



Together
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Best Practices Database

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Indigenous Local Development Program, Abra Pampa *Argentina*

Best Practice

New for 2002

Categories:

Gender Equity and Equality:

- access to resources
- control of resources
- ethnicity
- gender roles and responsibilities
- removing barriers to equity
- social integration

Economic Development:

- cooperative opportunities
- enterprise development (formal and informal sectors)
- micro-credit
- training

Civic Engagement and Cultural Vitality:

- community participation
- social and cultural vitality

Level of Activity: Provincial/State

Ecosystem: High Plateau

Summary

The aim of the initiative is to allow all coyas/ aborigines to live with dignity, like our ancestors did based on our own work and labor.

It is necessary to widen the capacity of individuals, leaders and organizations so that they are able to fulfill their own economical, political and cultural aspirations so that this aim can be achieved.

Mission:

It is made up of the following components:

- Organization
- Professional development (Communication Institute for development)
- Micro financing systems
- Services for business development
- Mutual Health Systems

All these components are inclusive of cultural identity, gender and environmental issues.

Our growth strategy is decentralized and based on our ancestors forms of organization- Communities-called Communal Funds.

The Association is formed by a network of 54 communities, which form part of the Warmi government.

Aims

1.Organization: Government System composed of 70 men and 70 women leaders who are in charge of their communities and 54 organized communities in charge of the projects. This are to cover 2000 families each with an average of 6 members. To have monthly assembly for leaders, the Strategic Team and Community Founds. To have a Permanent Supporting Technical team (CIRPA) and ad hoc technical support.

2.Qualifications: There are 80 qualified promoters, 36 coyas managers in development, 400 crafts women, 118 treasurers, 20 health promoters, 40 audiovisual training promoters, 286 producers. There is an Audiovisual Education System able to prepare any type of Education package.

3.Micro credits: 54 organized Community Founds got credit and 750 people delivered the credits with no delays or any unpaid.

4.Business Development Services: There was initiation of the Craftswomen organization which defined trademark image and market strategy. There was also increase in meat production.

5.Health: Health campaigns were concerning different health issues such as reproductive and sexual health and cervical cancer. There were also development programs.

Narrative

Men used to be agro industry, mining and were state employers while women were involved with housekeeping, cattle rearing and pasturing.

Macroeconomic liberal changes left us without jobs and without Social Welfare.

The lack of strategies to live in the globalization era and free market caused unemployment and social exclusion.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

Priorities:

- 1.To be able to live with dignity in our land, the land of our ancestors.
- 2.To be able to live from our work and to make decisions according to our own customs.
- 3.We want to be part of globalization, with the same rights, but at the same time, being accepted as different.
- 4.We want to achieve gender equality, to be in harmony with people and nature.

These priorities were proposed by the leaders and were accepted by the representatives of each community.

Members discussed the program in each community and the technicians were instructed to turn those ideas into development programs.

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Aims:

- 1.To generate political organizations according to our own culture
- 2.To strengthen and recreate our cultural identity
- 3.To be more competitive
- 4.To achieve incresed gender equality
- 5.To live in harmony with the environment, today and in the future

Strategies:

- 1.To make decisions about our own lives with our own resources and also with other resources.
- 2.To attain growth through consensus
- 3.TO work with companies, NGOs and State
- 4.To be dynamic and flexible. We know where we are going but how to get there is a permanent debate.

Aims and strategies were established through consensus and not by voting. Consensus is possible in each community therefore decisions are obtained from monthly assemblies then the technical team carries them out.

MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

The basis of resource mobilization in this initiative is participation.

To be members means to be part of the dream and to play a part in fulfilling it. Organizations and people decide to support us because we share our visions and values.

One of our principles is, 'NO TO GIFTS'. We do not accept benefits without previous or subsequent contribution. Thus, we have program members and transitory associates with whom we share our temporary aims.

Communities as well with their organizations contribute. Peasants contribute through their work while the youth contribute through their enthusiasm and the elders through their values.

International organizations make financial contributions. Political organizations contribute through social welfare and provision of resources.

Resources are supported by Warmi members, municipal, provincial and national state and international cooperation organizations.

The micro financing systems that contribute to the organisation include AVINA, IAF and revolving funds. AVINA, National State and Universities support the Communication Institute. Companies, foundations, and the State support the Health System and campaigns. Business Development Service works is based on contributions from AVINA, IAF, UNDP and the State support. The Technical Team elaborates, executes, investigates and evaluates projects. the technical team is also in charge of Technical Problem solving.

