

# Rural youth, territories and opportunities:

A policy dialogue strategy  
2016/2019



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## PHOTOGRAPHY

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# More dialogue for improved policies that benefit rural youth



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**M. Ignacia Fernández G.**  
**Executive Director**  
Rimisp, Latin American Center for  
Rural Development

We are now concluding the project “Rural youth, territories and opportunities: A policy dialogue strategy”, after three years of intense work promoting policy dialogue as a strategy to improve and strengthen public policies.

This initiative marks a nine-year cycle of cooperation between Rimisp – the Latin American Center for Rural Development and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Our collaborative efforts are based on the conviction that “the best public policies are forged through dialogue”. This is because the complexity of the development issues facing Latin American societies cannot be resolved without the participation of a variety of stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector and academia. These entities must work with governments to seek out innovative and creative solutions that respond to what individuals and communities perceive and value as being important for their well-being.

However, not just any form of dialogue will suffice. The exchange of ideas that we require is based on empirical evidence which places the views and contributions of the different dialogue stakeholders at the service of public-policy decision makers. And when we talk about evidence, we of course mean scientific research, but we also refer to the specific and daily experience of the stakeholders who live in territories affected by problems that the project seeks to address in its various phases. We are working to overcome a focus centered exclusively on the appraisal of “scientific” knowledge in order to build bridges between different sources of knowledge and perspectives, all of which are valid and complementary, but which are frequently not incorporated into the

design and implementation of public policies.

This project has focused on rural youth. Over the last three years, we have improved our knowledge and understanding of the problems that affect them, delving into the goals and expectations that these young people have about their future and the difficulties they face in realizing such goals. Young people face severe difficulties in accessing employment opportunities in rural areas and face significant gaps with respect to their urban peers, and unfortunately do not seem to be the focus of public policies.

With the active participation of representatives of rural youth, the Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) of Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru focused their efforts on finding and proposing alternatives to solve these problems. The work has focused on making recommendations for the inclusion of rural youth at the national and local levels and in the private sector. These entities also have engaged in other dialogue and technical assistance actions with the governments of the four countries included in the project.

Thank you very much to each and every one of the people who have made this effort possible!

# Rural Youth Project: An alliance for the future of the territory



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**Jesús Quintana**  
Head of the IFAD Subregional Hub  
Responsible for the Andean and  
Southern Cone countries

More than 30 million young people live in the rural areas of Latin America, representing around a quarter of the total rural population. They should represent the future of the region's rural areas, guaranteeing generational renewal and the introduction of new ideas for rural territories. However, their perspectives are not generally promising.

Most rural young people do not have a job, especially women, and those who do are generally wage earners, many of them in informal employment. The lack of job opportunities, limited access to property and the means of production, the poor quality of public services, especially healthcare and education, and the lack of connectivity, both physical and digital, are forcing youth to leave rural areas, jeopardizing the dynamism, potential and future of these territories.

The **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)** is aware of this situation, and prioritizes interventions that take into account young people, especially women, given the crucial role they play in the creation of dynamic and creative economic environments. Young people are indispensable in order to guarantee food and nutritional security, agricultural productivity and competitiveness, the sustainable use of the environment, and the peace and social stability of the rural spaces they occupy.

Therefore, IFAD, based on a long term alliance with **Rimisp, the Latin American Center for Rural Development**, has financed and supported the implementation of the "Rural youth, territories and opportunities: A policy dialogue strategy" project, which in the last three years has made innovative contributions in terms of data, analysis, dialogue and revitalization

of rural youth in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

This collaboration has allowed IFAD to take advantage of the knowledge, experience and capabilities of RIMISP, and through the latter's methodology of Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs), to increase both the understanding of the problem and the formulation of policy proposals to enhance the role of rural youth in the fight against rural poverty, migration and depopulation, social discrimination, and the unsustainable use of territories.

**The Rural Youth Project** has helped to strengthen the promotion and establishment of public agendas regarding the challenges that rural youth are facing in the region. In all four countries, the Rural Youth RDGs have consolidated themselves as spaces that promote strategic dialogue among stakeholders, and provide valuable data to ensure that policies effectively address rural inequalities.

The positive legacy of the Project will allow both IFAD and RIMISP to continue supporting interventions for the empowerment of rural youth, investing in a way that effectively achieves the improvement of opportunities and rural transformation, thus guaranteeing a better future for rural territories and their inhabitants.



# Policy dialogue: A strategy to improve opportunities for rural youth

The best public policy is carried out through dialogue. This phrase illustrates the conviction reached after almost a decade of work between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Rimisp – the Latin American Center for Rural Development, underlining how policy dialogue is an effective strategy to address and respond to the significant poverty gaps that persist in Latin America, which are particularly acute between urban and rural territories.

In this respect and thanks to IFAD's financial support, the "Rural youth, territories and opportunities: A policy dialogue strategy" project was launched in 2017, with the aim of improving opportunities for the economic and social inclusion of rural youth through evidence generated in research and policy analysis and the commitment of the governments of four Latin American countries: Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

This initiative provided continuity to the work carried out through two previous projects. The first was "Knowledge for change: policy processes to improve poverty impacts", which was developed between 2010 and 2013. This study established the basic conditions required to influence policy processes to overcome rural poverty through the use of dialogue. The second, "Policy processes for large-scale impacts", implemented between 2013 and 2016, focused on making a contribution so that the policies and institutions in Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador and Ecuador will create a more conducive environment for that segment of the rural population living in poverty.

Like its predecessors, the project "Rural youth, territories and opportunities: A

policy dialogue strategy", is based on dialogue and its ability to influence on empirical evidence. As such, a central focus of the work was to improve the knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of income generation of young people in their territories, as well as the expectations, aspirations and needs of young people themselves, taking into account the institutional frameworks, policies and budgets aimed at this sector.

In the same way, efforts were outlined to influence the creation or improvement of at least one national policy, institutional framework or program aimed at rural youth in each of the countries involved. This strategy generated important results as a consequence of the process of dialogue and technical assistance conducted by the Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) created in each country. These entities were responsible for bringing together various stakeholders from civil society, academia, the public sector and the business world around an agenda aimed at formulating proposals in a range of fields, such as education, rural violence or the promotion of economic opportunities.

**The results obtained in the four countries have been promising, creating opportunities and alliances to meet the objective of contributing to improve the economic opportunities and social inclusion of young people. These include specific commitments obtained by the RDGs.** The challenges are many, but the pathways forward have already been mapped out. Standing out among the various actions of change in public policies promoted by the RDGs is the case of Colombia, given its support for the generation of a higher education policy that allows

more access for all rural youth, but in line with territorial dynamics. In Ecuador, technical assistance has been offered to the government, which issues a distinctive seal to identify and recognize companies that support the strengthening of technical education. In the case of Mexico, technical support is being provided for the formulation of the National Agrarian Strategy with a territorial approach. Finally, in Peru, the RDG has generated a set of strategic and operational guidelines to achieve the economic inclusion of rural youth within the framework of the National Development and Social Inclusion Policy carried out by the Ministry.



# Interview with Rossana Polastri

*Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the  
International Fund for Agricultural Development- IFAD*

To analyze IFAD's focus on Latin America and the scope of the Rural Youth Project, we talked with the Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Division (LAC) of the International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD, Rossana Polastri. Polastri holds a degree in Economics from the Universidad del Pacífico (Lima, Peru) and a master's degree in Economics from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She has held important positions in the World Bank and in the government of Peru.

## **What is the main focus of IFAD's work in Latin America?**

IFAD has been working in Latin America for four decades together with governments, civil society, the private sector and, of course, family farmer organizations, for the development of the rural sector, including family, peasant, indigenous and Afro-descendant farming.

The characteristic inequities of our continent, the most unequal in the world, are even more evident in rural areas, where small producers do not have access to land, capital, information or the markets they need to be able to advance their economic activity.

Although Latin America has made significant progress in reducing aggregate levels of poverty since 2000, rural areas continue to have higher levels of poverty than urban populations. For this reason, decisive and focused policy action is required to offer families opportunities that allow them to have a decent and secure income. In Peru, where I come from, the percentage of people living in poverty decreased from 54.8% to 20.7% between 2001 and 2016, and extreme poverty dropped from 24.4% to 3.8%. However, more than 40% of the rural population remains poor. Brazil has a per capita GDP of around \$9,000 dollars. However, the socioeconomic indicators of many of the poorest areas of the semi-arid northeast region are unacceptably high for an economy such as Brazil's.

To help improve this situation, IFAD promotes comprehensive public programs and policies that contribute to the elimination of inequalities. Our goal is to promote an inclusive and sustainable rural transformation that will favor family farmers and the region as a whole. This is because

it is small farmers who produce the vast majority of the food that Latin America consumes and, in many cases, exports. For example, in the case of Peru, 60% of asparagus exports and 40% of artichokes are produced by family farming. If the right policies and services were in place, this sector has a huge potential to generate a sectorial economy that contributes to the reduction of extreme poverty.

The governments of the region seek to partner with IFAD because they understand that we can bring innovations that help accelerate those goals. We believe that new technologies can (and should) contribute to overcoming the limiting factors that prevent small producers from competing in the market. We contribute, for example, to reducing the costs of access to financial services and to remedying the lack of information on markets or climatic conditions that are usually important challenges for family farms.

