



Soluciones Prácticas - ITDG (Practical Action)
Regional Office for Latin America

Institutional Profile

Using technology to change the world

Since 1966 we have proved that poverty can be reduced by using technology in an appropriate and sustained manner. Guided by the philosophy of our founder, Ernst Fritz Schumacher, the author of *Small is beautiful*, we work to demonstrate that the simplest ideas can have profound, life-changing effects on poor people across the world.

We do not start with technology, but with people. The tools may be simple or sophisticated, but to provide long-term, appropriate and practical answers, they must be firmly in the hands of local people: people who shape technology and control it for themselves.

The work developed in our programmes using appropriate technologies focuses on four areas:

- Disaster prevention and environmental risk management (adapting to climate change).
- Making markets work for poor people (agriculture, farming, forestry, rural agroindustry, etc).
- Improving access to services (energy, water, sanitation).
- Responding to new technologies (ICTs, nanotechnologies).

Vision

A world free of poverty and injustice in which technology is used to the benefit of all.

Mission

To use technology to challenge poverty, working with poor people to:

- Build their capabilities.
- Improve their access to technical options and knowledge.
- Help them influence the social, economic and institutional systems for innovation and use of technology.

We are an international technical cooperation organization that has been working in Latin America since 1985 and since 1966 in the different parts of the world.

Practical Action has implemented over 300 projects in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Founded in the UK, today we work through 8 regional offices, based in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Zimbabwe, England, and Peru.

Our Regional Office for Latin America (called in Spanish *Soluciones Prácticas*), based in Lima, Peru, coordinates the work we carry out in this region and currently has country offices in both Peru and Bolivia.



Soluciones Prácticas in Peru

We have developed projects in the Peruvian coast, highland, and rainforest regions, supporting the initiatives and efforts of the rural poor.

Our regional office is integrated by a staff of 150 people. The projects we have implemented in different parts of Peru throughout these years have been supported by a great variety of international cooperation donors.

In close cooperation with the local organizations, municipalities, NGOs and education centers, we have ongoing projects in the regions of Áncash, Ica, Cajamarca, Apurímac, Cusco, and San Martín.

Because of the increasing, sustained work carried out through our programmes, we now have local offices in Cajamarca, San Martín, and Cusco.



Main Projects – Peru

Small Wind Energy Systems in Rural Areas

Goal: Help poor rural families gain easier access to decentralized electricity services based on the development of local wind resources.

Donor: Toyota

Period: 2007-2009

Demonstration and Training Centre in Renewable Energies

Goal: To offer training facilities on the different energy options for rural isolated rural areas, especially on micro-hydro and other renewable sources of energy.

Donors: Toyota Foundation, Ingeniería sin fronteras, Green Empowerment, DGIS, AECI, United Nations Environment Programme Fund, Municipalities.

Period: 2008-to date

Fund for the Promotion of Renewable Energies

Goal: To allow people in isolated rural areas in the Andean region to gain appropriate and sustainable access to local electricity supply services, based on the development of renewable resources by means of a combined financing scheme including a non-reimbursable investment, a contribution from beneficiaries and loans granted through a renewable energies promotion fund.

Donors: Chriss Calvert, J.M. Leach, William Harrison, A. Mc Cormick, The Ashden Trust, Matthiesen Foundation, Waterloo Foundation, Toyota Foundation, Llama Travel Ltd., Green Empowerment, Nouvelle Planete, Koru Foundation, DGIS, Municipalities, United Nations Environment Programme.

Period: 1992-to date

Strengthening Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in Colquencha, Bolivia

Goal: Strengthening livelihoods of smallholder farmers in the Colquencha municipality of the La Paz department and strengthen the institutions involved in local economic development.

Donor: European Commission

Period: January 2009-2013

Integrated natural resource management, poverty reduction and improved livelihoods in the southern highlands of Peru

Goal: Strengthening capacities in families farmers of Canchis province, in Cusco, Peru, for integral and sustainable management of native potatoes crop and the alpacas raising as well as for the access to better services of health and rural education.

Donor : Big Lottery

Period: 2006-2010

Sustainable Productive Ecosystems for Competitiveness in Separate High Value Markets

Goal: Help improve the standard of living of poor small coffee farmers in the Lamas province of the San Martín region.

