

# **A History of Water Projects in the Andes: from the autonomous to the global community.**

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**ABSTRACT:** As development organizations work to provide people in developing countries with access to water, they often assume a certain moral and pragmatic configuration of the communities in which these people live. Thus, the procedures of an NGO may assume that people want the water for its intrinsic value and will work cooperatively and single-mindedly to achieve it. In a case study of two water projects in the Peruvian Andes, separated by 40 years of history, this paper shows that the earlier project, entirely carried out by the community, largely fits this ideal. In the current context, however, multiple needs, pressures and interests mean that community water projects are carried out for different reasons by different people. The point is not to romanticize a local homogeneous past in contrast to an externally dominated fractured present, but to point to current realities so that these can be accommodated in projects providing this important resource.

**Key Words:** community development, water, history, Peru.

**RESUMEN:** Cuando las organizaciones de desarrollo trabajan para proveer acceso al agua en los países en desarrollo, a veces piensan que las comunidades donde hacen sus proyectos tienen ciertas características morales y pragmáticas. Así, una ONG puede pensar que la gente quiere el agua por el valor del agua misma, y trabajarían juntos sin otro interés para lograrla. Este estudio de caso de dos proyectos de agua en la misma comunidad en los Andes peruanos, separados por 40 años de historia, demuestra que el primer proyecto, llevado a cabo por la comunidad sólo, corresponde mayormente a este ideal. En el contexto contemporáneo, sin embargo, los múltiples necesidades, presiones, y intereses llevan a que las personas participan por razones distintas. El objetivo no es de caracterizar el pasado en términos románticos, en contraste a un presente roto, dominado por fuerzas externas, sino de subrayar la realidad compleja para que los proyectos puedan organizarse en una manera más apropiada a las condiciones del pueblo.

**Palabras claves:** desarrollo comunitario, agua, historia, Perú.

A focus on community has become a mainstay of development practice. Calls for community involvement have been framed as both moral and pragmatic imperatives and span the political spectrum from left (Escobar, 1997) and right (Putnam, 2000). A literature critiquing community participation practices has also arisen, pointing to problems in assuming local homogeneity (Guijt and Shah, 1998), overemphasizing localism (Harrison, 2002; Peters, 1996), and ignoring politics

(Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Pottier, 1997). This paper follows these critiques in showing how the exhortation that the people themselves can undertake their own development is historically and contextually blind. Communities and people in them have never ceased to attempt to meet their own goals and have adapted their strategies according to the changing circumstances. An NGO's or government's understanding of what a community is can differ dramatically from that of the groupings of people who form communities. Here I compare two water projects in the same community in the Peruvian central highlands, separated by 40 years, in order to demonstrate changes in why and how the projects were undertaken, as well as showing how the community and its context have changed over this time. This comparison underscores the contradictory visions of community by development workers and the people. While the first project reflects much of the ideal form of community operation that development workers hope to achieve, the second demonstrates the increased complexity of the context in which communities operate. The concerted effort to meet a unified community goal that could exist in the past is now fractured by the multitude of internal and external interests that pertain in contemporary peasant villages.

I will focus on four characteristics of two water projects that have been carried out in a community I will call Allpalumi Chico over the past 40 years: 1) how did the idea of constructing infrastructure for water provision arise? 2) who or which institution paid for the materials? 3) how was labour organized in the construction of the infrastructure? 4) what were the characteristics of the beneficiary population in terms of what they did for a living and where they lived? Answers to the first three questions demonstrate that decision-making has been distanced from the project beneficiaries over time, from the earlier autonomous project to one in which people participate in a project, the terms and impetus for which largely come from elsewhere. Changes in the characteristics of the people of the community, and the way in which they relate to one another, their translocality, the government structures in which they operate, accompany this transformation and lead to tensions as the NGO in charge of the project and the community have distinct visions of

the goals. I concentrate on the most recent project, which took place between 1999 and 2004.

The historical focus reminds us that communities were engaged in solving problems and working to improve their lives long before agencies devoted to community development existed. Recognizing history does not, however, necessarily entail extolling the virtues of the past over the present. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate important differences in context between the past and recent projects. Communities cannot work autonomously as in the past because of the myriad economic, political, social and cultural threads that tie them formally and informally to regional, national and global forces.

