

PROFILE: PERU



Its rich Inca history has bequeathed heritage sites such as the lost city of Machu Picchu, but behind Peru's tourist façade lies grinding inequality.

As in many other Latin American countries, a small Spanish-descended elite controls most of Peru's wealth and power. Despite recent economic growth, indigenous people remain excluded from both.

Peru has rich mineral deposits, including silver and gold, but its leaders have often put money before people and the environment. Swathes of rainforest were offered up to foreign oil and gas companies before protests from indigenous inhabitants forced a U-turn.

As well as urban shanty settlements, much of Peru's worst poverty is focused in the rural highlands and jungle areas.

In the 1980s and 90s, isolated villages were caught in the crossfire of civil war as Maoist 'Shining Path' guerrillas battled government forces. Up to 69,000 people died and innocent bystanders landed in prison.

'Structural adjustment' policies have encouraged food imports at the expense of local production and cut social investment. As a result, many rural women now head households as men leave to find work in the cities.

Indigenous people also suffer lack of access to healthcare and education – and schools often represent a hostile environment that ignores their culture.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN PERU

Tearfund has been working in Peru since 1980 and currently has six Peruvian partners. Here are some examples of their work:

Providing psychological, social and pastoral support to street children in Lima, Agape works with families, churches and schools to raise awareness of child abuse and develop communities of protection.

Manos Amigas helps impoverished craftspeople from Lima and the Andean highlands to maximise national and international market opportunities. Training covers product development, appropriate technology, environmental sustainability, fair trade and marketing.

Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope) employs legally qualified people motivated by their faith to advocate for oppressed people. For example, in Apurímac, Paz y Esperanza is helping to secure justice for women who have suffered sexual violence.

Shalom is improving living conditions for some of Peru's poorest people through programmes including healthcare, nutrition, job creation, and disaster mitigation and response.

In the Puno and Apurímac regions, Shalom has the support of mayors, local organisations, teachers and church leaders. By listening and working with communities as a constant presence, Shalom has gained a deep understanding of local needs and aspirations.

Founded by a group of Quechua women concerned about rural poverty, Warmis is committed to strengthening the ability of people to drive their own integrated development.

➤ Pray for people living in poverty in Peru.

➤ Please pray for our Peruvian partners as they seek to help others.

➤ And pray for Peru: for justice, peace, health and hope for everyone.