Donor European Commission

Period: January 2008-2011

Conservation and Participatory Management of Tropical Forests in Chinchipe

Goal: To develop a model of sustainable management of forests in the binational river basin of Chinchipe with total participation of the local population.

Donor: European Commission

Period: July 2005-July 2009

Educational Infrastructure Due to the Earthquake of 15th August, 2007 in Chinchá (El Carmen and Sunampe districts) and Cañete (San Luis district) Peruvian provinces

Goal: Improve the education infrastructure and implement the affected classrooms in elementary and primary school.

Donor: Mercy Corps

Period: 2008

Prepared for Emergencies in San Martín

Goal: Reducing the vulnerability to disasters in the Amazon region.

Donor: European Commission

Period: 2007-2008

Local and Community Capacity Building on Disaster Management in Lambayeque

Goal: Improve the capacity of communities and local institutions to respond to disasters caused by flooding associated with the El Niño Phenomenon and extreme climate changes in the Morrope, Tucume, Illimo and Pisci districts and help incorporate them into the Civil Defence System in Lambayeque.

Donor: DIPECHO, European Commission

Period: 2009-2011

Qemikuspa - Adaptation Measures to Climate Change to Protect and Improve the Livelihood of Alpaqueros Communities

Goal: Protect the livelihoods of Andean communities in Caylloma and Espinar, through the dissemination and use of validated adaptation mechanisms.

Donor: OXFAM America

Period: 2008-2011

Practical Solutions for the Livelihood Crisis of Indigenous, Migrant Communities in Moyobamba, Peru

Goal: Develop the capacities of the populations in the Alto Mayo region to reduce the degradation of their livelihoods.

Donor: Big Lottery Fund

Period: 2008-2012

Reconstruction and Local Development in the Area of the Chinchá Province Affected by the Earthquake

Goal: Help the people in Chinchá affected by the earthquake of 15th August, 2007 to recover and improve their standard of living by participating in the reconstruction and local development management process.

Donor: AECI-Fundesos

Period: 2008-2009

Supporting the Participatory Reconstruction of Houses in the District of El Carmen and Strengthening Risk Management Capacities in the Families Affected by the Earthquake of 17th August, 2007 in Ica, Peru

Goal: Improve the conditions of the families of El Carmen who were affected by the earthquake of 17th August 2007 in Ica.

Donor: MPDL

Period: 2008

Improvement of living conditions of High- Andean families, reducing environmental hazards through access and administration of basic sustainable services (ALLIMPAQ)

Goal: Pilot a model for access and administration of services contributing to the development of policies and programmes to benefit the poor, focusing on improvements in the quality of life of rural high-mountain communities.

Donor: Spanish Agency of International Development Cooperation (AECI) / Practical Action / financial assistance grants for community projects for Human Security (APC) government of Japan.

Period: 2008 - 2011

Willay Programme

Goal: Support local democratic governance and decentralization and improve the management of local public education and health entities and municipal governments in rural areas of Peru through the use of low-cost information and telecommunication systems appropriate for Cajamarca, Cusco and Lima.

Donor: Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM), Madrid City Council (AMA), La Junta de Castilla La Mancha (JCCML) and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI).

Period: 2007 onwards



Our actions have also extended to other Latin American countries since we have developed assessments and studies aimed at implementing projects and disseminating our proposal in the region.

Thus, today we are engaged in a bi-national forest management project with Ecuadorian counterparts.

Soluciones Prácticas in Bolivia

Our work in Bolivia started in 1999 with the consulting services and projects we developed in the areas of energy, local governance, and disaster prevention.

For 17 years, we have been members and promoters of the Latin American Network on micro hydro energy, which is integrated by several Bolivian and Latin American organizations working in this field.

In 2007 we opened our office in Bolivia with the purpose of implementing projects with a greater scope that meet the great challenge of contributing to reduce poverty and improving people's livelihoods in this country.

Our work approach responds to the most urgent needs of less advantaged rural groups: disaster threats, associated with the physical characteristics of their territories; scarce livelihoods with low productivity and quality levels; very limited access to basic services, such as the supply of energy and potable water, which only reaches 40 and 29% of the rural population, respectively.

