

# Promoting children's issues among politicians in Peru



YOUNG LIVES IMPACT AND LEARNING • CASE STUDY 4

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Over the past three years, Young Lives Peru has been working with different networks that lobby politicians and monitor their commitment to policies concerning child welfare. One such network is *Vote for Childhood*. Since joining the group in 2009, Young Lives has begun to build the connections between research, practice and policy.

As part of a campaign run by the network to encourage all 2011 presidential candidates to sign up to a charter that committed them to improving the lives of millions of Peruvian children and young people, Young Lives has helped push for the inclusion of a reduction in the gaps between the urban and the rural children and highlighted how the most vulnerable children required higher investment and improved access to public services.

The Vote for Childhood network consists mostly of advocacy organisations, whereas Young Lives is a research project. While it is important for Young Lives to maintain a high level of research integrity, the programme recognises the benefit of collaborating with a wide range of organisations and that in doing so it will become more effective in getting politicians to commit to tackling childhood poverty.

***While Young Lives works hard to leverage pressure on governments to adopt policies that improve the lives of children, it recognises that it can do so more effectively in partnership with others. By building alliances and networks with others working to promote more child-focussed policies in Peru, Young Lives is playing a role in facilitating policy change.***

With government policy decisions dominated by adult concerns such as job creation and increases in income, getting policymakers to commit to children's issues is a difficult challenge. To try and overcome this, the Young Lives team in Peru has been working with different networks that lobby politicians and monitor their commitment to policies concerning child welfare.

## **Vote for Childhood**

One such network is *Vote for Childhood*, led by the Mesa de Concertación de Lucha contra la Pobreza (Roundtable for the Coordination of the Fight Against Poverty). Since joining the group in 2009, Young Lives has been working with other members to build the connections between research, policy and practice.

In 2010, Young Lives took a lead role in *Searching for a million friends of children* – a public campaign run by the *Vote for Childhood* network to collect one million individual signatures to demand that Congress increase resources for services for children and young people in the fiscal budget by preparing press releases, using contacts in the media to gain press attention, and establishing links through social networks.

As part of a campaign to encourage all 2011 presidential candidates to sign up to a charter that committed them to improving the lives of millions of Peruvian children and young people, Young Lives has helped push for the inclusion of a reduction in the gaps between urban and rural children and highlighted how the most vulnerable children require higher investment and improved access to public services. The charter, called the *National Decentralised Agenda for Children 2011-2016*, focussed on specific issues of identity, nutrition, health, education, defence against violence, participation and protection of children and child work.<sup>1</sup>

## **Outcomes**

Young Lives key findings on the pronounced inequality between socioeconomic groups were used to shape the commitments signed by the Presidential candidates.

The study team now also has a permanent place on the parliamentary sub-group on education. Using our research findings, the *National Agenda* issues for the education sector have been amended to seek to close the differences between achievement of schools and children in cities and towns.

In order to give it the category of an official document, the *National Agenda* will be presented to the Acuerdo Nacional (National Forum), which gathers politicians, representatives of civil society and the government together to agree a group of long-term policies to lead the country development. The *Agenda* also will be given the National Jury of Elections, the government agency which supervises elections. The two candidates who will run in the second round of elections (likely to take place in early June 2011) will receive a more detailed plan of the National Agenda for the first 100 days from the network.

<sup>1</sup> <http://votaporlaninez.blogspot.com/2011/03/todos-con-la-infancia-votapor-la-ninez.html>



Further achievements of the Vote for Children network include:

- Commitments signed by the current Mayor of Lima, Susana Villarán in 2010
- The legal resolution by the Municipality of Lima that created the Advisory Committee of Children as promoted by the network
- A debate to be held between the final two presidential candidates and children and young people as chairs and discussants.

## Conclusion

In addition to raising its own profile, the network has enabled Young Lives to collaborate and learn from a diverse number of organisations from the public and private sectors.

The *Vote for Childhood* network consists mostly of advocacy organisations, whereas Young Lives is a research project. While each member of the network shares a common interest in improving the lives of children, our priorities and agendas sometimes differ, particularly over the quality of the data that the network publishes. While it is important for Young Lives to maintain a high level of research integrity, the programme recognises the benefit of collaborating with a wide range of organisations and that in doing so it will become more effective in getting politicians to commit to address pressing issues of childhood poverty.