We believe that the potential of family farming in terms of both contributing to families' well-being and playing a key role in the local and national economy is infinite when these obstacles are eliminated. For example, it is very gratifying for IFAD when the small producer associations that its projects focus on and that are made up of families in poverty are able to export, because they show that they are an integral part of the domestic economy.

## **Why has IFAD decided to focus on rural youth during this stage?**

For many years, IFAD has focused its interventions on the most critical issues associated with the groups we work with: the empowerment of women, the elimination of hunger and the improvement

*“The results obtained from the collaboration between IFAD and an institution like RIMISP are undoubtedly positive. Inclusive and sustainable rural development has yet to be achieved, so I hope we can continue to work towards these goals together to reduce extreme and rural poverty and contribute to food security in a context of environmental sustainability”.*

of nutrition, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, and the development of opportunities for young people. To these four cross-cutting areas, we must also add the focus on the most vulnerable groups, which in our continent are indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities. In this way, IFAD seeks to contribute to the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the principle of “leaving no one behind.”

Rural youth is perhaps the group that poses the greatest challenge to those who seek to promote the development of rural areas and, at the same time, the main means to achieve that goal. The exodus of rural youth towards cities means a great loss of human capital. In the associations and communities that we support, young people become the link between rural and urban domains. It is they who, through access to the Internet, provide their parents and/ or communities with information on new techniques or opportunities, who open up market opportunities in cities and who develop innovative ideas for the commercialization of products.

However, it is also logical that every new generation wants to go one step further than the previous one, and rural youth want different opportunities. They don't want to simply cultivate the land or take care of the cattle. They want to develop rural enterprises that use new technologies to make these businesses grow, whether they are agricultural or not. They want to become service providers or engage in marketing. It is essential that our actions allow those wishes to come true if we want young people in rural areas to continue to engage with our projects and contribute to their development.

### **What are the main challenges that must be addressed in order to decrease the poverty gaps that impact rural youth in Latin America?**

There are three fundamental challenges facing youth in general that are exacerbated in rural areas. And the three challenges have to do with a single global challenge: to allow young people to have access to the physical, human and financial elements to follow any path of economic and personal development they wish to follow.

These three challenges are, first of all, access to quality education that allows them to improve their productive capacities or work opportunities. Secondly, we have the challenge of creating decent employment opportunities and applying the laws and regulations that already exist in our countries but which become increasingly blurred as one moves away from urban centers. Finally, there is the challenge of access to financial resources for the development of their productive ventures. Remember that rural youth rarely have access to land or capital, so financial institutions must find innovative mechanisms to support them. Many of our projects have an impact on providing that access to education, employment and financing to family farmers, and especially to young people. That access is a door to a new world for young people and –and let me insist on this– for the whole community and for the whole of society, in fact.

It is also important to understand that rural youth is not a homogenous actor, and that the specificities of the different sub-groups of rural youth must be understood very well with their potentials and challenges. A young man who belongs to an indigenous or Afro-descendant community does not face the same situation as a young woman with a family. In the case of young women,

especially those who have had children at a very young age, their only option is often to provide unpaid labor to the family. They are not allowed access to education or paid work, so it is very difficult for them to develop their own life project.

### **Do you think that the Rural Dialogue Groups have been a successful methodology for impacting public policy in the region?**

Rural Dialogue Groups contribute to these efforts by opening up a space for dialogue and coming together among stakeholders who do not always know each other or who know each other but sometimes distrust each other. We are talking about governments, private companies, associations of small farmers and rural unions. All of these entities have different interests that are sometimes perceived as opposites even though they can often be complementary. Now, it is necessary to speak, dialogue, to capture that possible complementarity, that point where the interests of each other converge. The main contribution of the Rural Dialogue Groups is to promote this exchange of ideas.

Developing public policies requires that many stakeholders come to the table with their experiences, knowledge and ideas as well as a commitment to seek consensus aligned with a clear and shared objective.

# Aspirations and expectations of inclusion in different territorial contexts: A research agenda focused on people

Within a context of demographic bonus, rural youth have a great potential to face the challenges of rural transformation. Compared with rural adults, they have more schooling, more proximity to the information society and the use of new technologies, greater capacity for innovation, more environmental awareness and they also move more easily between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, they face a number of gaps in terms of labor participation, access to land, and access to the provision of extension and credit services to undertake economic activities.

In other contexts, gaps are also found among rural youth compared to their urban peers, such as greater school dropout rates, reduced access to higher education, greater levels of adolescent pregnancy, less access to jobs in general and to quality jobs in particular, all of which are a reality of the lives of rural young people throughout Latin America.

Understanding how young people experience these restrictions and opportunities was the main focus of the research agenda of the “Rural youth and territories: a policy dialogue strategy” project. Within the framework of the territorial approach of Rimisp -which cross-cuts the project- we propose that the places where they live have a positive and negative influence on the gaps and restrictions faced by rural youth to reach their full potential, as the characteristics of the territory offer differentiated job opportunities, diverse organizational and community spaces

and specific institutional frameworks. What kind of economic inclusion do rural youth aspire to and how do these aspirations relate to the characteristics of the territories in which they live? What differences exist according to gender and ethnicity?

Preliminary findings indicate that the type of territory where young people live has a significant relationship with their aspirations for economic inclusion (Cazzuffi et al, 2018). On the other hand, the self-perception of agency does not seem to be a significant determinant of the aspirations of rural young people (while it is in the case of urban and urban-rural youth). Moreover, education functions as a driver of aspirations for success and wealth among the rural youth, but that does not reduce their fear of not finding or losing a job. There are also important gender differences in some dimensions of aspirations.

Regarding the internal migratory flows of rural youth in Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, it was found that in all three countries, and without exception, young people are more geographically mobile than adults (Cazzuffi and Fernández, 2018). The push factors for the younger population are concentrated in rural areas, while the pull factors are predominantly urban. However, not all rural areas are losing their young people. The ones that are losing a greater proportion of their youth are the ones with the highest levels of poverty and dependence on agriculture, as well as lower levels of human capital.

*Within the framework of the territorial approach of Rimisp -which cross-cuts the project- we propose that the places where they live have a positive and negative influence on the gaps and restrictions faced by rural youth to reach their full potential.*



## Geographies of resilience: The configuration of the aspirations of rural young people in Peru

**An investigation by Adriana Urrutia and Carolina Trivelli that marked a turning point in the research agenda of the project.**

During the first six months of 2018, Adriana Urrutia and Carolina Trivelli, and within the context of the diagnostic work of the Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) Peru, focused their investigations on the expectations and aspirations of a group of Peruvian rural youth, with different backgrounds, all of whom were very marked by the territorial contexts of origin and reception.

The study findings had a major influence on the methodologies and research questions of the project in general, as well as the other RDGs.

The study shows that the backgrounds of rural youth are diverse and that some key transitions (access to education, work, parenthood, migration) define their aspirations. In this context, it was observed that:

- a. although progress has been made in rural areas, gaps still exist compared to urban areas: today, around 70% of rural youth have healthcare insurance. However, and as stated by the interviewees, there are no health services near their communities and, if they do exist, the provision of such services is not culturally adapted nor is it equitable in terms of quality according to gender.
- b. The urban / rural dichotomy is a conception of the territory that is not so predominant today: although young people have grown up in a disconnected space in many ways within the national territory, their daily practices reveal that the direction of their lives breaks with that dichotomy and their lives are framed in an urban-rural continuum.
- c. The rural space is not an area to flee from: living in the countryside represents a yearning for young people. This desire is manifested in different ways: young people who want to work in agricultural work and who seek to start a business venture and hopefully that their ventures are successful; young people who have access to higher education and who want to share their knowledge in their communities of origin, or young people who want to live in the countryside because they consider that the quality of life is better.
- d. Technology represents a tool to build an identity that is both rural and local: as with their urban peers and young millennials around the world, technology is a fundamental tool for rural young people today.
- e. There is a pending agenda of the State regarding rural youth: this straddles between childhood and adulthood and requires the coordination of different sectors of government. In a fragmented State such as that of Peru, responding to the same needs in a coordinated manner, such as employment insertion, can be a difficult task to accomplish.

It requires:

(i) The last mile: reaching out to the rural sector and doing so with all the services and with quality; (ii) The design of social protection policies for the family; (iii) Incorporation of the territories and the economic corridors in public policies; (iv) Thinking beyond a linear trajectory in terms of labor insertion; (v) Creating spaces for dialogue about community aspirations; and (vi) Incorporation of technology.

