







What Work4Progress is Innovation for *promoting employment*

The International Labour Organization maintains that 2 out of every 5 young people are currently unemployed. This problem is even more acute among women, whose chance of finding employment is 27% less than men.

The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened this situation, causing employment rates for women to fall by 5%, compared to 3.9% for men. For young workers, the fall in employment rates has been 2.5 times

greater than that suffered by adult workers (World Employment and Social Outlook, ILO 2021).

In accordance with the 2030 Agenda, the **Work4Progress (W4P)** programme of “la Caixa” Foundation is therefore intended to identify employment challenges and needs, and to encourage innovative solutions with a view to creating jobs, while paying special attention to women and young people in situations of vulnerability.

Objectives:



1.

Provide support for the networks of institutions that work jointly in **developing prototypes** on the ground to check their viability while identifying the most efficient initiatives for generating employment.

2.

Generate a new **culture of collaboration** among institutions working in the same geographical zone with a view to increasing their impact and to creating sustainable action.

3.

Promote **innovation** in products, services and/or processes.

4.

Incorporate **new constant monitoring and evaluation processes** with which to adapt the programme in real time to the needs of each place.

Where we work, who we target and who we work with

The Work4Progress programme is aimed at **young people and women** from rural zones of different geographical areas in **Peru, India and Mozambique**.

In each country, W4P promotes networks formed by civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and public institutions.

The programme began in 2017 with 10 partners. There are currently 47 member organizations (January 2022).

47
member
organizations:

Peru

Condorcanqui (Amazonas)
and Quispicanchi (Cusco)

17 organizations led by:



Mozambique

Cabo Delgado and Maputo

18 organizations led by:



India

Bundelkhand and Eastern UP
(Uttar Pradesh)

12 organizations led by:



Social innovation platforms seek to interconnect organizations and actions through shared objectives, methodologies and systems of evaluation, with a view to achieving **systemic impact**. Although a platform approach requires both greater effort in the design phase and also new tools for constructing a collective perspective, it will eventually help to align disconnected initiatives, to enhance their **impact and cohesion** and to **raise awareness of them**.



1. agents,
2. methodologies, and
3. actions that generate new processes, products and services in an open, integrated way to tackle the challenges faced by developing countries, whereby the population is defined not only as users from the territory but also as the generators and architects of that territory.

The goal is to bring an end to the funding of isolated projects and to help to build true innovation ecosystems.



Approach: *social innovation platforms*

Added value of social innovation platforms:

- 1.** They help to bring together a host of initiatives, which they make more coherent and visible through **collaborative methodology** rather than isolated projects.
- 2.** They create **networks of agents** associated with the platform who identify the needs and strategies suitable for **implementing a programme in a specific territory**.
- 3.** They encourage much more intense **use of the advanced knowledge** of a territory, city or country (universities, cooperatives, town councils, community initiatives, incubators, etc.).
- 4.** They generate interconnected **innovation ecosystems** and increase the impact of initiatives.
- 5.** They **reduce the risk of investment** and generate a medium- and long-term exit strategy for their promoters.
- 6.** They **adapt solutions** to the local cultural context and increase their chances of success and impact on the territory.
- 7.** They identify **options for creating decent employment**, which in this case is in rural environments. They integrate these territorial social, environmental and economic needs in a series of collectively designed and implemented proposals.
- 8.** They promote and improve **interculturality and social connection**.

Implementation of the approach

The W4P process for implementing social innovation platforms incorporates a series of iterative and cross-cutting elements.

Methodology:

Listening.

How can we obtain an in-depth understanding of the social and economic dynamics and perceptions in the zone? How can we create and systematize areas for collective deliberation? What type of information should be used for our analysis?

In-depth understanding of local dynamics requires a community deep listening strategy. This process

includes a set of qualitative tools that, when complemented with quantitative data, are able to unravel a **community's narratives** and reveal its needs, challenges and opportunities in-depth. This type of information also makes it possible to segment the population into profiles.

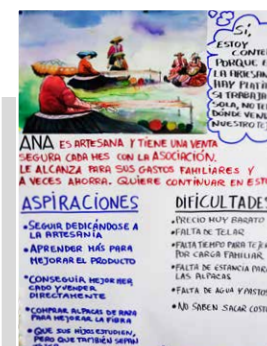


The first iteration of the **Listening Process at Work4Progress Peru** took place from May to September 2018 in 5 communities in Quispicanchi Province.

It was led by a mixed team of professionals from different disciplines (anthropology, economics, forest engineering, etc.). It focused on collecting existing stories, narratives and dynamics in communities and involved 250 people.

The tools used were:

- Compilation and analysis of **quantitative data** (national censuses, previous programmes, etc.);
- **Ethnographic research** (in-depth interviews, observation of dynamics, relations and customs through stays in communities, etc.);
- **Social photography** by members of the community who had previously received training.



