

Improving HIV and STD care services for indigenous people in the Peruvian Amazon



Figure 1: Ashaninka women during a participatory workshop. Ashaninkas are an indigenous group from the Peruvian Amazon where health services have limited capacity to provide culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health care.

Context

The Peruvian Amazon is a vast territory inhabited by indigenous people and settlers from other parts of the country. In the central Amazon area, the most numerous indigenous group are the Ashaninkas who are unequally affected by several health conditions such as HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. This situation has multiple explanations, but one important solution is related to the provision of culturally-appropriate counselling and information regarding existing preventive services and free treatment. All of these are to be provided by state health workers who are often unfamiliar with indigenous culture.



Figure 2: Entry to one of the communities we will be working with: Comunidad Nativa Poyeni.

Project description

Through this project we aim to contribute with the strengthening of Peru's health systems capacity to provide culturally appropriate care for HIV/ AIDS and other STDs for indigenous people.

In order to do so, we propose four key actions:

- To assess the current bottlenecks for appropriate delivery of sexual and reproductive health services for indigenous people.
- To improve health workers capacity to deliver technically sound and culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS and STDs related health care for Amazonian indigenous peoples in Peru.
- To develop indigenous organizations and indigenous communities' capacities to monitor public services around sexual and reproductive health.
- To improve the delivery of health services on sexual and reproductive health for indigenous people from the Peruvian Amazon

Each action will use a participatory approach, involve different stakeholders, and include the joint design of informational and educational material to support the actions proposed by health workers and indigenous communities.

Partnership

Three institutions have come together to plan and implement this project: The Division of Tropical and Humanitarian Medicine at the Geneva University Hospitals in Switzerland (HUG), the Instituto de Medicina Tropical Alexander von Humboldt from the Universidad



Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH) and Salud Sin Límites Peru, a Peruvian NGO that has been working with indigenous people for over 15 years, and with the Ashaninkas since 2006.

UPCH and SSLP have worked together in the Amazon before, in a research project around Tuberculosis services for indigenous people. HUG and UPCH work together since 2012 and are currently partners in the project "Addressing the double burden of disease", funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and focusing on vulnerable populations in Peru, Nepal and Mozambique. The Esther grant will strengthen these partnerships, will enable HUG to translate its expertise in non-communicable diseases to HIV/AIDS and STDs and develop networks for future public health research and action through the inclusion of a local NGO.

Timeframe

February 2018 to June 2019

Contacts

Contact in Switzerland	Contact in Peru
David Beran David.Beran@unige.ch	Maria Amalia Pesantes Maria.amalia.pesantes@gmail.com