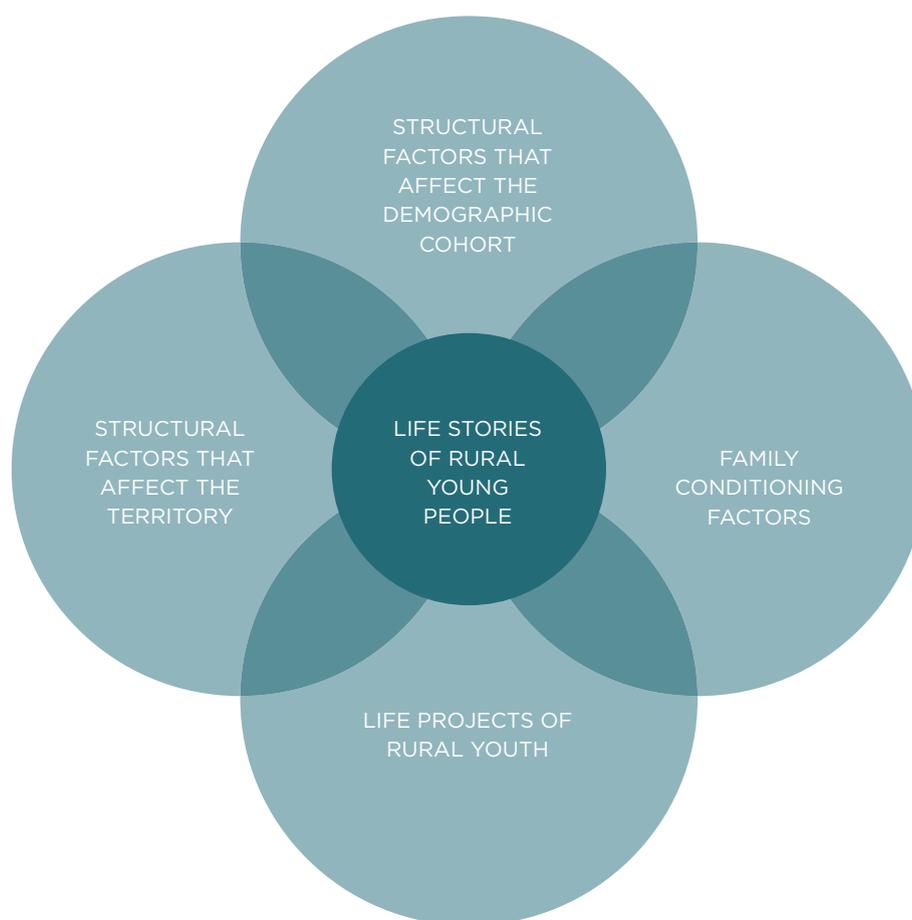
## Reference framework for the analysis of the life stories of rural young people

With the presentation of these results, the challenge of the third year of the project was to investigate how -in a context of economic, social, political and cultural changes- young people succeed in gaining access to livelihoods that allow them to start a family and lead a fulfilling life; what are the obstacles they encounter in this process; and what is the role that public policies play, along with the influence of territorial constraints. The same

research questions and methodologies were used in all four countries.

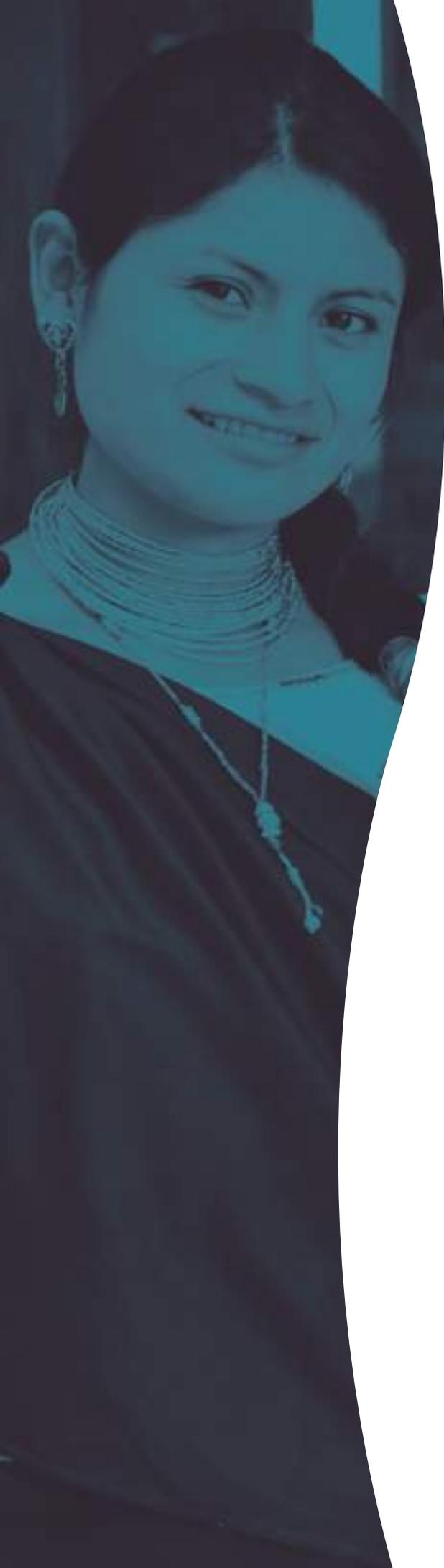
Led by Raúl Asensio<sup>1</sup>, principal investigator of the Institute of Peruvian Studies, the study proposes an analytical framework according to which, the trajectories of rural youth are the result of the intersection of four dimensions: the structural conditions that influence the situation of young people in each country; the specific conditions

of the territory where they live; their own personal / family conditions, and their own life projects, which may be constrained by the aforementioned conditions or young people may try to overcome such constraints.



Source: Asensio, 2019, Overcoming the wall: routes (and frustrations) of economic inclusion of rural Latin American youth.

The research teams were led by Claudia Ospina (Colombia), Eugenia Quingaisa and Juan Fernández (Ecuador) and Anidelys Rodríguez Brito (Mexico). In the case of Peru, the investigation adopted a different strategy, given that instead of carrying out specific field work, the project took advantage of other activities focused on rural youth that were being carried out in parallel in that country, including the aforementioned work by Urrutia and Trivelli, 2017.



The life stories of young people included in this research project represent a forewarning regarding the pending agenda for rural development in Latin America:

“Although they live substantially better and have greater possibilities than their parents and grandparents, the transition to the adult world means overcoming a wall of obstacles and difficulties. This wall can be more or less challenging depending on the specific conditions of each rural young person. Living in dynamic territories makes it easier to overcome, while living in economically disadvantaged territories makes it a lot more difficult. It is substantially more complicated for women than for men, as well as for indigenous young people of both genders.

The wall faced by rural youth derives in a large part from the continued existence of long-term structural factors in Latin American rural territories. In rural zones there are fewer quality jobs. Our life stories show that the labor insertion of young people is significantly more random. This is due in part to causes that we could call “natural”, associated with urban economies of scale, but also to the imbalance of political power inherited from the 20th century, which determines what rural agendas are delayed with respect to their urban counterparts.” (Asensio, 2019)

## Public policies and budgets for rural youth

As a whole, these results suggest that public policies should invest both in individuals (schooling, assets) and in territories (public goods, promotion of productive diversification, among others) and in territorial development policies focused on improving local opportunities, so that young people can develop their potential in the place they choose.

With this concern in mind, the project developed two types of analysis. On the one hand, an analysis was made of the behavior of public expenditure of the Central Government in terms of rural youth, with special emphasis on efforts for economic inclusion (financial, productive and labor), in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru (Rodríguez, 2018), which shows that a very small amount of the programs

for the economic inclusion of rural youth is directed exclusively to this group, as the vast majority of the programs identified were directed at more segments of the population. This may generate a risk of not adequately addressing the needs of rural youth, as they may be included as potential beneficiaries in larger programs that do not take into account their particularities and, therefore, that there is some kind of implicit bias against their adequate access to the programs being offered. The aggregate expenditure on programs for the economic inclusion of rural youth in general represents a low percentage of total government expenditure.

Furthermore and in terms of diagnosis, each RDG sought to investigate the characteristics of public

programs aimed at young people and rural productive development in their respective countries, in order to analyze their relevance to contribute to the economic inclusion of rural youth. The results of these diagnoses represent an important input for the advocacy and technical assistance agenda of the project.

### The research agenda in figures:

- 14 Rimisp working documents
- 5 working documents of the Institute of Peruvian Studies
- 7 presentations at international scientific congresses
- 4 presentations in activities held by international and development organizations
- 5 project and/or assessment reports
- 1 workshop held in IFAD, Rome



# Public policies for rural youth: More dialogue and evidence in the search for strategies to generate economic opportunities

*The goal of this project is to contribute to the improvement of the economic opportunities of rural youth through the evidence generated in research and policy analysis and the impact on public policies*

Rendering rural youth more visible and incorporating them into dialogues that will allow more and better public policies to be generated has been one of the objectives of the “Rural youth, territories and opportunities: a policy dialogue strategy” project. The goal is to promote economic opportunities that allow members of this youth segment to be agents of change and development of their respective territories.

Taking into account that rural young people have been gaining importance in the international arena, more and more countries and international and cooperation agencies have been formulating proposals to adequately address this population segment in development strategies and to offer them opportunities tailored to their needs and characteristics.

This challenge was taken up by the Rural Dialogue Groups (RDGs) in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Mexico, promoting dialogue as a key strategy to influence substantive changes in the public policy agenda aimed at rural youth.

The goal of this project is to contribute

to the improvement of the economic opportunities of rural youth through the evidence generated in research and policy analysis and the impact on public policies targeted towards them with the local and national governments of four countries.

Consequently, efforts have been focused on the distinctive features of the territories of the four countries, highlighting specific actions to improve the economic opportunities of rural youth from different dimensions, such as education, entrepreneurship and social inclusion.

MÉXICO:

## Civil society organizations discussing policy dialogue strategies with a focus on rural youth

Situations of violence and the lack of opportunities in rural Mexico have made the visibility and incorporation of rural youth into discussions, along with the presentation of evidence and proposals to government decision makers, increasingly more important so that interventions targeted on this population segment can improve and be strengthened.