PROCESS

Problems

1. After we began organizing there was a lack of financing to our proposal.
2. There was lack of coordination between survival strategies and the social funds. Due to the influence of the paternalist state and the factories (mines, tobacco, etc.), we had lost the capacity to organize ourselves and decide all together about our own problems.
3. Distrust and individualism which we are slowly struggling to do away with.
4. After receiving the first financial support we had problems organizing ourselves internally so as to execute the programs. When we achieved this initial efficiency we had to face difficulties of decentralization.
5. Access to the land is a major problem and it strongly affects us, as the cultural identity of the Andes is closely tied to the land. The members of the program do not attempt to better their production if they are not the owners of the land.
The land is ours, as we have lived here for many thousand years. The National Argentine State expropriated the lands in the last century. We still live in them but even though it belongs to us by right and by law we cannot overcome bureaucratic obstacles due to the lack of funds.
6. Presently, distances and the absence of communication means are the main problems. Information is the key concept for the success in scaling up strategy.

Participation:

Each community has its own organization called Community Funds. A male leader and a female leader, a treasurer and pro-treasurer, a secretary and members are chosen annually. A credit council is also formed. We demand a strict 17 step process to form a Community Fund. These steps were designed by the leaders.

We train two people for each community to be treasurers, training promoters, crafts promoters and health promoters in a near future.

After the fund is formed, a certain amount of money is given to them and the fund decides to whom micro credits can be given. A chain of people waiting for credits is started. The returns of micro credits stay in the same community and are used to give credits to those in the waiting list. A similar criterion is used with training and crafts where the decisions and money management is by the community. Communal Funds meet twice a month. The monthly assemblies in the Warmi site are attended by;

- * Leaders assembly: decisions on the future of Warmi are taken there
- * Treasurers to control the micro financing system.
- * Training and crafts promoters.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

- there has been actual improvement achieved in peoples living conditions, this has been through,
 - Improvement of competitiveness among the 750 families due to the access of micro credits and in 686 through training.
 - Better co-ordination and integration between various actors, organizations or institutions. Warmi is a network of 54 Community organizations with more than 2000 families members, and it operates through an Indigenous Local Development Program, which is comprised of:
 - Private companies to trade our products;
 - Universities to investigate and facilitate technological transfer;
 - The Government, to regulate the property of our land and to cooperate with our health system;
 - Other organizations, in order to obtain technical support.
 - Changes in local, national or regional, social, economic and environmental policies and strategies have being observed.
- People from other organizations in the country regularly visit us to look at our organization, and Rosario Quispe is permanently invited to give conferences in different places of our country and of South America.
- Improved institutional capacity at the national, sub-national or local levels.
- Our leaders and associates take part in the local government activities. Warmi has agreements with more than 10 municipal governments and we work together with them.
- Changes to local or national decision-making, including the institutionalisation of partnerships.
- Warmi's president takes part in Provincial Commission for Indigenous Participation, which is presently looking for ways of solving the problem of land ownership.
- Recognising and addressing specific opportunities and constraints.
 - Changes in peoples attitudes and behaviour. There has been noticeable increase in participation in the communities monthly meetings and also increase in awareness of responsibility.

SUSTAINABILITY

1.Financial:

Micro credits-

Loans are returned after three, six, twelve or twenty-four months. Interest rate is 9% and the interest obtained is added onto the capital. System Maintenance Expenditures are being partially taken care of by AVINA and IAF.

If there are members who have delayed payment they are given a limited period to update their situation, if they can't the community pays for them if not the money of Community Found goes to another community. We believe that 9% is enough to self support the system.

Training-

The people who undergo training become trainers themselves. These people are part of the community and they charge a small amount to the members for training. The most expensive part of this training is the preparation of the audiovisual packages. This is being financed by AVINA and IAF but we think we can generate funds to support these by selling the some products.

Crafts and Other products-

Through Warmi and the community funds each member can contact different companies to trade their products. We are creating and establishing market relations.

2.Social and Economic:

This includes Gender equality and social inclusion, economic and social mobility.

Women participation in the activities has increased significantly. At the beginning of the program they did not come to meetings, later they attended meetings but did not participate. Today they have a high attendance percentage and they actively participate in each debate.

There was also improvement in the access to health services and a sense of right and wrong in the defense of sexual and reproductive rights.

We encouraged equity in the access to economic resources, equal opportunities were therefore given to

men and women. We especially support women's craft production.

3.Cultural: Respect for and consideration of attitudes, behaviour patterns and heritage is what the initiative aims at.

