

# Almanac of the Future

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Motivational experience No. 23

A photograph showing three men in a community setting. They are wearing vests and are loading a cart with bags of waste. The cart has a green canopy with the text 'ASOCIACION COYAXIS Los Cipreces' and a yellow circular logo with the number '226'. The background shows a dirt path and some buildings.

**From trash to sharing  
economy: An experience  
where no one loses**

# From trash to sharing economy: An experience where no one loses

***Una What started as an initiative with a business logic against the eruption of a cholera epidemic and illegal dumping, sites in the east of Lima / Peru, has become a collective enterprise where sharing economy is practiced, generating benefits in the environmental, social and economic aspect. A story where no one loses***



***Mary recalls that in that time there were illegal dumping sites everywhere in the streets, and in the year 91 the cholera epidemic started. People literally lived next to the trash and there was no organized collection of garbage collection.***

there were illegal dumping sites everywhere in the streets, and in the year 91 the cholera epidemic started. People literally lived next to the trash and there was no organized garbage collection. The initiative to combat the problem of garbage came from the Missionaries of Bethlehem, who founded the Parish "Nuestra Señora de la Paz" in the area. "At that time, we were only 65 families living here," says Mary; today there are several towns or communities with thousands of homes. The idea of the missionaries to process solid organic residues and produce organic manure achieved the participation of a group of volunteers, who, supported by the church, formed the company CEPILOMA, an acronym that means "Centro Piloto de Lombricultura 1° de Mayo" (translated: Pilot Center for Vermicompost 1st of May).

## **Everything was about profit**

"We were all thinking about CEPILOMA's profitability, which was established as a limited liability company, but it quickly turned out that the expected profits were not as high as expected, so many of the people initially involved migrated again", says Mary. "After all, a small group of

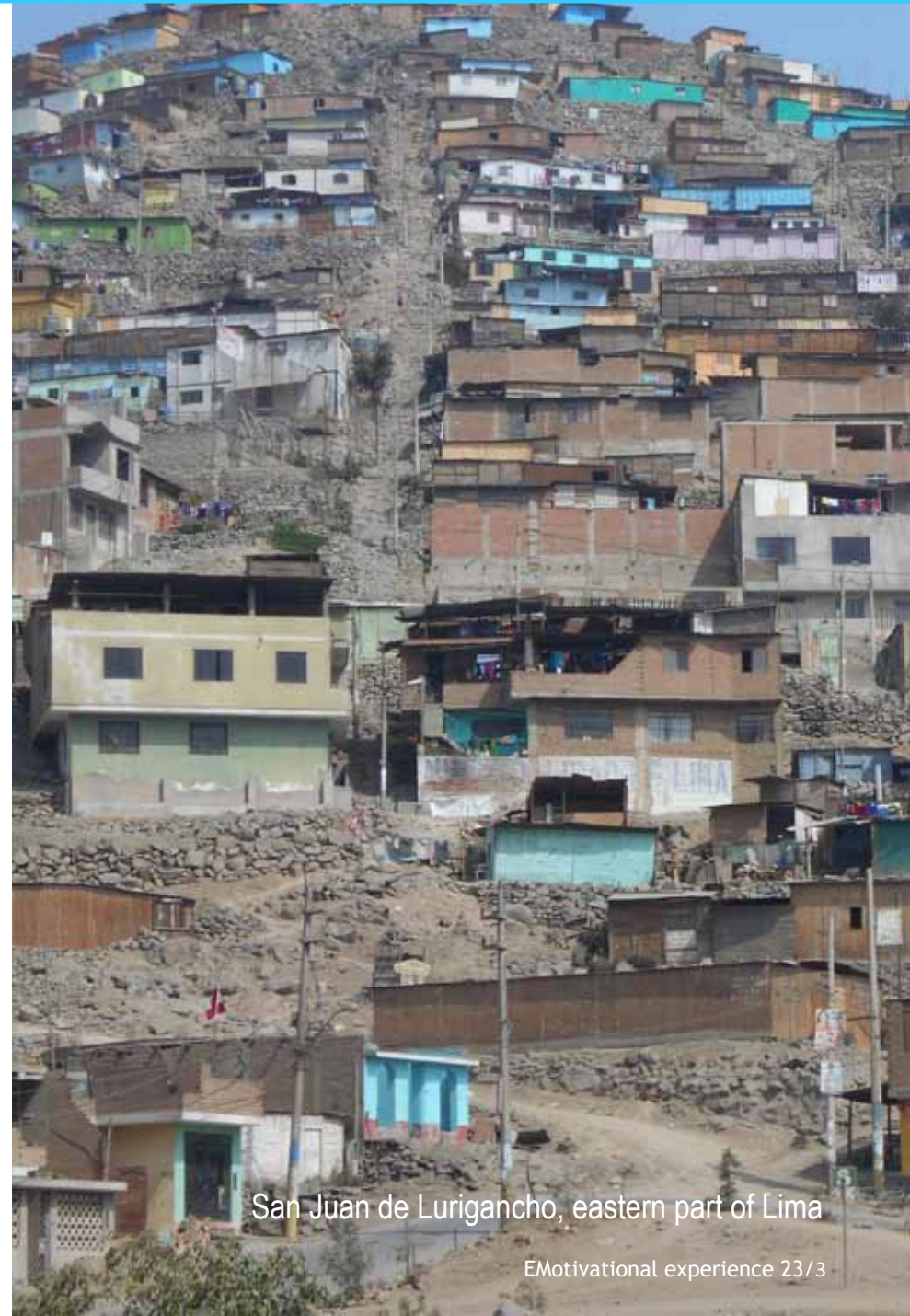
people, mostly from the immediate neighborhood, remained." The district administration had offered an area of 3500 square meters for the neighborhood's initiative. Finally, in 2007 the group, made up of 11 people, 7 of them women, ended with the legal closing of the company and its reconstitution as the Ecological Center "La Lombriz Feliz 1 ° Mayo".