In this context, and following the initiation of this project, the decision was made to restructure the Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) by inviting a group of civil society organizations to join as co-conveners of a dialogue process to benefit rural youth (Oxfam, the Espinosa Yglesias Research Center-CEEY, the Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute, the Mexican Senate's Belisario Domínguez Institute, the Territorial Dynamics and Welfare Research Chair of Universidad Iberoamericana, Social Mexico, and Front Against Poverty). This stage of the work was led by Jorge Romero in the Technical Secretariat and took place during the last period of President Peña Nieto's six-year term in office. During this process the RDG was invited to present its assessment of the situation of rural youth at the meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee of Information on Youth, which was presided over by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and the Mexican Youth Institute (IMJUVE). The initiative brought together a dozen agencies focused on creating information tools and indicators regarding Mexicans youth.

In 2018, and with Isidro Soloaga and Perla Legorreta alternating roles in the Technical Secretariat, the RDG decided to refocus its efforts based on the opportunities that accompanied the arrival of the administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly known as 'AMLO'). The dialogue focused on extended meetings of the RDG with the transition teams of the incoming government, highlighted by the presence of those who would go on to head the Ministries of Labor and Social Welfare, Public Education and

Technological Education.

During this period, the RDG also made progress on coordinating proposals to make government measures in rural youth matters more relevant and effective. The product of this work is a series of four policy briefs that include policy recommendations, which have been disseminated among various public, private and cooperation stakeholders.

### Strengthening linkages with rural youth and their organizations

RDG Mexico has added new youth organizations to its network, highlighting their experiences and focusing on those that promote social and political participation. It has also sought to incorporate the voices and perspectives of rural youth through a pilot study set up in rural areas of Hidalgo, Guanajuato and the state of Mexico. Furthermore, workshops have been held in the states of Morelos, Guerrero, Nayarit, Jalisco, Puebla, Chiapas, Guanajuato and Michoacán to develop outreach activities and look into opportunities that engage in production initiatives.

In this sense, the RDG's efforts have been focused on strengthening the incorporation of the voices of rural youth in policy discussions, strengthening ongoing processes and robustly promoting their development with respect to the most incipient issues. This approach was adopted in light of the diagnoses that have been developed, as it was observed that current policies towards young people mainly focus on urban youth.

With the same purpose in mind, the RDG joined the unprecedented Youth Caravan, an initiative that brought together around fifty rural young people from the Sierra Norte de Puebla and the Yucatan Peninsula, along with various community organizations. This event was focused on generating dialogue, understanding public policy processes and voicing the demands and concerns of young people in terms of the country's present context.

### Principles and expectations of rural youth in Mexico

Rural youth in Mexico express important values such as tolerance, respect (especially towards women and the issue of sexual diversity) and solidarity. These principles may stem from the close family and community ties that exist within rural settlements, where a high value is given to social cohesion and local identity. It is also striking that it is these same values that lead rural youth to see in the absence of the rule of law their greatest obstacle to fulfilling their dreams. Our attention was also drawn to the fact that, despite the civic values they express, the insecurity and the context of violence in many territories leads young people to put up with the violation of human rights and laws as long as the safety of local inhabitants is guaranteed. Not so bribery, which is strongly looked down on by the rural youth.

On the other hand, rural youth maintain high expectations in relation to their studies and job opportunities, which stands in contrast to their salary expectations (half aspire to earn less than 15 thousand pesos a month). Regardless of the socioeconomic level in which they consider themselves to be, rural youth aspire to complete their high school studies and continue studying towards higher levels. The main obstacle that they identify in this regard is their economic condition. As for job aspirations, these are oriented to professional work. However, it should be noted that young women continue to view the rural sector as a source of job opportunities despite the fact that adult women are less involved in field labor than men. And while rural young men do not harbor values of discrimination against women, they do recognize that women have fewer opportunities than their male peers when it comes to job opportunities.

Extract from an analysis of expectations and aspirations of rural youth carried out by RDG Mexico under the direction of Isidro Soloaga.

### Collaboration with the agricultural strategy of the Ministry of Agrarian, Land, and Urban Development (SEDATU)

Working with the Under-secretariat of Technological Education of AMLO's government transition team, this dialogue process with public actors initially led to progress being made in generating opportunities for collaboration aimed at generating information on the situation of rural youth. This included the issue of school drop outs and their reinstatement, and on the education opportunities being offered to them, which are relevant inputs when addressing the effectiveness of public policies.

More recently, the work of RDG Mexico on rural youth created an opportunity for Rimisp to support the design of the National Agrarian Strategy of the Ministry of Agrarian, Land and Urban Development (SEDATU), one of the priorities of which is a generational transfer strategy for social property in the country, with the consequent creation of opportunities for the youth population. In this context, Rimisp hopes to support diagnostic elements and to contribute to a working agenda that brings together various agencies. This it hopes to do by making the experience available of the RDG and organizations with respect to the restrictions and opportunities for the articulation of public policies.

*The RDG's efforts have been focused on strengthening the incorporation of the voices of rural youth in policy discussions, strengthening ongoing processes and robustly promoting their development with respect to the most incipient issues. This approach was adopted in light of the diagnoses that have been developed, as it was observed that current policies towards young people mainly focus on urban youth.*

#### Mexico's rural youth in numbers

- According to the 2015 Inter-census Survey, **45 million people** live in rural areas consisting of **15 thousand** or less inhabitants, of which **14 million** are young people.
- While **78.5%** of Mexican youth live in cities, **21.6%** live in rural areas. However, for every three young people who are considered poor, one comes from a rural area.
- While the average number of years of schooling in urban areas is **11.4** for women and **11.1** for men, in rural areas of less than **15 thousand** inhabitants these figures fall to **10.5 and 10.2 years** respectively, and in rural areas of less than **2,500 inhabitants**, to **9.2 and 8.9 years**.
- The percentage of young people who do not study or work in rural areas with less than **2,500 inhabitants** stands at **33%**.
- In terms of violence, the number of young women killed in rural areas with less than **2,500 inhabitants** is almost **5 percentage points** higher than in rural areas with less than **15 thousand inhabitants** and in urban areas.

COLOMBIA:

## Education for rural youth and the challenge of illicit crops

An estimated 2.6 million young Colombians between the ages of 14 and 28 live in rural areas, comprising 24.5% of the total rural population. This rate is similar to that of young people in capital cities like Cali or Medellín, but rural young people do not have the same offering of services and programs as their urban peers. Difficulty accessing post-secondary education and formal employment and the general lack of opportunities lead 12% of rural young people to migrate to urban centers in search of a better life.

An aggravating factor is the presence of illicit crops. The progressive expansion of such crops has contributed to a decrease in the viable legal alternatives open to the young people who live in these areas. In fact, their proliferation has been a critical matter for Colombian public policy.

In this context, Colombia's Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) focused on creating a space for dialogue among diverse stakeholders in order to advance proposals to address the issue of rural young people in difficult contexts. This includes those living in areas dominated by the presence of illicit crops, an issue which has been included in a limited number of instruments and infrequently discussed in the context of public policies.

### Three focus areas

The Colombia Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) is composed of experts from civil society, academia, the public and private sectors and cooperation agencies. Its main goal is to create spaces of informed dialogue and evidence-based decisions that can have a significant impact on the country's rural development.

During this period, the Colombia RDG has focused on three main areas. The first, which was led by Santiago Perry as the Technical Secretary of the Group, involved assessing and drafting policy guidelines for rural youth in Colombia in order to promote

the development of capacities and opportunities for rural young people. The goal was to allow them to improve their living conditions and quality of life so that they could contribute to the economic, social, cultural and institutional transformation of their territories. There was also an effort to promote the participation of rural young people in social life and the development of the public policies that affect them, encouraging their organization and representation and designing and implementing specific policies in the various areas that affect their social and economic development.

Following the mid-2018 transfer of the Technical Secretariat to Rimisp's Colombia office –led by Ángela Penagos–, and the incorporation of new members, the RDG agreed to focus its efforts on understanding and supporting the situation of rural young people who live in territories impacted by illegal economies and specifically by the presence of illicit crops.

In this context, an analysis was conducted in collaboration with the Agriculture Ministry of the factors that encourage young people to engage in these activities, moving towards guidelines that could shape the illicit crop substitution policy and policies focused on rural youth.

### Colombia's rural youth in numbers

- Nearly **40%** of rural Colombian young people live in poverty. This rate is **1.6 times** that of young people living in urban areas, and this gap has expanded over the past 10 years (up from **1.3 times**).
- **16.7%** of rural young people live in extreme poverty. This is three times the rate of urban young people living in this situation (**4.8%**).
- Only 71.2% of rural young people participate in an economic activity. That rate is over **25 percentage points** higher among urban youth (**97.4%**).
- Only **16%** are affiliated with the healthcare system compared to **52%** of their urban counterparts.
- **6%** have access to post-secondary education compared to **28%** of urban youth.
- One quarter of young women between the ages of **15 and 19** are pregnant or have had children, which is 10 percentage points higher than the rate for their urban counterparts.

## Impacts of illicit crops in Colombia

In Colombia, the territories affected by illegal crops exhibit greater delays in various critical variables for development. They present a considerably higher global poverty rate than the national average (81% vs 69%) (DANE, 2005). This difference is greater if these numbers are compared to those of municipalities without the presence of these crops (67%). The trend remains steady in urban and rural areas but is particularly dramatic in rural zones, which have an incidence of 89% in areas with illegal crops compared to 78% without them. Inequality is also greater in the affected areas, which present a Gini index of 0.49 compared to the national average of 0.45, which is also the rate for areas free of these crops.