Our activities are developed with the invaluable support of prestigious local counterparts in the country, as well as with the support of the alliances and agreements established with state organizations, producers' associations, and cooperation entities.

Main Projects - Bolivia

Sustainable Strengthening of the Livelihoods of Peasant Families in Colquencha

Goal: Contribute to reduce poverty among the 1,938 peasant families that live in the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Colquencha in the department of La Paz in the Bolivian High Plain.

Donor: European Community
Period: 2008-2011

Strengthening Community Risk Management Capacities in Peru and Bolivia

Goal: Develop resilience capacity in 2 communities (1 in Bolivia and 1 in Peru) through the participatory construction and application of tools that will allow these communities to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and efficiently manage the disaster risks they are exposed to in their territories. Location: Peru (Cajamarca – Huancavelica), Bolivia (Sucre – Santa Cruz).

Donor: Lutheran World Relief (LWR)
Period: 2008-2009

DIPECHO Bolivia: Emergency Prevention and Response in The Communities under the Jurisdiction of the Municipalities of Sipe Sipe and Vinto, Cochabamba, Bolivia

Goal: Develop capacities of responses to face disasters in schools, teachers, students and local leaders, in the municipalities of Vinto and Sipe Sipe, department of Cochabamba

Donor: DIPECHO
Period: 2007-2008

Our Programmes in Latin America

Reducing Vulnerability Programme

In Practical Action, we believe that technology can really help to prevent disasters and that people living in poverty conditions can develop capacities to protect their families and homes against the terrible consequences of these events.

Our organization's work in this field is to identify the needs and experiences of people, to empower them to prevent disasters and to support them in their reconstruction plans.

We also promote including the risk management approach in public policies and in strategies of adaptation to climate change, both of which are key aspects for reducing poverty and for the sustainability of development projects.

Some of the most important actions we have developed in this area include carrying out research and studies on disasters and on the appropriate use of urban and farming spaces; training and advisory to communities and local governments in the elaboration of prevention, development, and reconstruction plans; technical assistance to local governments, institutions, and organizations.

Main achievements

In Disaster Prevention

- Co-establishment of the Latin American Network on Disaster Studies and Prevention (Red Latinoamericana de Estudios y Prevención de Desastres – La Red).
- Strengthened local capacities to reduce disaster risks in the jurisdictions of local municipalities in Peru and Bolivia.
- Elaborated risk maps in the communities of Colcabamba (Huancavelica), Chota (Cajamarca), San Martín, Piura and Belén de Urmiri (Potosí, Bolivia) with a participatory approach.
- Training in risk management provided to 2,600 teachers, local authorities and community leaders in Ica, Cajamarca, Áncash, Tumbes, Piura, San Martín, Ayacucho, Lima, Lambayeque, Huacavelica, Arequipa, Moquegua, Tacna, and Puno, as well as in Bolivia and Nicaragua.
- Included the risk management approach in the National Environmental Education Plan and in the education plans and policies of the Peruvian Ministry of Education. We have also worked together with the specialists of the Ministry of Education to elaborate the teachers' guidelines on risk management in educational centers. The guidelines were tested and validated and published by the Ministry (a total of 50,000 books were published and distributed all over the country).
- 42 NGOs and institutions of 8 departments of Peru and of 2 departments of Bolivia have been trained in risk management. They have established risk steering committees and elaborated 17 project profiles that have been submitted to the regional governments and municipalities for their approval and implementation.
- 65 publications (books, manuals, technical sheets) related to risk management and disasters prevention for rural communities.

In Reconstruction

- Trained over 2,846 people affected by disasters in construction techniques using *quincha*, *adobe* (mud bricks), and blocks using appropriate technologies in Moquegua, Tacna, Ayacucho, Ica and San Martín.



- Reconstructed over 1,346 houses and community facilities and 28 schools in Ica, Moquegua, Tacna, Ayacucho, San Martín, and Piura that had been affected by earthquakes or political violence.

