth

In Latin America, few HIV/AIDS prevention programs for young people have actually involved youth in their design — a crucial element if such programs are to work. The Instituto de Educación y Salud (education and health institute) launched an innovative HIV/AIDS prevention strategy using information and communication technologies. A group of adolescents and youth are creating and maintaining an HIV/AIDS online education portal, Punto J, that allows them to exchange knowledge and experiences with their peers on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS.

This project is helping the young participants to assume citizenship rights and obligations and take part in their own development. The Institute expects the project to have a positive impact in terms of skills development, learning of new

technology, and disease reduction.

(Project # 103977, Punto J: A Portal for Youth-to-Youth Education on Health and HIV/AIDS; Duration: 2005–2006; IDRC allocation: CA\$50 860; IDRC contact: Angélica Ospina; Research partner: Catalina Hidalgo, Instituto de Educación y Salud, Calle República de Chile 641, Jesús María, Lima 11, Peru; Tel.: 511-433-6314; Email: Catyhidalgo@yahoo.com; Website: www.puntoj.com.pe)

Raising Gender Awareness

Men and women have different relationships with the environment and they use natural resources and biodiversity differently. Yet women are often forgotten in environmental research, says the Ecuadorian NGO, Corporación Grupo “Randi Randi.”

Grupo “Randi Randi” is coordinating research on the link between gender and the sustainable management of natural resources. In collaboration with the Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán (Flora Tristán Peruvian women’s centre), it is studying this issue among marginalized populations in several regional and social, ethnic, and cultural contexts in both Ecuador and Peru. The two organizations are also strengthening an information exchange network, which encompasses Bolivia and Colombia, and building the capacity of professionals in the biological and social sciences to understand and apply gender analysis. They also provide technical support to Latin American institutions endeavouring to incorporate a gender research focus in their projects.

(Project # 102101, Managing Ecosystems and Resources with Gender Emphasis; Duration: 2004–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$474 220; IDRC contact: Merle Faminow; Research partner: Susana Albán Bedón, Grupo “Randi Randi,” Los Alamos No. 1410 y C. Alvarado, Quito, Ecuador; Tel.: 593-2-240-2587; Email: mapuche@uio.telconet.net)

Managing Aquatic Resources in a Traditional Culture

The remote Pachitea River watershed is home to a high proportion of Indigenous people living under conditions of extreme poverty, poorly

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developed political institutions, and contested access to resources. The Instituto del Bien Común has undertaken an action-research project to analyze and compare how customary norms and the national legal structure govern natural resource use. The project is based on the hypothesis that, to be effective, institutions created to manage common water and fish resources should draw on both customary law and governmental regulation.

The Institute wants to understand the disadvantages and the opportunities offered by national legislation and customary norms for the management of aquatic resources. It also seeks to improve the participation and negotiation capacity of local populations (especially vulnerable groups such as women) in common property management institutions. The goal is to encourage policy dialogue leading to decentralized management of aquatic resources.

(Project # 103165, Community Management of the Pachitea River Watershed; Duration: 2005–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$205 600; IDRC contact: Merle Faminow; Research partner: Richard Chase Smith, Instituto del Bien Común, Av. Petit Thouars 4377, Miraflores, Lima 18, Peru; Tel.: 511-440-0006; Fax: 511-440-6688; Email: rchase@ibcperu.org)

Race and Ethnic Inequalities in Health

Peru's high levels of poverty and inequality are linked to the systematic, historical exclusion of the vast majority of the Indigenous population. Recent studies have shed light on the mechanisms that perpetuate the disadvantaged situation of people of Andean, Amazonian, and African origin. However, significant knowledge

gaps exist with respect to the way ethnic and racial discrimination works in general and in specific sectors such as health.

The Peruvian non-profit research centre, Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), is measuring the magnitude of racial and ethnic inequalities in health status, access to health care, and health financing in Peru. GRADE aims to identify the most important discriminatory experiences faced by different ethnic and racial groups, their coping strategies, and how discrimination manifests itself in the delivery of health care. GRADE is seeking the involvement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders from decision-makers to ethnic organizations and human rights associations. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness in Peruvian society of racial and ethnic discrimination in health care and propose policy changes that will improve the situation of traditionally marginalized groups.

(Project # 103211, Ethnicity, Poverty, and Health Inequalities in Peru; Duration: 2005–2008; IDRC allocation: CA\$300 650; IDRC contact: Roberto Bazzani; Research partner: Martin Valdivia, Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), Av. Del Ejército 1870, A.P. 18-0572, San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru; Tel.: 511-264-1780; Fax: 511-264-1882; Email: jvaldivi@grade.org.pe.)

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October 2006

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