### **Allpalumi Chico**

Allpalumi Chico is located in the central highlands of Peru, about 280 km inland from Lima. It is small in size with little arable land, pasture or other resources. Over the last century, the people have combined agriculture with other economic activities in, but mostly outside the community, such as working in the mining or transport sector in the region or in various formal and informal sector work in Lima or elsewhere.

Allpalumi Chico is a legally recognized peasant community (*comunidad campesina*). While in theory all those who live there should be members of the *comunidad campesina*, in practice only those who derive a major part of their income from peasant agriculture tend to join. Thus, the community includes peasant farmers, households with men who have retired from the formal sector and have pensions, households which move between Allpalumi Chico and other locations to work, young families in which the adult man works in nearby rock quarries and the women concentrate on domestic and some farming in Allpalumi Chico. I will call them allpalumichiqueños here and use the same term to refer to the beneficiaries of the water projects I describe below. They are not

necessarily all members of the *comunidad campesina* and the final project on which I concentrate was not organized by the local polity, but by representatives of the larger group with houses in, or who lived in Allpalumi Chico. One of the important factors over the last 40 years has been the waxing and waning of the *comunidad campesina* structure, especially in the case of Allpalumi Chico. It gained national political status in 1969 with the agrarian reform and remained a key local organizing entity in the 1970s and 1980s. Gradually political turmoil in the 1980s and 1990s and political patronage and neoliberalism after 1993 made inroads on its power. There has been a tendency after the 1980s for development projects to bypass local political organization (Vincent, 2005a: p.10-11)

The population of Allpalumi Chico is small, between 350 and 500 people. It is impossible to calculate with any precision because of the high degree of people moving in and out of the community. Since water in the most recent project was provided to actual physical houses, this number needed to be calculated, again a difficult task: some houses are divided between two or three families, while two or three other houses might be cared for by a single family for migrants living elsewhere. While everyone has a place to live, not everyone lives in his or her own home and there is significant mobility even within the community. This was to be an important factor in tensions pertaining to the most recent water project in the community. This project originally had 120 houses on the list; 79 were finally declared eligible, although only a small number actually had everything in place to be connected in time for the inauguration of the system.

Over the last century the economic patterns of allpalumichiqueños have changed significantly. While probably even a century ago there was some reliance on sales of agricultural goods and waged work, the latter has become much more widespread and long term. In the 1960s, when the first project took place, jobs for men were relatively plentiful, and men could take up and leave work fairly easily. Proletarianization and commercialization were making inroads on peasant life, however, and gradually households came to rely on wage or market income. Income from work has

displaced agricultural production due to low productivity and volatile prices. Over the last 20 years, waged work in the region has declined in favour of informal and some formal sector work in Lima or other more distant locations. Male workers retiring from the mining centres have sometimes returned to Allpalumi Chico with their pensions, while other elderly allpalumichiqueños have gone to live with their migrant children. Some households regularly move, in whole or through some of their members, in and out of the village as they combine income from various places. The economy is thus quite diverse over history, life cycle and among and within different households.

### **The first project: community initiative**

Up until about the 1950s, Allpalumi Chico relied on water from springs near the settlement. Older villagers remember how an earthquake in 1947 cut the amount of water from one of the springs. When don Pablo (all names are pseudonyms) tried to excavate around the spring to get better access to water, it just went further underground. In any case, the water from both springs escaped through its natural flow, and got muddied from washing and livestock. In the mid 1960s (memories are inexact about the date), the people of Allpalumi Chico built a cement reservoir from which pipes carried water to 6 or 7 public taps to different points in the streets. Based on what villagers remember about the past, we can explore the answers to the four dimensions of comparison between the two projects.

1) Who had the idea? Allpalumichiqueños insist that this project was entirely their own idea. The community was not an isolated hermetic entity, and by this time, many villagers had lived in work centres for mines and the railway. They had had experience of public water infrastructure and some of them had worked in installing parts of such systems. Thus, they wished to recreate in their community something they had seen elsewhere as a way of conserving water, ensuring that it was potable, and carrying it to taps closer to people's houses.

2) Who paid for the materials? The people of Allpalumi Chico raised money among those living in the community and those with jobs elsewhere. They would have needed some cement, although much of the water tank was stone, as well as pipes and valves to take the water to taps in the streets. Most people I talked to insisted that no resources from government or other outside sources were available, although one man mentioned a government donation of water pipes. This is in contrast to the community of Cajas, within 30 km in the Mantaro Valley. Alberti and Sanchez (1974, p. 103-106) recount that Cajas received both government support for some of the materials and for technical supervision.