Young people in these territories present important delays in variables that impact their ability to generate income and opportunities. Educational coverage in these municipalities was just 25% in 2016, which stands in contrast to the average rate of coverage of 42%. The percentage of the population between the ages of 5 and 24 who attended a school in the affected territories was 53% in 2005, compared to 62% in municipalities

that do not have illicit crops (DANE, 2005). The standardized test scores of students from these territories are also lower than the national average.

For their part, young women in affected rural areas had 30% more children than the national average in 2016 and 39% more than women in municipalities without coca crops. In contrast to the national average and that of municipalities without illegal crops, population growth in affected rural areas was positive in 2017 (0.48%).

Other sources have shown that municipalities that have undertaken crop substitution processes present concerning dynamics of violence that prevent legal alternative from emerging for young people (FIP, 2018). In that sense, the number of homicides, displacements and kidnappings is considerably higher in territories that began substitution processes compared to municipalities with illegal crops that have not yet begun to implement such programs (FIP, 2018). This represents an even greater challenge for rural youth seeking out viable and sustainable options for income generation within the territories and exacerbates dynamics of migration and abandonment of the territory by young people.

More recently, and thanks to the RDG's position with the government, the National Education Ministry (NEM) requested the group's collaboration on the creation of technical inputs directed at the development of a rural higher education public policy that recognizes territorial heterogeneity and leverages regional functionality.

The assessment for the NEM is clear. Educational coverage in rural areas decreases as students move from primary to secondary education and then on to higher education due to the fact that conditions of access become more and more difficult. A higher education policy requires territorial differentiation that emphasizes the empowerment of different territorial stakeholders. The work of supporting these organizations will focus on those efforts.

In 2020, the RDG plans to make progress on the promotion of territorial dialogues that include young people and other key stakeholders in the creation of legal opportunities. The group also hopes to generate opportunities for reflecting on and building viable and sustainable alternatives for generating income and individual and collective development in the affected territories. In order to do so, it will have to position itself as a figure of coordination of stakeholders and in initiatives that contribute to achieving this goal and providing evidence-based technical inputs to increase the dynamism of the discussion and the proposals that are generated in this space.



ECUADOR:

## Reinforcing links with SMEs and strengthening education to improve opportunities for rural youth

It is estimated that 60% of Ecuadorians do not have a good job or are unemployed, aggravating the country's situation in terms of poverty. In the rural sector, 43% of the population is subject to this condition. But when it comes to rural youth, unemployment stands at 10% and up to 75% of the jobs that they hold fall into the category of inadequate employment.

Since 2010, the Ecuador Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) has worked to break down barriers of inequality in the country. In this new stage, assuming the task of generating responses and strategies for rural youth, it has engaged in fruitful policy dialogues with important stakeholders in different categories, supporting efforts to increase coordination in this sector.

The main topics of analysis have been agriculture and its importance in the development of the economy and society, agricultural institutions, the improvement of rural education, sustainable productive chains, the importance of innovation and research for agriculture.

The Group, headed at the Technical Secretariat by Ney Barrionuevo, has drawn attention to the discussion of rurality beyond the agricultural context and has extended it to include the quality of life of the rural population, to the local capacities of productive enterprises and to the urgency of granting rights and access to education and healthcare. In 2018 and 2019, there was an active participation in the meetings of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Education and the Undersecretary of Specialized and Inclusive Education of the Ministry of Education, with the aim of articulating proposals in the area of rural youth as promoted by the RDG.

The initial assessment made by the Ecuador RDG reveals that in Ecuador there are no public policies aimed exclusively at young people in the rural sector, also revealing

that 40% of rural work is based on entrepreneurship. Therefore, the RDG decided to focus its advocacy agenda and policy dialogue on the improvement of rural education and the support of entrepreneurs.

### The key role of RENAJER

One of the main achievements of the Ecuador RDG was the creation of the National Network of Young Rural Entrepreneurs (RENAJER), an organization comprised of more than a hundred entrepreneurs from the Coast, Sierra and Amazonia regions, covering a range of 15 provinces. Its focus is dialogue around issues associated with rural youth and related topics.

RENAJER has played a key role in coordinating the dialogue process. This Network has matured over time, which has led to both an active participation in RDG meetings - where their concerns and approaches are received - as well as a better organizational structure, achieving the categorization of agricultural and livestock enterprises, food processing, of tourism and gastronomy and of various services in the rural sector. Institutions and organizations that support the growth of RENAJER and its potential have joined forces with this effort, which is being coordinated by the young people themselves.

### Significant progress on technical education in the rural sector

In late 2017, the Ministry of Education asked the RDG to conduct two studies aimed at incorporating improvements in the area of technical education in the rural sector. Following up on this work, the Undersecretariat of Specialized and Inclusive Education of the Ministry of Education presented the National Strategy for Technical Education to the RDG, incorporating some elements suggested by the RDG regarding the rural environment and findings from the studies. These were related to the need for differentiation in terms of relevance to the demands of rural development, the incorporation of new outlines according to the

### Ecuador's rural youth in numbers

- **63.6%** of rural youth in Ecuador live in poverty and their basic needs are not met. Furthermore, **27.1%** live in extreme poverty and **33.4%** of rural households live below the multidimensional poverty line.
- The unemployment rate among rural youth is **10%**, and up to **75%** fall into the category of inadequate employment.
- The average number of years of schooling in rural zones is **7.5** compared to **11.3** in urban areas.
- The rural enrollment rate for technical high school (including agriculture and livestock, industrial, service-oriented, art or athletics activities) is **82.4%**, while the enrollment rate in universities in rural areas is just **5.2%**.
- **40%** of rural employment is provided through enterprises.

diversification of rural activities and changes in teaching methodologies with flexibility to use the same territory as an element of learning.

In recognition of the work of the RDG and in the context of the “Strategy for the Strengthening of Technical Education (2030)” of the Ministry of Education of Ecuador, the technical assistance of Rimisp was requested for the construction of a corporate seal that identifies and recognizes companies that support the strengthening of rural technical education. The Technical Baccalaureate Seal was launched as part of the Companies and Institutions Committed to Technical Education Exposition. This recognition will be granted to companies and institutions that support technical education at the secondary education level, thanks to the technical advice provided by the RDG.

#### **Rural enterprises**

The activities of the RDG have also contributed to the discussion of (i) the inclusion of rural youth in the Ministry of Agriculture’s 2018-2025 Strategic Plan for Agro, with support for entrepreneurship; (ii) the prioritization of credit for young rural entrepreneurs through BANECUADOR, making the provision of guarantees more flexible and adapting to their needs; and (iii) the incorporation of young people into the National Tourism Training Program of the Ministry of Tourism - MINTUR.

More recently, and at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, the RDG Technical Secretary is providing advice on the design of the 2020-2030 State Policies for the Agricultural Sector, an initiative that is being developed jointly with FAO. RENAJER forms part of its Steering Committee. This collaboration, as well as the determined commitment of the RDG members, opens up important opportunities for the continuity of the Group’s work in 2020.

*Since 2010, the Ecuador Rural Dialogue Group (RDG) has worked to break down barriers of inequality in the country. In this new stage, assuming the task of generating responses and strategies for rural youth, it has engaged in fruitful policy dialogues with important stakeholders in different categories, supporting efforts to increase coordination in this sector.*



PERÚ:

## Economic inclusion of rural youth placed within the public policy agenda

In Peru, rural youth represent 22.2% of the youth population and 4.6% of the country's total population according to the National Census (2017). This sector faces important challenges related to their economic inclusion due to a series of factors, including academic pathways that are often truncated because they have to take on family responsibilities early in life, as well as a lack of job opportunities.

The Peru Rural Development Group (RDG) is the newest group created in the context of this project. After it was formed in 2016 with Carolina Trivelli as its Technical Secretary, the RDG sought to position the issue of rural youth on the agenda and bring together and engage various stakeholders through this topic. In the public sphere, it connected with the Ministry of Inclusion and Social Development (MIDIS), the National Youth Directorate (SENAJU), the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) and members of Congress. The group also includes representatives from academic entities such as the Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) and the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya Jesuit University (UARM) as well as private sector entities such as Hubday and Antamina, among other actors.

RDG Peru has focused its advocacy work on two areas. The first is to create evidence and position within the public discussion a set of critical issues, which have been identified as priorities by Group members for the development of rural youth. The second is to respond to specific public and private sector demands to analyze and formulate proposals in areas critical to the performance of the stakeholders involved.

### Raising the visibility of rural youth

The first years of the RDG's work were focused on creating trust and shared work agendas. The most noteworthy development in this stage was the organization of an International Seminar on Rural Youth

that was held in October 2018. The event featured the participation of young people from different rural areas of Peru, some of whom still lived in their territories of origin and some of whom were pursuing university studies in Lima. These participants presented their expectations and described the challenges that they faced. The seminar, which was organized in collaboration with the Peruvian Studies Institute at PUCP and UARM, was the first opportunity that academics from various generations and disciplines had to meet to discuss Peru's rural youth and set out a research agenda for the future.

Following this, the RDG's main effort in 2019 was to assess, analyze and formulate recommendations around a set of critical issues for rural youth such as education, employment, agroecology, ICTs, participation and institutional structure.

