

## CLAMOR POR LA DIGNIDAD - PERU

### The three organizations – in Peru, Germany and Spain- are legally and functionally independent

It was not foreseen. The sudden loss in trust experienced with the projected local counterpart in Arequipa, the organization CIESCU, led to an unexpected change in the roadmap. What is the path to follow now? Should we stop the support to the project "La Mansión"? Should we cancel the school twinning with the school La Mansión and the school in Langenau? Should we abandon the plans to prepare and accompany two volunteers from the school in Langenau? The answer is no. There are many people and plenty of reasons not to leave the project "La Mansión". We believe in the project that is being implemented in "La Mansión" (Arequipa, Peru) and in the management from Deisi and Pamela. We do trust those parents involved in the project. We wish that the boys and girls - end beneficiaries and main actors in the project - can continue benefiting from the nutritional, educational and cultural support offered through the project. We think that the experience of working as a volunteer during a whole year is really worth it.

In order to face the new and unexpected situation two major decisions had to be taken between Deisi and Pamela in Peru and the associations "Claim for Dignity e.V." in Germany (CfD) and "Clam per la Dignitat" in Spain (CxD). The first decision was to reinvent the project and give it a new name -this has already been done. From now on the project is called "Pueblo sin Hambre" (People without Hunger) and it is a continuation from the previously implemented project but with some adjustments.

The second decision was to encourage Deisi and

## editorial

Pamela to create a local organization in Peru. With the support of Nelva, Pamela's mother, and María José, a member of "Claim for Dignity e.V." who was in Arequipa last summer for two months to support the project, the organization "Clamor por la Dignidad - Perú" (CpD) was founded. With this local association we have an institutional presence in Peru that facilitates the project work and the stay of the German volunteers.

One of the consequences of the founding of "Clamor por la Dignidad - Perú" is the increase of twinning of organizations having an analogue name and common ideas. The three organizations - in Peru, Germany and Spain- are legally and functionally independent. The bulletin, however, is an instrument that brings together the three organizations. The bulletin's editorial comes to be the official voice of the three organizations and the bulletin itself is also an instrument of Clamor por la Dignidad - Perú".

In the present publication a very interesting article from Christian Engelhardt can be found; it pertains to an irrigation and reforestation project in Matarani, in the Peruvian coast located 100 km away from Arequipa. In addition, the first of a total of two articles from Stephanie Wildenberg summarizing the most interesting ideas and conclusions from her diploma thesis about "La Mansión" is also included. Her thesis "Zur Bedeutung gemeinwesenorientierter Sozialer Arbeit im Armenviertel La Mansión in Peru" is focused on the importance of the social work oriented towards the community in the poor neighborhood of La Mansión in Peru. With this diploma thesis and the subsequent oral exams, Stephanie has finalized her studies in Pedagogy at the University of Tübingen in Germany with the best qualification: Congratulations!

The Directive Councils of CfD, CpD and CxD

**THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY-  
BASED SOCIAL WORK IN THE SLUMS  
OF LA MANSIÓN IN PERU  
A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IN  
RESPECT OF DEVELOPMENT COO-  
PERATION  
AN EXCERPT FROM MY THESIS 2010**

**In terms of development cooperation the people concerned need to agree to the courses of action and the goals of the project. They need to be part of actions taken as well as take on part of the responsibility**

During those 6 months I lived in Arequipa and worked for the project "Pueblo sin hambre" in the urban slums of La Mansión a lot of questions were raised in my mind that kept me preoccupied for a while: What causes wealth and poverty? Why are there social imbalances in the world? Are there strategies for a sustained development cooperation? How can they adapt to the abilities of people living in poverty and also meet their needs? I had the chance to pick up some of those questions in the course of research for my thesis in social work and education in 2010.

The subject of my thesis is how social work can contribute to strategies of development cooperation in a developing country like Peru where people are disadvantaged, excluded and stigmatized and very, very poor in parts. Also the struggles of a difficult daily life cause a variety of problems they have to face like domestic violence, alcohol abuse and child labor. My study focusses in particular on empowerment, strategies of a solidary and community-based economy, political participation and social networking as important factors for community-based social work in La Mansión.