3) How was labour organized? The community itself designed the system and did the work. They hired a villager from one of the annexes who worked as a mason for the mining company in La Oroya. He did the work during one of his vacations. They carried out the unskilled labour through community faenas.

4) Who was the project for? The project was to provide water for the people of Allpalumi Chico, both residents and migrants who expected to return to the community to live. They maintained it and ensured that people did not abuse the infrastructure or resource. Another purpose may have been for the community leaders of the time to be able to point to an important project during their time in office in order to gain prestige. One of the retired comuneros, don Máximo, claims this as his contribution, along with the rest of the executive of the time. Thus, local politics probably provided an additional impetus.

What I wish to emphasise in this project is its *local* and relatively autonomous nature. Labour migration affected the ability to afford the inputs, and knowledge of the technology, but the people themselves decided on, organized, paid for and carried out this project for their own use.

## **The second project: multiple initiatives**

1) Who had the idea? As indicated in the overview of the community above, Allpalumi Chico was quite a different place in 2000 from what it had been in 1960. While in 1960 there was already frequent emigration for work, by 2000 this had become essential. Agriculture was in decline and most villagers either had lived elsewhere or had strong expectations of living elsewhere in the future. Not only were villagers coming and especially going from Allpalumi Chico at an accelerated rate, there had been more outsiders in the community. Many of these outsiders had been specifically involved in providing development assistance. Government programs in agriculture or income support, a Peruvian NGO and a foreign NGO had all taught the villagers that resources were available from other sources. Thus, while my own presence, from my first fieldwork in 1984, was for research rather than development, over time people asked what help I could provide, either directly or indirectly. Thus, in 1998 I worked with the community to discover what their priorities for development were, with the hope of finding a way of funding these. They emphasized the need for more income opportunities, both through jobs and improvements to agriculture, although access to services including water and sewage arose in the discussions. Although it was not the primary preoccupation of allpalumichiqueños, by the end of the 1990s the state of their water supply had been one of their worries over the previous 10 or 15 years and they had asked for support from both government and NGO sources without success. A research assistant and I looked for organizations that could help the community. It was not easy. The region was not poor enough, not geographically situated to make access from Lima easy and the priorities were not those being funded at that point (governance was a major theme just then). We did, however, uncover a small Canadian NGO that sponsored potable water projects, incorporating a “conscientization” element that could help with conflicts that had plagued the community.

We took this possibility to the community, which held a poorly held assembly (all general

assemblies were poorly attended at this time) to discuss it. From this point, the project negotiation and operation was entirely in the hands of the community without further input on my part. Although people still held that income was a greater need, they did decide to support a bid for the water project. It is important to point out that allpalumichiqueños do not feel themselves to be in a position to reject any offer of assistance, in any form. In the debate returned migrants (retired workers with pensions) and women were the most in favour. They argued that having potable water in taps inside houses would improve health and be far more convenient. A committee was formed to get in touch with the NGO and pursue the project.

Thus, the decision was not entirely in the hands of the community. They had learned that resources could be accessed from outside agencies, but this entailed reacting to these external opportunities, rather than following their own priorities. Although they did decide to pursue it, the decision was made halfheartedly.

2) Who paid for the materials? The materials needed for the project were to be provided in part by the NGO and in part by allpalumichiqueños. The contract indicated that the pipes and other industrial inputs for the public part of the system would be supplied by the NGO, allowing it to decide on quality and diameter of the pipes. Since this was a donation, complaints about the specific materials chosen were considered by the NGO engineer to be impertinent.

Allpalumichiqueños provided natural materials such as gravel and sand, and purchased the items needed to connect and install the water inside the houses. The precise requirements for the connections were specified by the NGO and this ended up causing problems. Some allpalumichiqueños (among them the poorer villagers) had purchased smaller cement cases that were less expensive than those the engineer had specified. When she refused to allow them to use these they were outraged. Some had wanted the pipes to be large enough to carry sufficient water for irrigation, but again the engineer refused. In both cases she defended her point by calling on her

expertise: the smaller cases would not sustain this system, and there was insufficient water for irrigation. Some of the villagers were frustrated at not being able to influence these decisions.