The initiative benefitted from the participation of nearly all of the RDG's members, who organized working groups to generate recommendations for each topic. The final product of the process was a document containing public policy recommendations entitled "Between aspirations and limitations: Public policies in favor of rural youth in Peru." The text is being disseminated among high-ranking officials and through the usual Peruvian Studies Institute and Rimisp channels.

Education Minister Flor Pablo offered a presentation on December 9, 2019 that was attended by Ana Patricia Andrade, the Vice-Minister of Pedagogical Administration; Fabiana Raunelli, the National Secretary of the National Youth Directorate; Jesús Quintana, the Director of the Andean and Southern Cone Region IFAD Office; and several RDG members led by Carolina Trivelli.

### Between aspirations and limitations: Public policies that favor rural youth in Peru

The title is the name of the document that contains the final summary of the Peru GDR's work. It describes the main proposals for the joint actions described above, as well as others developed by the group over the course of three years of work. The topics addressed include education, employment, participation and institutional structure. The document has been formally submitted to various government officials as a summary of the assessments and proposals formulated to improve opportunities for rural youth in Peru.

### An effective response to specific demands

The active participation of the public and private sectors made it possible for some entities to formulate specific demands that were shared with the group at various points in time as part of an effort to support their work strategies with rural youth.

Due to the constant references made regarding the critical role of local governments in the International Seminar held in October 2018, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, through its Decentralization Secretariat, asked the RDG to provide an analysis of the role of rural mayors in the economic inclusion of rural youth (Romero and Reategui, 2019).

Furthermore, based on the interest of various members of the RDG from the mining and agricultural exports sector, a request was received to organize and discuss the actions that mining companies have taken in favor of rural youth in their areas of influence. The goal is to document, discuss and report back to the companies on initiatives that they can implement

on behalf of young people.

The results of both projects were distributed at public events, to the government and to the National Mining, Oil and Energy Society (SNMPE), respectively.

Those who directly took part in the Peruvian RDG, along with the set of stakeholders with which the Group has interacted over the years, all made a positive assessment of the work that has been conducted. So much so in fact that the Group has decided to continue to discuss rural youth in 2020 through quarterly meetings that have been agreed to with key stakeholders such as UNESCO, PUCP and UARM, which will be complemented by an event on rural youth organized in collaboration with YPARD.

#### Peru's rural youth in numbers

- Approximately **1.5 million people** between the ages of 15 and 29 live in rural territories in Peru.
- **53.5%** of rural youth are men and **46.5%** are women. This difference may imply greater migration of the female population to urban centers.
- While most rural youth in Peru work, only a minority are paid for their efforts. According to the 2017 Census, while **45.8%** of Peruvian youths work for some pay, that number drops to **29.8%** among the rural population (Urrutia and Trivelli, 2019a).
- Young people who do not study or work represent **15%** of the rural youth population.
- The dominant mother tongues of the rural youth population in Peru are **Spanish (65.1%), Quechua (26.8%) and Aymara (3.2%)**. The latter two are much more widely spoken among rural youth than among their urban peers.





## Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality

Latin America has the dubious honor of being the most inequitable region in the world, even compared to regions that have more dramatic levels of poverty, such as Africa and parts of Asia. For this reason, and every two years since 2011, Rimisp-Latin American Center for Rural Development has published the Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality, the objective of which is to contribute to the discussions regarding poverty and inequality from a particular perspective: that of territorial inequality, which corresponds to one of the issues that has been least addressed, and that has a particularly far-reaching impact on Latin America's rural sectors.

This series of documents has allowed us to discuss the importance of contemplating the territories and their particularities beyond the aggregate national data that is habitually observed in the respective countries. From this perspective, the reports have contributed to highlighting key aspects that affect those territories that have the greatest difficulty in terms of growth and to reduce their poverty and inequality rates.

The disadvantaged territories in the different countries of the region tend to share certain characteristics: they are smaller in terms of population, are more rural, have a greater proportion of people belonging to indigenous or Afro-descendant groups and, to a lesser extent, have a higher proportion of inhabitants aged under 15. The evidence also shows that sub-national territorial gaps tend to be geographically grouped together and usually in places further away from national capitals and/or large cities, and in many cases located in border zones.

*Latin America has the dubious honor of being the most inequitable region in the world, even compared to regions that have more dramatic levels of poverty, such as Africa and parts of Asia.*

### **2011: Territorial gaps, a cross-cutting issue in Latin America**

In 2011, and with the first edition of the Latin American Report, it was proposed that regional inequalities are a problem and an obstacle to development. Consequently, understanding and dealing with territorial gaps is not only good for territories, where relationships today are not what we would wish, but also because these unequal relationships have a significant cost for the respective countries.

In terms of territorial inequality, the study showed that the average values of the socioeconomic indicators of each country frequently conceal significant variations between territories, either between urban and rural territories or between different political-administrative units. In this case, some of the social indicators in a given country can make it seem that there are no problems in the areas they measure, given their average values; however, such average figures contain results from territories in which these indicators are clearly disappointing.

The first Latin American Report also analyzed the implications of these inequalities in terms of public policies and their relationship with institutional capacities. In this sense, it was proposed that sectoral policies are not neutral with respect to territorial inequality, as the same policy may contribute to the development of one territory, not have much impact on others and may even have a negative effect on other territories.

### **2013: Territorial inequality and employment opportunities**

The second edition of the Report, published in 2013, analyzed the evolution over time of socioeconomic gaps and incorporated an additional dimension to the study, i.e. the unequal territorial distribution of opportunities for access to quality employment. The Report proposed that the places where people are born and live are a significant determining factor with respect to their opportunities for access to quality employment. Unevenly distributed among the territories, the difficulties created by precarious employment opportuni-

ties represent serious obstacles not only for those who experience them, but also for the equitable development of the region's countries.

The document provided a better understanding of the factors, characteristics and conditions of the territories that determine the generation of better employment opportunities in some places more than in others. Territories with a productive structure in which the primary sector carries less weight or generates greater productive linkages (with a greater presence of high productivity sectors), where higher-quality public policies are applied (to foster economic and social development), and where there is more social dialogue (greater level of union affiliation, more opportunities for tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining), will also have higher levels of quality employment.

### **2015: Gender equality**

In 2015, the third edition of the Latin American Report conducted an analysis of the evolution of territorial development gaps, and incorporated a Territorial Equity Index, which measures the gaps between the territories of each of the ten countries included in the study, these being: Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile.

The dimension covered by the analysis was gender equity, and more specifically, individual and territorial opportunities for women's economic autonomy. Gender inequality -in terms of women generating their own income and resources- is expressed in different ways in the territories, as such inequality not only relates to the assets or endowments of women and their capacity for agency, but also with factors typical of the territory, such as the productive structure, formal and informal institutions, and agents present in the territory. Each of these dimensions is marked by gender systems, which can restrain or open up development opportunities, both in the case of women and for the territory.

Territories in which more dynamic markets predominate, that have highly productivity economic sectors, with public policies that tend to facilitate the

economic integration of women and with a better distribution of the capacity for agency among diverse social groups, make a better contribution to increasing and/or deploying the assets of women, therefore improving their relative status in these territories. This integrated analysis of territorial factors and women's characteristics is the main challenge for interventions by public institutions and their policies and programs.



## 2017: “No Territory Left Behind”

The fourth edition of the Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality discussed territorial inequality from the perspective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that is being promoted by the United Nations.

The integrated approach that underlies the 2030 Agenda -in which economic, social and environmental issues are indivisible- is one of the main challenges faced by Latin American states in terms of its implementation, as it requires both the building of institutional mechanisms that overcome traditional ways of compartmentalized organization and the articulation of a diverse range of stakeholders under a common vision.

In full alignment with the 2030 Agenda slogan of “No One Left Behind,” the Report proposes the need for “no territory to be left behind”, as is the case today when development dynamics predominate that represent clear advantages for some and delays for others.

From a territorial perspective, the linkages between different levels of government and different stakeholders is imperative, as inequality in Latin America has a different and additional territorial component to the inequalities that are commonly witnessed between people, households and groups, and where rural territories have been systematically held back in terms of the dynamics of development.

### Latin American Report 2017 No Territory Left Behind

The Report proposes a series of measures aimed at incorporating the territorial approach, and reducing gaps for the progress of the 2030 Agenda. These interventions can contribute to the articulation of institutions and stakeholders for the sustainable development of the territories:

1. Identify the type of coordination necessary for the purposes proposed by the development policies or projects.
2. Formalize the instances of coordination and define the roles and functions of the institutions, as well as developing mechanisms and tools that support the coordinated action.
3. Design an incentive system that promotes coordinated action among institutions and establishes an institutional culture open to coordination.
4. Define a common vision among the stakeholders that are part of the coordinated action, giving

meaning to the articulated work.

5. Recognize the fundamental role of local governments and territorial institutions, while taking advantage of previously established trust.
6. In initiatives or public policies at the national level, it is essential to promote the involvement of local governments to give sustainability to the processes.
7. Incorporate professionals with specific dedication to manage the articulation of stakeholders.
8. Promote informal opportunities of coordination and communication between the entities involved, as this allows for investment in the generation of trust between the people who are part of the articulation spaces.
9. Promote leaderships with the ability to convene and which are legitimate.
10. Promote the participation of private-sector stakeholders and civil

society, favoring the generation of alliances or coalitions in contexts of the lack of trust in institutions.

