

PERU



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The best start in life for indigenous children in the Amazon

Context

While Peru has made significant advances in providing early childhood care to its 3 million children under the age of 5 years, **indigenous children are still left behind**. In Peru, **10 out of every 1,000 children die** within their first month of life. In rural indigenous communities, the rate can be four times higher. Social inequalities cause chronic malnutrition, anaemia, development delays and teenage pregnancy.

Providing early childhood care is not easy in the Amazon. Indigenous communities have few skilled workers and existing services often don't include work with parents and caregivers. Training for early childhood development (ECD) workers and communication with families generally lack an intercultural approach.

Our solution

For years, UNICEF has worked with the Government of Peru to create a model for integrated early childhood care. Two key results have recently set the stage for lasting change: the national Childhood First ("Primero la Infancia") policy and a results-based funding scheme for ECD services. Peru now faces the challenge of implementing the policy across the country.

UNICEF's goal is that over the course of the next 5 years, 4,700 children will have had a better start in life and Peru will have tested a scalable model for integrated early childhood care to reach more children in the Amazon.



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UNICEF key actions



- Train 2,000 service providers with the knowledge and tools needed to provide improved, culturally sensitive maternal and neonatal health and ECD services
- Equip and implement 50 community centres where community health workers can help families learn nurturing care practices
- Provide 10,000 families with ECD kits that include culturally sensitive play and learning materials for children under five as well as maternal and neonatal kits with supplies for mothers and newborns
- Provide 50 communities with communication equipment and culturally sensitive materials to disseminate healthy ECD practices in community spaces
- Continue to support regional governments to increase budget allocation and improve efficiency of ECD services

Story from the field

There's a health centre in the Amazon where children can get better care than in Peru's capital, according to Jessica and Rider, parents of three in Ucayali. Their youngest, 3-month old Maria Luisa, was born underweight and didn't take to breast-feeding. With integrated ECD guidance from staff at the UNICEF-supported America health centre, she now weighs a healthy 5,85 kg.

Maria Luisa's parents see the difference compared to her brothers born in Lima. **Thanks to the centre's nurturing ECD approach, she is already more alert and active.** They have also developed a strong bond more quickly, which will support her development in the future.



Financing examples

5,000 €

150 families receive ECD kits

50,000 €

25 communities with equipped community centres for ECD promotion and surveillance

100,000 €

1,000 service providers trained to deliver adequate ECD care

500,000 €

Provide parenting guidance to families in 50 indigenous communities to ensure children's health and development (0-5 years)



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