We permanently work on the recovery of our indigenous heritage and on cultural values and our own forms of organization. Our main values are solidarity and participation through consensus.

4.Environmental: This includes reducing dependence on non-renewable resources (air, water, land, energy, etc.), and changing production and consumption patterns and technology.

We are working on the recovery of ownership of our lands and the use of natural resources. Solar panels are installed and used in homes and solar pumps are used for pumping water.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons:

1)The power of a motivating dream:

Defining our dream in an active and participatory way has been one of the major assets in the initiative. The dream of being able to live with dignity on what we produce like our ancestors did, means going back to depending on our resources and living according to our traditions and customs. This allows us to base our survival strategy on solidarity and community organization.

Passing on the dream in a simple way, which is easy to transmit and positive for others is perhaps the most important lesson we have learnt. This dream follows the principles of not giving anything away and to declare everything clearly and directly.

2)Internal and external efficiency:

Internally, we are trying to have the most efficient person carry out the job. This implied breaking our tradition of placing people of the same family group, friends, members of the same political party or religion in positions of power. To trust other people is the key concept in this growing decentralized system. Growth is achieved without centralizing resources or decisions and this leads to greater involvement of the people and increase in sustainability of the program.

Externally the activity is very dynamic. Since powers are distributed and not centralised, it allows us to be flexible and to deal or negotiate with each sector.

Both the combination of the president's political ability and the contribution of the technical team is relevant. We do not make permanent deals with any political party instead we talk to everyone and make agreements on different levels. Before the elections, we try to make ourselves unnoticeable and we prefer to leave our place or cancel any meeting with politicians.

3)What unites us and separates us

Understanding that, in a highly competitive world it was very important to look for something that united us was a valuable lesson. The elements that unite us are our common historic past and the fact of belonging to a certain ethnic group. Another unifying element was the perception of our own poverty, while a few companies and corrupted politicians became more powerful and richer.

Thinking on the economic and political processes has been, and still is, very useful for us to understand what makes us separated. Reflection was made with the help of technicians on economic and social processes in an era of comfort and closed economy. Recent liberal years have helped us understand why we are separated.

TRANSFERABILITY

Warmi is the result of 20 years of cooperative work between a group of technicians, the president and community leaders. Based on our joint experience, we have reflected on our failures and successes. This is the result of a continuous thinking process on what we did, and comparing what we did and what we saw was being done. The process of learning by doing and learning through others' experiences, allowed us to offer a development program. The program has been able to withstand the worst economic crisis ever in the history of our country and an intense social and political downfall. Our technicians were trained in different places of South America and in the world thus learning from

other people's experiences and adapting their knowledge to our reality.

Presently, Warmi is a model for those projects associated to AVINA in the province of Jujuy and in the nation. Because of this, we were awarded several local, national and international prizes. Many organizations in our country are looking for a way of adapting our strategies to their own environment and realities.

One of the key concepts of this high- quality performance is to keep good relationships (trust, understanding, sharing values and dreams) among leaders, and between technicians and leaders.

Another crucial point is the dynamics and the capacity to view opportunities in every experience. We know where we are going, we plan only systematic and predictable tasks, we trust in people's participation and the power of long-term objectives in order to face new challenges.

We believe that efficiency is the best answer to long-term planning. We are interested in the people and the process, as well as in the products. The generation of genuine leaders, of our own organizations, of gender equality, our capacity to include ourselves in a process of permanent trade in this globalization- respecting our differences- is vital. To increase our income is also important.

What we would do differently and what we would avoid :

We would prepare the organization beforehand for the financing shock. Real difficulties appear when there are resources to fulfill our dreams but not when we are dreaming them.

Key Dates

Creation: 1995: The decision to organize ourselves in order to overcome poverty/ isolation

Reward: 1997: International recognition and access to financing

AVINA's Support: 1999: The Possibility to fulfill our dream

Organization Strength: 2000: networking with 54 communities

Growth: 2001: To decide about own future

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Type of Organization: Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Partners

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Type of Partner Support: Financial Support

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Type of Organization: Central Government
Type of Partner Support: Political Support

Financial Profile

Year	Total	Partner A	Partner B	Partner C	Budget (US\$)	AVINA	IAF	MTySS	(% of the budget)	(% of the budget)
1.997	38.000,00	0%	0%	0%	1.998	57.000,00	0%	0%	53%	1.999
63.500,00	24%	0%	37%	2.000	385.000,00	60%	0%	32%	2.001	410.766,67
						60%	28%	10%		



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