3) How was labour organized? The frustration and conflict over materials paled beside that over the organization of the work. Much of this had to do with both their priority for income earning and the experience of workfare type projects sponsored by the state, especially during the presidency of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000). The workfare projects, which continue in certain government programs, supported community projects by offering workers a small wage or food staples. Thus, in the 1990s Allpalumi Chico had applied for and won a project to fix a track to the highland part of the community. Participants got food handouts in exchange for their work. The track had originally been intended to permit the tractor to have access to fields but the tractor had not been in working order for several years before the project took place. It was clear that that project had been pursued by the community in order to get the food handouts and not because of any particular need for the track. Community members who had been able to take advantage of food or money offered in such projects came to understand their labour as valuable, worthy of compensation (Vincent, 2005a).

Such projects and rewards had been strategically manipulated by Fujimori to shore up political support. The clientelism and welfarism resulting from such strategies had been widely condemned on Fujimori's departure from the presidency not only because of the political manipulation, but also because they were believed to make the project less sustainable. Instead, multilateral and NGO development agencies turned increasingly to the "demand response approach" favoured by the World Bank (Oneworld, 1999; Sara, 2003). This approach suggests that requiring recipient communities to contribute much or all of a project's cost will ensure that they take responsibility for it, assuring its sustainability and strengthening community at the same time. A tractor track, for example, would only be built by people who really needed and wanted it, if they had to pay for all of the inputs instead of being paid for building it.

This, of course, had been the case in the earlier water project, but times had changed and what allpalumichiqueños hoped to gain from a project had also changed. There are obviously different priorities at stake here, between agencies that want to ensure that the things produced in projects are sustainable, and people who want to attain their own economic sustainability and sometimes only incidentally enjoy the results of the project.

This strategy partly underwrote the NGO's manner of proceeding. It had a mandate to provide potable water and assumed that project recipients, who had asked them for assistance, also wanted potable water. The NGO endeavoured to make limited funds and personnel stretch as far as possible by providing some materials but not others, and by setting out a schedule of work so that their skilled technicians would not waste time waiting for the unskilled work to be done. The unskilled work of digging trenches, carrying cement, sand, gravel and stones, etc. would be done by allpalumichiqueños as their major contribution.

The distinction between skilled and unskilled work was the basis for many of the conflicts. Among the allpalumichiqueños were men who considered themselves to be skilled – they were masons or other craftsmen, had worked in the mining smelter or were farmers with years of experience. In the earlier project these people would have been able to help design the infrastructure, but now their suggestions for changes were ignored.

More demoralizing and frustrating was the experience of the water catchment system. There had been no mention of what would be done to capture and channel the water from the source in the contract with the NGO, so the allpalumichiqueños took the initiative to undertake a system themselves. The source was a small gully one and half kilometres and about 500 metres higher in altitude than the hamlet of Allpalumi Chico. In one of the long absences of NGO personnel, allpalumichiqueños dug a trench into the hard dirt and gravel, backfilled it with stones and directed it to the trenches they had dug. When the engineer showed up, she demanded that the work be done

again to meet her specifications. The capture system had to be dug deeper and the stones more carefully selected for different sizes. This would ensure more reliable water, but the humiliation of having their work deemed inadequate was added to the considerable labour involved in lugging tools and materials to 4000 metres and digging a trench two metres deep and 20 metres long at that altitude. Worse yet was that a side of the trench collapsed while they were redigging it, nearly burying some of the workers. Don Jaime, retired from the mineral refinery at La Oroya, interlaced his complaints about his near escape with resentment that his opinions about the work had been rejected.

Although the distinction between skilled and unskilled work left the latter in the hands of the community, the NGO put certain restrictions on the organization of the unskilled work. In order to benefit from the donation, participants had to have fulfilled their share of the actual work. The NGO showed itself to be conscious of debates over elite capture and gender differences, by requiring that all those who would be connected to the system perform an equal share of work and by dictating that the work of everyone would be treated as equivalent. The work had been distributed so that each beneficiary household was individually responsible for digging 40 metres of trench between the source and the reservoir, as well as having to participate in *faenas* for projects which needed more labour at a time – working on the capture system, fixing the reservoir, etc. The trench digging was under the control of the future water users and could be done by household or hired labour. There were difficulties because some had drawn sections of pure rock while others had only dirt to remove, but the users managed to get some dynamite to remove some of the rock. Nevertheless, the rock did cause some of the delays that exasperated the NGO.