11. Involve a diverse range of stakeholders to amplify the synergistic effects of the articulation.
12. Consider the difficulties of transportation and connectivity so that these are not an obstacle for individuals and organizations in isolated zones to be part of the coordination activities of stakeholders.

## 2019: Rural Youth and Territory

Eight years after the publication of the first Latin American Report, inequality remains a critical problem for Latin America and for the world and territorial inequality, which is one of its least explored aspects. The 2019 Latin American Report pays special attention to rural youth, seeking to investigate the characteristics of territorial dynamics that may constitute an opportunity to reverse the situation of vulnerability faced by young people, both with respect to their urban peers and rural adults.

In line with the project proposal of “Rural youth, territories and opportunities: a policy dialogue strategy”, the Report illustrates the potential of young people to promote the development of their territories.

### Latin American Report 2019 Rural Youth and Territory

#### **1. The territorial gaps in the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda cannot be reduced.**

- When observing the development trajectories, it is possible to verify that in all the countries of the region there are territories lagging behind.
- It is possible to highlight progress in the fulfillment of certain SDGs, along with delays or setbacks in the fulfillment of others.
- Territories exist with a critical concentration of SDG gaps, while in others, the gaps have been reduced.

#### **2. Opportunities for young people are unevenly distributed among the territories.**

- There are broad territorial gaps linked to economic inclusion indicators for the youth population.
- Lagging territories tend to offer fewer opportunities for education, healthcare and employment to young people, which would reinforce the dynamics of economic exclusion.
- Territorial inequality is more intense among the youth population.

#### **3. The interaction between individual characteristics and territorial dynamics provides a bet-**

#### **ter understanding of the gaps in terms of economic inclusion faced by rural youth.**

- The individual characteristics of young people and the dynamics of the territory in which they live have a combined impact on their opportunities for economic inclusion. Particular emphasis is placed on the double burden of young women, the particularities of the economic inclusion of young people in rural areas, the differentiated impacts of the different productive configurations and the importance of connectivity as factors explaining opportunities and constraints for the economic inclusion of rural youth.

#### **4. Territorial dynamics play a decisive role in the economic inclusion of young people.**

- The rural dimension is not a condemnation of the economic exclusion of youth. In Latin America there are rural and rural-urban territories that offer greater development opportunities to their youth population, based on the diversification of their productive structure, the determined and systematic development of local public policies in favor of rural youth, along with the active participation

of civil society organizations and young people themselves in defining priorities and implementing actions in critical areas, such as study continuity, safety, prevention of teenage pregnancy and promotion of employment.



# Voices of rural youth

One of the main challenges of the project have been the efforts made to integrate the voices of rural youth and their territories and thus comprehend first-hand the reality, needs, dreams and aspirations of young people in Latin America.

Many issues have been raised over the last three years, underlining the common problems shared by rural youth, the inequalities they face, their need to be rendered visible, and the importance of joining forces for their dreams of a better world, both for themselves and their communities.



## THE DREAM: BEING AGENTS OF CHANGE FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES

Rural youth have plans and aspirations, and are called on to be agents of transformation of their respective territories.

*“Right now I work at a restaurant in the El Carmen district. I help out in the kitchen and also do some waitressing. I used to work in the fields and pick cotton, but I want to study pastrymaking. I dream of being a great pastry chef”*

Estefanía Gonzáles  
El Carmen  
Chincha, Peru

*“When I’m no longer so young, one of my aims is to leave a legacy. Now starting with this youth movement, so that we’re the first generation to make a mark in five or ten years time”*

Ignacio Contreras  
San Miguel Tzinacapan, México

*“In five years time, I imagine taking my children to school, that they study, and that I can dedicate myself to the family farm, have a stock of animals and much more than I can produce and plant”*

Leticia Dekentai  
Alto Pajacuzá indigenous community  
in the Amazonas region of Peru

*“In five years’ time I want to have my own association up and running, with my technical team, perhaps with partners in Lima, organizing a chain, with all the partners working for the well-being of the producers in my zone”*

Isamael Ushap  
indigenous community, Junín, Peru

*“I observe my community, the well-being of my community. We have projects; we’re a team of young people who want our community to be different. In terms of this task I see myself perhaps becoming a governor one day, because that’s a powerful [political] position where changes can be made”*

Evelyn Espinoza,  
Shintariato indigenous community,  
Junín, Peru



## EDUCATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Rural youth point out that the conditions they face in the places where they grew up and live, often restrict their chances of success, starting with the difficulties they have in accessing education. They know that having such access opens up a world of possibilities.

*“When I was a kid I traveled long hours by boat and bus to get to school. The principal introduced me to the students and said: ‘Here we have a young boy who comes from the jungle; I don’t want any of you to bother him just because he’s from another zone or because maybe he doesn’t speak very good Spanish. You’re here to help him’”*

Isamael Ushap  
Comunidad nativa Shintariato,  
Junín, Peru

*“If it was up to me I would introduce technology, I’d set up courses and workshops so that in my community people could continue to learn, whether they’re programmers or researchers. I’d like to continue studying, so that if I’m given an opportunity by the State, I’ll be able to apply all the knowledge that I’ve accumulated in this area in order to improve my community”*

Ángel Uceda  
Hoja Redonda,  
Ica, Peru

*“In order to leave the settlement where I grew up, I chose to undertake Military Service, so I arrived in the city of Lima and ended up in the arms of the Air Force. After four years of service, I was given the opportunity of Scholarship 18, which I used to study Tele-matics. In 2016 we won the Amazon Hackathon Award with a hardware and software prototype to monitor water quality”*

Ángel Uceda  
Hoja Redonda,  
Ica, Peru

*“Since I was a small child I liked to study. But it was a long way [to school], three hours walking through the mountains to the Chapiza community. It was dangerous and my mum told me that best not to study. So they took me out of school”*

Leticia Dekentai  
indigenous community in the  
Amazonas region of Peru

## COMMON PROBLEMS AND SHARED CHALLENGES

Young people have shared perspectives and are concerned about their future. They also feel that the immediate environment offers them limited possibilities to showcase who they are, as well as the abundant knowledge and skills they have acquired.

*“The experience we had in ‘The Caravan’ transformed us. It made us feel, to experience the heat, how the countryside in Hopelchen has been devastated by industrial agriculture. It made us aware of the nature that exists in the Yucatan Peninsula. And when the Mayan companions of Quintana Roo joined us, they also felt what it’s like to walk along mountain paths, to feel the fog, the cold, the constant rain, and they ate our food. That is all part of learning and transforming and, through that knowledge, to create”*

Yolotzin Zamor  
Cuetzalan  
Sierra Norte de Puebla, México

*“We have a lot of shared concerns; we’re worried about almost the same things: our future, living in our communities, returning and not having any jobs available, the lack of cultural and artistic activities. And we’re also worried about what happens in the communities because of the mega projects that affect us and make us defend life”*

Yolotzin Zamor  
Cuetzalan  
Sierra Norte de Puebla, México

*“They think we’re kids. We want to shatter that stereotype. In an urban context perhaps there are young people who don’t work or study, but in rural communities we’re doing things for life, for the environment”*

Ignacio Contreras Diego  
San Miguel  
Tzinacapan, México





## ENTREPRENEURSHIPS FOR A DIVERSIFIED WORLD

Rural youth are very different from their parents and grandparents. They have received more education, have traveled more, have access to and use new information technologies that allow them to link up with an increasingly globalized world, and they are eager to undertake their own business ventures and contribute to their families and communities.

*“Although I’ve already graduated with a degree from my intercultural bilingual education studies, I’ve always said that the first thing I want to do is focus on my people. To create a company so that we can compile a health record for the coffee produced in my zone, then we’ll be able to market it”*

Sherly Achulli  
Chapimarca  
Apurímac, Perú

*“With this group we proposed agroecology as a central issue to study, and as a key factor so that young people become more involved in rural development, especially taking into account the demands of the market and realizing how young people can take advantage of this”*

Flor de María Prado  
volunteer in YPARD, Perú

*“I’ve been able to express my opinions, and they have taken us into account as young people. For example, as an entrepreneur of Agroecological Baskets, I’ve raised the problems we have in terms of marketing and the idea that the Network could create a seal that identifies us and facilitates product placement by guaranteeing the quality of our products”*

Alexandra Toapan  
Pichincha, Ecuador

*“In Ecuador, the Rural Youth Network has allowed us to join together so as to seek out better opportunities and thus move forward with our businesses and improve our lives, as in my case with my coffee venture”*

Diego Loaiza  
Manabí, Ecuador

## VISIBILITY: A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR RURAL YOUTH

One of the major challenges for rural youth is to be seen and have a voice. In the four countries where the project has been implemented there are different institutional activities that include the participation of young people. However, such activities tend to have a limited scope and there is no specific line of work focused on this population segment.