## Extending the radar

The idea to train the families of the communities around the ecological center was retaken, instructing the people in the management of waste, separating the household excess into solid organic waste, other recyclable and non-useful waste. "Three times a week we went from house to house collecting the organic waste, because this was the main source for our compost and humus production," explains Mary. Today the dynamics have changed, since it is the families who, on their way to the market or to work, pass through the center to leave their organic waste; the entrance gate of the center is open during the day and facilitates the garbage "delivery". There are more than 400 families who now separate their waste. Some produce compost in their houses and have small orchards, practicing urban agriculture according to their possibilities (space, availability of water). Many families collect their non-organic recyclables, selling them to recyclers in the area. In this way, they reduce the volume of non-useful waste and obtain some income from the sale of reusable waste.

## A lost opportunity awakens creativity

In 2012, the public service of garbage collection, organized by the municipality of San Juan de Lurigancho, began to operate in the area. "Unfortunately, it was not possible to convince the authorities to apply the waste separation concept", says Mary and adds: "The good news is that many families in the area have already no-



San Juan de Lurigancho, eastern part of Lima

***“Three times a week we went from house to house collecting the organic waste, because this was the main source for our compost and humus production,” explains Mary.***

“...ticed the importance of waste separation”. There are families who, thanks to the proper management of their waste, lowered the amount of garbage to less than ten percent of what they used to throw away.

At first it was the Parish that supported the Center; now it has managed to capture resources from the international cooperation; thanks to the support of a national program, sponsored by the European Union. For the continuity of some projects the institution receives the support of the missionaries of San Columbano. The Center extended its training program with the neighbors, managed to better organize the transfer of organic household waste and began to organize the collection of organic waste from the market in the area. There are currently 25 vegetable and fruit traders who deliver their “raw material” to the Center.



Waste separation and collection of organic waste.





The center spread information about waste separation

## Collaborativeface

The Center has identified three axes of development, society, environment and economy. The activities of the Center are guided by this: information and community orientation, training and production.

Together with Mary Nieto, currently director of the ecological center and president of the association, works Andrea Cabrera, another founder of the organization. Both devote the full working day to the operation of the center, supported by neighbors who work a few days or hours during the week. With the sale of compost, humus and fertilizer, vegetables, plants, guinea pigs and rabbits, all at affordable prices, the production area covers the center's costs (wages, water, energy etc.) and supports the other activities in the center.

***“Unfortunately, it was not possible to convince the authorities to apply the waste separation concept”, says Mary and adds: “The good news is that many families in the area have already noticed the importance of waste separation”***



## On direction to the common good

What started as an initiative to take care of the environment, has undergone a transformation, from a business looking for profit to an ecological center that provides its services with a collaborative spirit to the community and its environment, making it sustainable.

During the visit to the center facilities, Mary explains the different sections, including worm

*Spices and medicinal herbs  
The volumes of compost and humus produced monthly reach up to four tons, most of it is sold, being the flower market of Lima the largest customer, the rest is used for the vegetables production in the center and the maintenance of green areas nearby, what twenty years ago was an illegal dumping sites, is today a field full of natural grass.*

and composting beds, horticulture, aromatic and ornamental plants and the guinea pigs and rabbits. The visitor can easily identify the established recycling circuit: organic waste as raw material for its processing into humus, its further conversion into fertilizers to produce vegetables and well as feed for animal husbandry; the excrement of guinea pigs and rabbits along with organic waste close the cycle. As biological control for the odors of composting the “garlic wrap” is used, which is produced massively in the region. The garlic helps to control the humidity in the compost beds. The water management is based on the scarcity of water resources. For the generation of electrical energy, the center is thinking of installing a bio-digester.

## Observing the future

The success achieved by the center is in Mary’s opinion very satisfactory: “People understand that what they produce at home is not garbage but raw material. We are creating a healthier environment. There are economic effects, between employment, income and even saving, since the volume of non-useful waste has been reduced”. According to Mary, the most valuable contribution of the center is sharing the experience and transmitting the knowledge acquired.

Compost and humus production

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The major challenge of the center is to convince the municipality to promote the separation of waste. "It is difficult since there are a lot of changes in the municipality's technical staff and the authorities have different visions. The former Mayor of Lima understood our approach and has spread our experience. In these days, a group of people from the Ministry of the Environment are coming to hold a workshop with us. From the practice is easier to persuade."

The center has set itself the goal of becoming a reference point for urban environmental work, and they are already on the right way



Urban Gardening on the improvised roof terrace of MOCICC, the citizens' action center of Peru on climate change

## Messages to the future

- What began as an initiative with a business logic, was transformed into a functioning example of sharing economy.
- From waste management and separation, a recycle circuit is established, allowing a healthier environment, employment, income and savings, sharing knowledge and stimulating replication at home.
- Generating multiple benefits for the common good rather than commercial profit - a way to build future into the present.



The best legacy we can leave to our children is a clean planet

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# Almanac to the Future

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