It was in the organization of the cooperative work that there were problems. Here, a secretary of the organizing committee had to keep careful track of the contributions of each household in order to be able to assure the engineer that all had performed their part. A household could send a representative, send someone else to replace its own labour or pay a fine. Tracking the contributions

was enormously complex because of the system of interhousehold reciprocities. Over the last 50 years or more a web of relationships had developed between households with monetary income or land and households without. Thus, a household in which the adult male was working in the mining sector might hire someone from a resident household to help with agriculture. As outmigration became more common, residents might look after houses for the migrants as well as their fields. Goods and services might go back and forth so that the relationship was usually only partly mediated by money. Migrant workers, retired workers, single mothers, farmers, migrant children with elderly parents in Allpalumi Chico all carried on a multitude of mutual obligations and benefits, sometimes among rough equals, sometimes in more patron-client relations. Some of the obligations could involve requests to participate in the *faena* on someone else's behalf. Thus, there could be a situation in which one household cared for several houses belonging to migrants. Each owner might request that the allpalumichiqueños attend the *faena* as part of the unpaid goods and services they exchanged. It could happen that the resident family sent all of its adult labour force to the *faena*, but that none of these were attending on their own behalf. As a result, the resident family might end up owing days of cooperative work, even though they attended every session. The secretary of the organizing committee thus could not simply keep track of who attended, but whom they were attending *for*.

The complications did not end there. I have noted that the NGO was attentive to the debates over gender and other inequalities within communities, and had established that all workers in the project be treated equally. The social justice concerns of the NGO were laudable; they wanted to prevent the elite from benefiting unduly, and to ensure that women, the elderly, the physically weak were treated as equals. The engineer, a woman, was insistent that women be welcomed and was admiring of the contribution of elderly women, in particular. But remember that the work was physically very demanding: lifting and moving rock up and out of trenches 2 metres deep at 4000 metres altitude is extraordinarily difficult. A household that had to apportion its labour between its own domestic, farming and income-earning work as well as to find someone to attend a water project

faena, had to make strategic choices. What happened was that a lot of young and elderly women were sent to the faena – if their labour power was as acceptable as anyone else's and was what the household could best spare, then it made sense from the household's point of view. The number of faena days increased, though, as many of the attendees could not work as quickly due to their lack of strength.

The longer the project took, the more frustration arose (see Vincent, 2005a). The NGO technicians would arrive expecting to complete important steps and have to wait or leave because things were not ready for them. This accounted for long periods when the NGO refused to go to Allpalumi Chico because they could not waste their time. The allpalumichiqueños who were paying fines or hiring others to work found the cost became unbearable. Among this group were the retired or current migrants who had originally pushed for the project. Poorer villagers who had to commit their day to unpaid work on the project, and who kept in mind other public infrastructure programs in which they had received food or money, calculated the foregone benefits. These people also tended to be those who attended faenas on behalf of others through unpaid reciprocities. They could end up attending all days and still be ineligible for connection because they had attended for someone else. They might also be unable to afford the materials for connection.

Thus, although allpalumichiqueños were responsible for completing the unskilled work, the NGO maintained control over significant features of its organization. The irony is that the NGO had the intention of working toward equality within a strong community united in a common goal – building “social capital,” in some of the other popular development terminology (e.g. Putnam, 2000; Mosse, 2006) which would establish strong ties of mutual benefit which could be used for survival, to resist anomie, etc. They had in mind that earlier model when the village had only its own people and resources to count on, for good or for bad. The problem in the NGO vision was not that “community” did not exist: it did; but the allpalumichiqueños had a different idea and practice of what this meant from the engineer.

The engineer had promoted the idea that the project belonged to the allpalumichiqueños, hoping to assure its long-term sustainability. Allpalumichiqueños had never doubted this. It was precisely because they believed it belonged to them that they had felt such frustration at having to follow the NGO requirements. They were determined to maintain control of the system in the future. One of the major fears, in fact, and one which led to some hesitation about supporting it, was that the water system might, on completion, be transferred to either a regional or private utility. They had had this experience with electricity, an earlier infrastructure project in which they had contributed the unskilled labour and a foreign NGO donated the materials and technical work. In the end, *their* project with all of their unpaid labour, was handed over to the regional state-owned electrical system and they had to instal metres and pay set rates. Worse yet, over the last ten years, state-owned electrical utilities were being sold to the private sector. Thus, not only did they lose control of the system, but other entities were selling the product of their labour while they got no compensation. There was a major fear that this would happen with the water system. This fear is not unfounded: Verzijl (2007) argues that the Ley General de Aguas, which came into effect in 1969, established water as a public good in Peru, thus making the state the owner of and intermediary of disputes over access. This state assertion of interest in local water resources adds yet another external thread in the second water project.