## thoughts

Some of residents of La Mansión already received material goods as support from governmental and (inter-)national non-governmental groups. Although this kind of support surely did help those people in La Mansión it is not sustainable aid if it is limited to handing out material goods and technical interventions. There are quite a few development aid projects that fail to make the people they want to help part of their approaches. In terms of development cooperation the people concerned need to agree to the courses of action and the goals of the project. They need to be part of actions taken as well as take on part of the responsibility. Is this not the case it should be checked if "help" should be given or if it is an option at all. Pedagogical strategies like community- and group-based approaches contribute to developing an ability to act for themselves. The guiding principle in development cooperation is to help people so they can help themselves and this should be more than just an empty phrase (see also next issue: "Help so they can learn how to be helpless")

Community-based social work operates in an intermediate space. This means trained social workers work with the local people and they also engage in politics (together with the locals at best) to point out problems and if necessary harshly and publicly criticize the situation. For successful community-based social work it is important that professionals work on an interdisciplinary level. An approach combined with development cooperation can contribute considerably to disclose structures of injustice. We need to encourage the people of La Mansión to take joint action and be solidary. It is important to use local resources because this will encourage the process of empowerment. Building networks between aid and local organizations is important to assist the local community with its own socio-cultural facilities.

There is great importance attached to co-operating with the people concerned as to render their consciousness. See also Paulo Freire: "The realization of his or her own situation leads that person to realizing that this situation is historical truth and is therefore open for change." "Pueblo sin hambre" is a food project for about 140 children and their parents. This is a sustainable project where people are taught knowledge about nutrition, hygiene and health, and where the parents (especially the mothers) are helping in the school cafeteria every day.

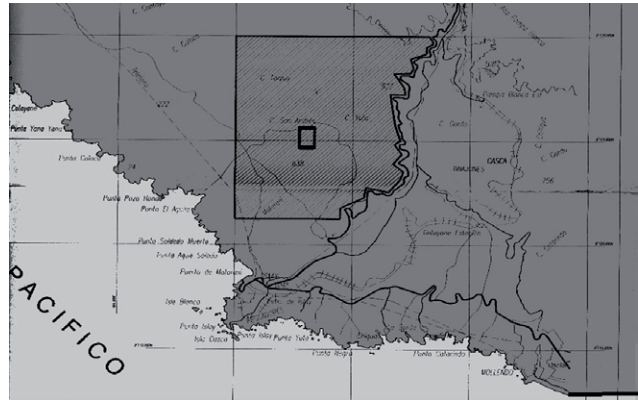
Community-based approaches of social work are aiming to build a strong community where people care for each other and work together to solve their problems or at least try to make it little better and the children can grow to be part of this community.

Stephanie Wildenberg

## IRRIGATION AND REFORESTING PROJECT - MATARANI (PERU)



## experiences



Matarani is a small desert township close to the western shoreline of Peru. Situated about 100 km west of Arequipa, there is practically no industry located there hence the offshore harbour and thus the train line to Arequipa are only scarcely used. There is almost no means of generating a decent income for the local population, as there is no rain in Matarani. Here the Humboldt cold stream reaches the south American continent, preventing formation of clouds and therefore rain, though fog is occurring regularly.

While in the past the western coastline of Peru used to be lush and green, as the trees were extracting the moisture from the fog, human need for firewood and extensive farming resulted in deforestation, leaving only sandy desert slopes with little vegetation at all. Farming and herding became impossible, driving the poor local families to leave the area in search of better living conditions.

For 15 years Anthony (78) is working on a project to irrigate and reforest the area. Initially devised to help Mataranians to make a decent living in farming by collecting water from the pacific fog by the means of using fog traps, this project has now achieved a new, much bigger importance and perspective as a part of an integrated, round loop



system for re-growing natural resources in hi-tech automotive plastics by introducing the castor oil-plant. This plant, already growing locally, may play an extremely important role for the future development.

The water contained in the pacific fog may be collected by means of textile fog traps as already in use in other, similar projects. The water obtained may be collected in containers or cisterns and further distributed by piping systems as devised by the Inkas hundreds of years before, serving the Casuarina trees, which would in turn act as natural fog traps and deploy their water resources to Tara and Castor oil-plants set nearby.

The local government has set aside a protected area of 3,76 Ha, ideally suited to set up a pilot project to prove feasibility, which could be done with an initial budget of around 20.000 USD. For doing so, however,



## experiences



the reserved area would have to be claimed from the local government authority. For CfD this could be the possibility to engage on a long scale representative pioneer project acting as a pilot for similar projects worldwide, attracting universities and industrial support.

Advantages of this project in summary:

- Win-/Win-situation for all sides engaged due to stringent sustainability throughout the project
- makes sense both ecologically and economically by planting re-growing resources on previously infertile and unusable soil.
- constantly growing industrial demand for product as crude oil replacement.

Christian Engelhardt

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