Improved Technologies

- Designed the Disaster Inventory System or DesInventar (database software).
- Improved *quincha* and *adobe* technologies to reconstruct houses after disasters.
- Methodology to assess risks of disasters with a participatory approach in rural communities.

Climate Change

- One of the biggest projects on Climate Change Adaptation carried out on 7 regions of Peru.
- Practical Action Peru is the most important source of information about Climate Change and Poverty in Peru. On 2008 we launched 8 books describing our experience and learning on Climate Change adaptation (the biggest collection on climate change in the country).

Market and Livelihoods Programme

The incomes and livelihoods of poor people will improve where they are able to use technologies, and their skills, knowledge, networks and resources to enter into and adapt to market systems that work effectively and fairly.

We train farmers as promoters using methods adapted to the local culture; thus, peasant promoters are trained in technology transfer, development, and adjustment so that these technologies may be used in small agroindustry and forestry-related micro businesses. Technical assistance and training in technologies, business management and commercialization is also provided to small agroindustrial units; and support is also provided for the establishment of productive chains.

We also promote the use of improved practices in terms of the management of water for irrigation, models of more efficient and egalitarian entrepreneurial farmer organizations, the strengthening of rural and urban micro businesses, and training in the elaboration and commercialization of farming and forestry products.



Main achievements

- Developed methods to transfer appropriate agro-processing technologies which have allowed improving the living conditions of small producers. We are one of the leading organizations in the use of extension methodologies for rural promoters.
- Reinforced the technical capacities of national schools and development organizations (NGOs, education centers, and technical institutes) in the area of agroprocessing.
- Comprehensive work in productive chains associated with products such as milk, coffee, native potatoes, alpacas, grains and forests.
- Promoted the Rural Agroindustry Network (REDAR) as a space for exchanging information and sharing experiences at the national level (with 41 members) and at the Latin American level through its 15 member networks.
- Improved irrigation infrastructure in 40 peasant communities, with beneficiaries including over 2,996 peasant families.
- Provided technical assistance and promoted the adoption of improved technologies among over 8,150 peasant families. This has been achieved by the training of 320 rural promoters (using peasant to peasant education model).
- Established the Institute of promotion for water management (Iproga) to improve the management of water for irrigation purposes. This organization is integrated by 33 individual members, 16 institutional members, and two honorary members.
- Developed appropriate methodologies for the sustainable management of forest in the Peruvian Amazon region.
- Reforestation of more than 3,000 hectares and forest management. 50 rural promoters provide technical assistance in forest management.
- 200 teachers have improved their capacities for delivering environmentally-oriented education.
- 68 publications (books, manuals, technical sheets) related to food processing, irrigation, farming for rural communities. Creation of a specialized information system for the Peruvian Dairy Sector: www.infolactea.com.

Access to Services Programme

Government investments in the supply of basic services have frequently opted for costly centralized infrastructure, which very often is not only inefficient for the conditions of rural areas, but also excludes most of the population who do not have the required resources to afford their installation and maintenance.

In Practical Action, we believe that decentralized, locally managed services are, in most of the cases, the best solution to provide energy, water, sanitation, and communications to poor rural communities. Therefore, research is carried out to develop low cost alternative technologies. We also implement innovating financing and management models, and work in the areas of knowledge dissemination and in building local capacities to contribute to the provision of these services in rural areas.

These activities are carried out in the areas of renewable energies for rural electrification (micro hydro power stations, wind and solar energy), bioenergy (biofuels in small scale, biogas, improved cook stoves) water and sanitation for rural communities (ecological sanitation, nanotechnologies) and ICT (Information and communication technologies).

Main achievements

- Around 60 mini and micro hydro power stations and over 60 small wind generators have been installed in Peru and in other countries in the region, with direct beneficiaries including over 6,200 families (over 30,000 rural people).
- Low cost technologies have been developed in the lines of micro hydropower, small wind energy, river turbines, small scale biofuels.
- Technology associated with the fabrication of energy generation equipment transferred to Bolivia, Brasil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka and Nepal.



