

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT IN PERU

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- Poverty-stricken informal settlements in peri-urban areas of Latin America have numerous environmental health problems, typically related to a lack of infrastructure and basic services.
- Residents of these communities suffer ongoing health problems related to environmental health conditions, including lack of water, sanitation, and solid waste services; poor air quality; and deficient food safety.
- National and local environmental health programs have neither the resources nor the personnel to prevent or respond to these problems. For example, the District of San Juan de Lurigancho has a population of about 750,000 people but has only 12 staff members in the local environmental health program.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC, in collaboration with CARE/Peru, applied the *Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health* (PACE-EH) in the Peruvian communities of San Juan de Lurigancho and Iquitos. PACE-EH guides communities in defining and prioritizing environmental health problems and planning interventions. Members of both communities effectively worked together to define their top priority areas. For example, San Juan de Lurigancho citizens identified three problems as top priorities for intervention: lack of safe drinking water; inappropriate food handling and hygiene habits; and erratic and inefficient solid waste services.

Examples of Program in Action

- The Peru PACE-EH process has brought together various stakeholders (including community groups, government agencies, local municipalities, private enterprises, and nongovernmental organizations) to define and prioritize local environmental health problems and to develop action plans to overcome those problems. Thus, problems can be addressed more quickly and efficiently. For example, in Iquitos, the PACE-EH process has resulted in funding to implement a water and sewer project, an intervention that would not have taken place for at least 20 years according to the local public utility.
- CDC, in cooperation with CARE/Peru, has translated the PACE-EH guidebook into Spanish.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC continues to work in cooperation with CARE/Peru to implement the PACE-EH process in three additional Peru communities: Tarapoto, Puno, and Arequipa. In addition, CDC will provide technical assistance in the implementation and evaluation of water and sanitation interventions in Iquitos.

CDC continues to translate PACE-EH guidance documents for others in Latin America and Spanish-speaking areas in the United States. For example, CDC is preparing an implementation manual titled *PACE-EH en la Práctica: La Experiencia Peruana de CARE Perú y el CDC* (*PACE-EH in Practice: The Peruvian Experience of CARE Peru and CDC*) which shares lessons learned from experiences in the first two Peruvian communities.