*"We want them to perceive us as an organized group, organized rural youth who are not satisfied with how we are taken into account in terms of public policies. We are not considered as subjects of the policies focused on the country's rural zones and that has an impact on the opportunities available to us in our communities"*

Yolotzin Zamora  
Cuetzalan  
Sierra Norte de Puebla, México

*"The 'Caravan' is a youth movement that arose in response to our concern that we were not being taken into account in our communities, by either the government and by certain organizations. It was created so that we could get to know other movements that young people are organizing in their communities, but that do not have a voice that resonates in other State"*

Floriberto Morales  
San Miguel Tzinacapan  
Puebla, México

*"I'm concerned about my future so I will go out and use my voice. Although I'm a young rural woman, I study, I organize, I research and I'm able to construct my own future"*

Leticia Vázquez  
Union of Tosepán Cooperatives  
México





## ADVOCACY AS A TOOL TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

The policy dialogue and research processes of the project, which incorporated the vision of rural youth in the first person, have shown that placing a central focus on young people necessarily implies understanding them and making such youth participants and drivers of their own transformations.

*“We realized that what was happening to us, what we were feeling, was that we were not being heard, that we had dreams and that there were also many obstacles. We realized what was happening in other communities. We realized that we should come together, organize and be heard”*

Leticia Vázquez  
Union of Tosepán Cooperatives  
México

*“We all know, governments along with our political representatives rarely take us into account as young people, and if they do, they do so because of their own needs and interests. They use us, the indigenous youth, more in periods of elections in order to obtain their political posts. We want to change this paradigm and turn our ideas into a reality”*

Ignacio Contreras Diego  
San Miguel  
Tzinacapan, México

*“Studied agricultural production and I work with the producers in my community. I know very well that there are difficulties in partnering with the authorities, but if we don't do so, extreme poverty and chronic child malnutrition will just continue, and we all have to make efforts so that education is available to all”*

Ismael Ushap  
Indigenous Community  
Junín, Peru

## UNION IS STRENGTH

Partnerships are viewed as an important space to share experiences and create opportunities, as well as a powerful engine for change.

*"This struggle is just the beginning. The challenge lies in continuing to join together, continuing to expand, continuing to take part, continuing to inform ourselves and continuing to share information and, at the same time, convincing more young people to join this struggle to defend the territory"*

Nicasio  
Union of Tosepán Cooperatives  
Colombia

*"I want the Network to continue to play a very important role in the territories, to link up rural youth with opportunities, to help them gain access and participation in development programs and projects that are offered by both public and private bodies"*

Yeisully Tapias  
National Network of Rural Youth  
México

*"Without the RDG we wouldn't have had the opportunity to talk with so many people who have contributed so much. There would have been no link up to enable us to talk and listen to Minister Lazo, for example, who has shown us a very human face of what the government can be. We were able to observe that, with his advice and suggestions, he placed himself in our shoes"*

Diego Loaiza  
Coastal Region of Ecuador



# Working Papers and Project Reports

The dialogue and management being promoted by the Rural Dialogue Groups in Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Ecuador are based on the research work carried out as part of the project through different studies, diagnoses and policy analyzes that have been compiled by Rimisp and its partners in a series of Working Papers and Project Reports, which are openly available to all interested parties.

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# Team members

## General Project Coordination

### **Maria Ignacia Fernández** Project Coordinator

Ignacia Fernández holds a Doctorate in Sociology and a Master's Degree in Political Science. She specializes in public policy, social policy, decentralization and territorial development. She served as a member of the Presidential Advisory Commission for Decentralization and Regional Development, Advisor to the Treasury Ministry's Budget Directorate and Director of the Policy and Research Division of the Office of the Undersecretary of Regional Development of Chile's Ministry of the Interior. Ms Fernández also teaches in the Universidad de Chile Master's Degree program in Management and Public Policy. She has been a Principal Researcher with Rimisp since 2010 and became Executive Director of the organization in August 2015.

### **Lorena Álvarez** Communications Director

Álvarez holds a Master's Degree in Social Communication and Education and is a journalist with an Undergraduate Degree in Social Communication. She directed communications for the Intermunicipal Network for Strengthening Metropolitan Audiences, an intermediation project developed by the National Council for Culture and the Arts. She also was the Communications and Mediation Director of the Infinite Skies Arts Festival and its Artistic Training Academy in Patagonia. She has served as a social communicator responsible for school journalism workshops and community radios in rural schools in the Magallanes Region, Chilean Antarctica, Valparaíso and La Araucanía. She was Rimisp's Communications Director until October 2019.

### **Juan Fernández** Assistant Project Coordinator

Fernández holds a Doctorate in Sociology, a Master's Degree in Research Methodology in the Social Sciences and a Master's Degree in Urban Development and Sociology. His main areas of research are public policy, decentralization and territorial development, social movements and collective action. He served in the Department of Research and Evaluation of Chile's Office of the Undersecretary of Regional Development and was Project Director on advising projects focused on development. Fernández has taught at Universidad Diego Portales and completed public policy evaluation consultancies in Chile and Spain. He served as Rimisp Principal Researcher until September 2019.

### **Yenny Carvallo** Administrative Assistant

Bilingual and executive secretary with a great deal of experience. Carvallo worked with Rimisp from 2008 through July 2019 and was responsible for the administrative and financial support for the project.

## IFAD Counterpart

### **Jesús Quintana** Head of the IFAD Subregional Hub responsible for the Andean and Southern Cone countries

Quintana has worked with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) since 2007. He currently serves as Head of the Regional Hub responsible for the Andean and Southern Cone countries and is the Resident Representative for Peru in Lima. Quintana is a Rural Development Expert with nearly 30 years' experience in the sector, most of it in cooperation activities abroad. Prior to joining IFAD he worked for international and multilateral agencies (USAID, AfDB, JICA, EU, AECID) in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He has a degree in Forestry Engineering from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) and is also a sociologist graduated from the National Distance Education University of Spain. He obtained a Master's Degree in Environment and Development at the University of Reading (United Kingdom). Prior to joining IFAD, he worked for the Spanish Cooperation Agency (AECID), the African Development Bank (BAfD), the Japanese Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as with various international consulting firms and NGOs. He also worked in the Spanish government.

## México Team

**Perla Gris Legorreta**  
Alternate RDG Technical Secretary

Gris Legorreta holds a Doctorate in Politics and a Master's Degree in Administration and Public Policy. She is a "C" researcher affiliated with the Political System and Federalism Area of the Mexican Senate's Belisario Domínguez Institute.

**Isidro Soloaga**  
Alternate RDG Technical Secretary

Solaga holds a Doctorate in Agricultural and Resources Economics (AREC) and an Undergraduate Degree in Economics. He teaches at Mexico's Universidad Iberoamericana and is an Associate Researcher with Rimisp.

**Jorge Romero**  
RDG Technical Secretary through April 2018

Romero holds an Undergraduate Degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree and Doctorate in the same field. He was the Director of Rimisp's Office for Mexico and Central America from January 2017 through April 2018.

**Lourdes Rudiño**  
Communications through December 2018

Roudiño is a journalist specializing in rural, agriculture and livestock and food issues. She was responsible for communications at Rimisp's office for Mexico and Central America from 2014 through December 2018.

## Colombia Team

**Ángela Penagos**  
RDG Technical Secretary since June 2018

Penagos is an economist and teaches environmental economics and natural resources. She is the Director of the Rimisp Colombia Office.

**Santiago Perry**  
RDG Technical Secretary until May 2018

Perry is an industrial engineer and economist who serves as Executive Director of the Corporation for the Participatory and Sustainable Development of Small Rural Producers (Corporación PBA).

**Juan David Quiñones**  
Research Assistant

Economist and political scientist who holds a Master's Degree in Development Studies. Research Assistant in the Rimisp Colombia Office.

**Lilia Sánchez Valbuena**  
Research Assistant

Economist pursuing a Master's Degree in Environmental Management. Research Assistant in the Rimisp Colombia Office.

**Claudia Valencia**  
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Social Communicator and Director of Communications for the Rimisp Colombia Office.

## Ecuador Team

### **Manuel Chiriboga** Founder (†)

Countries. He is a sociologist with a degree from the Catholic University of Lovaine in Belgium. He served as Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador from January through August 2003, focusing on topics such as sectorial policy, trade negotiations, rural development and information. He was later the Executive Secretary of the Latin American Association for Promotion Organizations (ALOP) and prior to that was the Director of the Rural Development Program of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). He Works as a consultant with various international organizations, including the World Bank, International Fund for Agriculture Development, Inter-American Development Bank and United Nations, SELA, FAO and IICA. He received the Pío Jaramillo Alvarado Award from FLACSO in October 2008. He served as a researcher for Rimisp Ecuador and Technical Secretary of the Ecuador Rural Development Group until his death.

### **Ney Barrionuevo** RDG Technical Secretary

Agricultural Engineer with a degree from the Higher Institute of Agricultural Sciences of Havana, Cuba. Specialist in analysis and strategic planning of agricultural production chains, and design and implementation of inclusive business plans and public policies for the agricultural sector. Ney is director of the Rimisp office in Ecuador.

### **Eugenia Quingáisa** Researcher

Economist. Quingáisa is currently a Researcher with Rimisp's Ecuador Office.

### **Diana Proaño** Communications

Proaño holds an Undergraduate Degree in Journalism and Social Communication with a focus on Cultural Journalism. She serves as a Rimisp Ecuador team member and freelance contributor on various publications.

## Perú Team

### **Carolina Trivelli** RDG Technical Secretary

Master's Degree in Agrarian Economics and Undergraduate Degree in Social Sciences with a focus on Economics. Trivelli served as Minister of Development and Social Inclusion in Peru. She is currently Lead Researcher at the Peruvian Studies Institute.



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