- Developed and applied innovative financial mechanisms to implement renewable energies in isolated rural areas.
- Implemented the Center for training and demonstration of appropriate technologies (Cedecap) with infrastructure to provide training on renewable energies and ICTs at various levels (including seminars and long-term internships). The Cedecap is located in Cajamarca, Peru (www.cedecap.org.pe).
- The Energy Program is the coordinator of the Latin American Hydro Energy Network (Hidrored) and responsible for organizing the Latin American Conferences on Small Scale Hydro Energy Use every two years. Moreover, since 1990 it publishes the magazine Hidrored. Over 700 people from Latin America, the United States, Canada, and Europe have subscriptions to this publication.
- 70 publications (books, manuals, technical sheets, magazines) related to renewable energy and basic services for rural development, available online through our institutional website: www.solucionespracticas.org.

Communications Area

Practical Action is aware that communication plays a key role in responding to the most urgent challenges faced in the field of development. Therefore, communication is considered strategic in all the areas of the work we carry out to multiply the impact of our projects, to facilitate learning, and to generate a creative and inspiring work environment.

We know that having access to useful technical information on a timely basis and in the appropriate formats is a rare privilege for many people in our region. Therefore, one of our most important strategies has been to facilitate access to information and technical knowledge to people in order to contribute to poverty reduction processes. With over 300 publications, our vast editorial production is testimony of this.

Technical Information for the World

Updated information on our work, our latest publications, as well as articles, papers, and other resources on appropriate technologies may be found at our regional web site:

Our web site, which is one of the most important technical information systems oriented to poverty reduction in Peru, receives nearly 57,000 visits each month. An average of 47,600 publications are downloaded from our website every month.

Practical Answers

Our service for technical enquiries provides free of charge technical information on development and appropriate technologies to small producers, micro entrepreneurs, base root organizations, researchers, NGOs and other agencies through our web page. Each year we reply nearly 1,200 queries on aspects related to food processing, renewable energies, disasters, farming, etc.

Documentation Center

Our online documentation center provides the community with a vast selection of specialized information on appropriate technologies and sustainable development. We seek to position our documentation center as one of the most complete libraries specialized in development and risk management related topics in the continent.

Some of our most important awards and honors

- Tech Award Laureate for using technology to make the world safer and healthier, more prosperous and just in the Environment category (2008).
- **U.S. Congress** recognition awarded for our outstanding service to the community (2008).
- Universidad Nacional San Simón (Cochabamba, Bolivia) recognition awarded for our support to the University's Department of Science and Technology (2008).
- Recognition awarded by the district of El Carmen, Chíncha, for our reconstruction work after the earthquake of August 2007 (2008).
- United Nations Environment Prize (Sasakawa Prize) for our outstanding contributions in the field of sustainable environmental management, especially in the area of offsetting carbon emissions (2008).
- Second Prize in the **Ashden Awards** for Sustainable Energy for our work in the field of renewable energies. The award was presented by the former U.S. Vice President and environmental activist Al Gore (2007).
- 2 times selected as finalists in the National Creativity Prize: Creative Business Prize for our work in the area of energy and production systems (2006, 2007).
- First Honor Mention in the Award for Eco-Efficiency by the "Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú" and the National Environment Council (CONAM) in recognition to our work in the area of Biodiesel (2003).
- **Climate Technology Leadership Prize.** This award was granted by the Energy International Agency (EIA) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in recognition of the work carried out by our Energy Program in promoting renewable energy in Peru (2000).



Main Donors / Partners

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Centro latinoamericano para el desarrollo rural (RIMISP)
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Miscellaneous Churches Together
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Ministerio de transportes y comunicaciones (MTC), Peru
Movimiento por la paz, el desarme y la libertad (MPDL)
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Integrated Natural Resources
Nike
Nouvelle Planète
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OIKOS Cooperação e Desenvolvimento
Open Gate Trust
Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la agricultura y la alimentación (FAO)
OXFAM América
Principado de Asturias
Programa nacional de agua y saneamiento rural (PRONASAR), Peru
Rotary Club
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Solidaridad, Holanda
Solidaridad Internacional
St. Mark's Overseas Aid Trust
St. John Baptist Church
State of Jersey
The Guardian
The Swallows of Finland
Trusts Miscellaneous
VECAM
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Zephyr Charitable Trust

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