



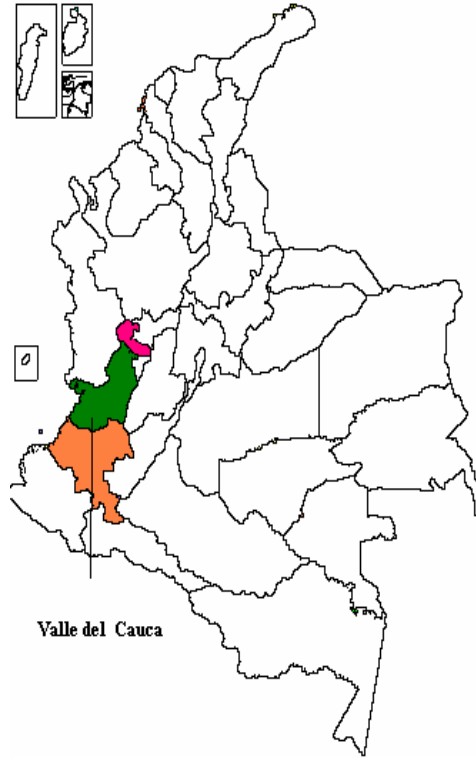
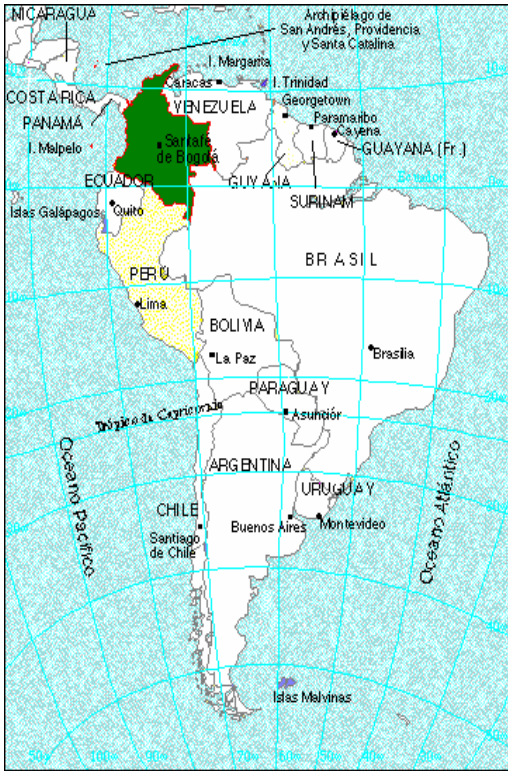
WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION FOR ALL
Capacity Development and empowerment of Civil Society

**ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY WATER SUPPLY
AND SANITATION PUBLIC SERVICE
ORGANISATIONS IN COLOMBIA**

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Community leader

Mexico City, 17th March 2006

Geographical setting



- AQUACOL is a Colombian association.
- AQUACOL has 28 member organisations that provide services to 112 communities in the departments of Cauca, Valle del Cauca and Risaralda.
- There are plans to scale up coverage to the national level.

Context and background

- Administrative decentralisation process in the 1980s.
- Weakness of local government to meet their responsibilities.
- Act 142 of 1994 allowed municipalities to delegate public service provision.
- Lack of incentives for private investment in rural and urban periphery sectors.
- Community organisations providing services is the only alternative in these sectors.
- Weak management capacity of community leaders.



Tools and process

- AQUACOL was legally established in October 2001.
- The organisation moved from having a local to a regional vision.
- Assessments are carried out to analyse its members' situation.
- A capacity building programme was designed.
- AQUACOL advises members and works as an intermediary between official entities and communities.
- Four organisations have been selected as Community Learning Centres in water and sanitation.
- It is hoped to channel resources that will improve members' infrastructure and a monthly publication is planned.



Lessons learned

- Communities can be mobilised around water supply.
- The impact generated by offering quality public services, which are efficient and have fair prices, is very positive for improving quality of life among communities.
- Even strong community organisations have little influence at the national level.
- Many of the problems in providing public services are due to low management capacity rather than infrastructure deficiencies.
- Community Learning Centres in water and sanitation have proved a very strong option for achieving qualifications in community organisations.



Acueducto Mondomo, Cauca

Transferability of the local action

- Many of the community organisations providing public services in Latin America operate in isolation, thus making their work more difficult. The results achieved by AQUACOL demonstrates the advantage of establishing this kind of organisation.
- Communities in general, and particularly their leaders, exchange knowledge through horizontal relationships and communicate better with other community leaders who are working on similar activities. This shows that there is a need to select and set up community learning centres to strengthen community management capacity, with the support of facilitation entities.



Conclusions

- Sustainable human development can no longer just be discourse, action must be taken.
- State institutions should be staffed by qualified professionals who are committed to social development.
- The technology used in water treatment plays an important role in system sustainability.
- Providing public services is a complex activity and communities need management capacity strengthening for continuous improvement.
- Communities should manage their own development.
- Knowledge exchange between different communities has a mutual benefit and contributes to greater protection of the environment.

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antes de que sea demasiado tarde.



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