

Community Environmental Health Assessment in Peru

What Is the Public Health Problem?

- Informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas of Latin America have numerous environmental health problems, typically related to a lack of basic services.
- Residents of these communities suffer from preventable health problems related to the environmental conditions in which they live. Environmental problems include limited access to sufficient quantities of safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, erratic solid waste services, poor air quality, and food handling practices that allow for contamination.
- National, regional, and local environmental health programs often lack the resources and the personnel to prevent and respond to these problems. Also, poor coordination often exists between laboratory, epidemiologic, and environmental health services.



What Have CDC and Its Partners Accomplished?

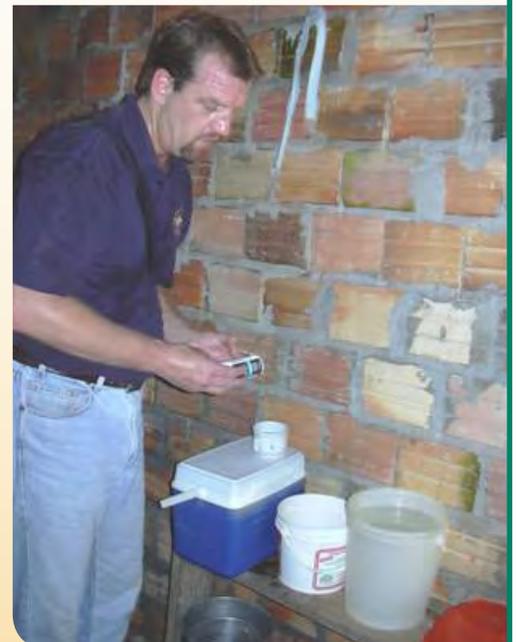
CDC, in collaboration with CARE Peru, applied the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH) in the Peruvian communities of San Juan de Lurigancho, in Lima, and Manuel Cardozo Davila, in Iquitos. PACE-EH is a methodology for involving the community in an environmental health assessment. PACE-EH guides public health officials and the community through a process to identify and prioritize environmental health problems, design and implement an action plan, and monitor improvements to reduce environmental health risks. Program accomplishments include

- Formation of inter-institutional committees to improve environmental health (CIIMSA).
- Implementation of broad-based and in-depth needs assessments.
- Identification of the top three environmental health priorities based on community values in both project sites.
- Development of strategic and operational plans for a 5-year time frame.
- Development of project proposals, including action plans for resolving selected environmental health priorities.
- Securing of a 3½-year cooperative agreement from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct community environmental health assessments in three additional communities in Peru.

Examples of the Program in Action

Examples of the program in action in Manuel Cardozo Davila include the following:

- Installation of a Condominial Water and Sewerage System to serve 1,023 households (approximately 6,150 residents).
- CDC Scientists Worked with Regional Laboratory in Iquitos to determine Water Quality.
- Development of a local environmental health-risk monitoring system partially managed by community residents.
- Organization of a voluntary environmental health promoter group to collect and disseminate environmental health information.
- Adoption of a local environmental health-risk monitoring system and community environmental health assessment process by the Loreto Regional Health Directorate.
- Reduction of diarrheal disease, promotion of healthy hygiene behaviors, and increased use of chlorine in properly stored and secure drinking water.
- Development of a Spanish version of the PACE-EH guidebook and other guidance documents.



For further information about Community Environmental Health Assessments in Peru, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/GWASH/ceha.htm>

For further information about PACE-EH, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CEHA/resources.htm#Protocol>

Published articles:

Baffigo V, Albinagorta J, Nauca L, Rojas P, Alegre R, Hubbard B. Field action report—desert hills and rainforest: conducting community-based environmental health assessments in Peru. *Am J Public Health* 2001;91:1580–2.

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