This information yielded 19 ethnographic profiles from the photographs, which were confirmed with the communities in **collective analysis and interpretation sessions**.

Methodology:



Co-creation.

How should new solutions be co-created for specific (and even contradictory) perceptions with a portfolio logic (interconnected and multilevel initiatives)?

Co-creation is a process by which ideas and solutions are developed collaboratively and involves members of the community and significant agents from the territory.

The results of a co-creation process are prototypes, which tend to fall into the following categories:

1. community innovation,
2. support for entrepreneurial spirit,
3. large-scale public-private associations,
4. redesign of public services and
5. new regulations.

The **Safe Spaces** of **W4P India** host discussion sessions on issues of gender and women's empowerment.

These work groups have prompted the co-creation of prototypes such as e-rickshaws, micro-enterprises involving electric tricycles that are headed by women and offer a service to other women and girls from their communities and therefore meet the needs women have expressed for mobility and security.



Prototyping and acceleration.

The prototypes on the W4P programme are job creation initiatives implemented on a small-scale to test whether they are feasible. They have been identified through the community listening process and developed through the co-creation process.

In W4P, prototypes make up a **portfolio of interconnected initiatives** that operate on different levels:

- **Systemic prototypes:** these offer support services for the business ecosystem and take the form of financing instruments, guarantee funds, employment vacancy services, business incubators and lobby initiatives, etc.
- **Company prototypes:** different-scale entrepreneurial initiatives in sectors such as the production and processing of agricultural products, manufacturing, tourism, retail, services, etc.
- **Technological prototypes,** with or without a business model, that meet specific needs associated with the introduction of low-cost technologies adapted to local contexts.

As with co-creation and the creation of prototypes, this innovative portfolio approach also requires new skills for designing, managing and evaluating the interconnected and integrated series of projects from a holistic perspective.



The **Guarantee Fund** developed at **Work4Progress Mozambique** in collaboration with a local microcredit institution, is a W4P prototype that offers small farmers from Cabo Delgado access to microcredits and provides the financial institution a guarantee that, in the event of non-payment, the fund will cover the deficit.

Cross-cutting elements

The social innovation platform approach and non-linear work require an understanding of traditional elements of development processes:

Developmental evaluation.

Developmental evaluation tools allow for real time decision-making to adapt the strategy to changes in the system. The measurement mechanisms and metrics are adapted as the objectives evolve, and are designed to identify the dynamics of the system, interdependences and emerging connections, while acknowledging the system's complexity and the specific features of each context.

Collaborative governance.

How are the social innovation platforms managed? What kinds of functions and responsibilities do they require? What kinds of spaces? Social innovation platforms require new approaches to management and governance that no longer adhere to methods of command and control, but are rather based on convening power and soft leadership. They should integrate performance, evaluation and communication, in an approach that contemplates the complexity of supervision, evaluation and, above all, learning and adaptation.



Developmental communication.

How do we communicate in this new way of working? Communication on the platforms of multiple interested parties, of multiple levels and of multiple projects should help to build a collective perspective of these problems and, therefore, of possible solutions. What is communicated is the process, as an enabler of the results of systemic transformation, rather than defined and finished products.

To facilitate the processes of communication and knowledge generation, the W4P programme has set the **W4P Virtual Lab** (www.work4progress.org) into operation. This is a virtual community in which all the programme's member organizations, external collaborators and "la Caixa" Foundation's own team come together, where the information generated by the programme is shared, connections are made and the programme's results can be viewed using global indicators.



Sustainable technological innovation.

In keeping with the 2030 Agenda, W4P encourages the incorporation of sustainable technologies through initiatives such as Challenge W4P, which has allowed for the implementation of low-cost technological innovations to make irrigation in Peru's high-mountain regions more efficient, to improve soil preparation and the management of weeds in Mozambique, and to generate virtual co-working spaces for rural women in India.

Innovative financing instruments.

What financial tools and mechanisms does this approach require? Systemic innovation in governance and policy involves making the most of new sources of financing and aligning these resources with a different way of operating.

Recognitions and awards:



- **UNDP** adopts W4P as an example of good practice (2019).
- **World Bank** selects W4P for its "Solutions for Youth Employment" portfolio (2019).
- **Iberdrola Prize** for the best energy cooperation to the e-rickshaw companies from W4P India (2019).
- The W4P monitoring and developmental evaluation processes are Included in the **Cotec Foundation Innovation Report** (2020).
- MOU with UNDP for the generation of knowledge on social innovation platforms and innovative financing instruments (2021).
- W4P India recognized as a global Good Practice, **SDG Good Practices** (2021).
- Selected for the **Paris Peace Forum** 2021.



"la Caixa" Foundation