4) Who was the project for? Finally, we must consider the characteristics of the beneficiary population. Remember that among those most in favour of the project were returned retired migrants; current migrants also featured among the supporters. Those who had lived in houses with running water, especially those with children who had been born and reared in cities, found the rustic services in Allpalumi Chico inconvenient and, in the lack of a sewage system, embarrassing and unpleasant. Those most in favour of the water project, then, were those most willing and able to live elsewhere. Even the long-term residents were not necessarily committed to staying in the community. While many enjoyed the healthful peaceful environment, being able to grow their own

food, the lack of income, quality education and health services were significant problems. Translocality, moving between different locations, had become the norm for many. Thus, in contrast to the first project, which had been for a population that intended to enjoy the service in their daily lives, the beneficiaries of this final project could not count on living there over the long term.

### **Participation: from the local community to the global community**

Over the 40 years between the first and the most recent water systems, much about how allpalumichiqueños decide, fund, organize and benefit from projects has changed. From internally generated, resourced, executed operations for community residents, almost all of these elements incorporate threads from outside the community.

These external threads are multiple. Allpalumi Chico is not the community it was in the 1960s. The people are far more translocal, moving for work within and outside Peru. They are also, both individually and as a community, far more implicated in the structures of the state and in national and international capitalist economies. Expectations about living conditions, consumption, all aspects of life are not containable within the confines of the community to the extent that they were in the past. Cosmopolitan, city-savvy, television-watching, domestic appliance-using, construction-, factory- or informal sector-working allpalumichiqueños do not want to go back to whatever infrastructural services they can construct themselves. Migrant villagers want comfort and reliable water when they are in Allpalumi Chico and push for the services they are used to in cities and work centres. Their incomes in part support these services.

Not only are allpalumichiqueños implicated in external processes, but these outside processes also operate more intensively in the community. External agencies provide funding and technical

direction. The state institutes laws about ownership and access that can have significant effects on local control. International agencies such as the U.N. set objectives such as the Millennium Development Goals that promote water provision (U.N., n.d.; see also Amin 2006). Allpalumi Chico is still a community, but one riven with multiple and cross cutting interests.

The point is not to romanticize a homogeneous united past. If the description of the 1960s project presented here sounds idyllic, we should remember that it is quite probable that there were conflicts, now forgotten, over competing interests relevant to the reality of the community at that time -- such things as where the public taps would be located, who would claim credit for the project, and maybe resentment by those who were satisfied with the spring against those who wanted to change this system. It is also important to point out that the people themselves have sought opportunities in work and through projects outside the community. In effect, the very impulses that allow communities to approach external agencies for assistance entail that the community cannot match the vision the NGO in the second project had of its character.

Acknowledgement of the reality of Allpalumi Chico could have prevented many of the misunderstandings between the NGO and the people. I also do not wish to imply a fatalist acceptance of the wider conditions that affect the lives of people such as those of Allpalumi Chico. It is by analysing the multiple threads that compose the lives of people that we can identify the pressures they face. A place to start might be for such projects need to accept that for some the goal will be income earning, while for others it will be the water itself. An acceptance of divided interests seems to have led to more smooth operation in a water project in the Mantaro Valley (Arias and Aramburu, 2003), in which those who contributed the unskilled labour were paid for their work, and in the end considered themselves owners of a service for a paying clientele. It is interesting to note that discussions in the Fourth Water Forum (Martinez Austria and Van Hofwegan, 2006) argue that water provision should be linked to poverty reduction. How this is done requires very careful consideration. Other discussions at the Forum hint at how local

entrepreneurs might invest in water systems and thus generate profits. Allpalumichiqueños were adamant that they would not tolerate the privatization of the water system. Without local forms of earning income, however, the community will not survive. I am very much afraid that, despite the current trend to improving the infrastructure (Vincent, 2005b) so that Allpalumi Chico now has electricity, a satellite dish, running water and in an even more recent project, has sewage, it will not be around in 20 years because no one will be able to make a living there. Thus, while the water system is a technical success and has the potential to be sustainable, the community may not be.

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