

Almanac of the Future

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Motivational experience No. 3



**Breaking schemas,
gaining access**

Breaking schemas gaining access

A decent housing is a human fundamental need, recognized as a human right. The other side of the coin is the commodification of social/popular housing. In Peru, state social housing programs are dominated by construction companies, making it impossible for families to self-construct. The Banks, which are in charge of placing the state subsidy, accentuate the problem because low income families, as the main target group of this state subsidy do not qualify due to a lack of solvency. The example of the “Movement of the Homeless of Lima / Peru” breaks down schemes and barriers, achieving from its persistence access to the decent housing.



Foto de Rubén Pérez

From protest to proactivity

Rubén Pérez earns his living as a taxi driver in Lima, the Peruvian capital metropolis with more than 9 million inhabitants. Soon Rubén will turn 60 and his dream of home ownership, even if it is only a small apartment, has remained a dream. Like millions of families, Ruben works every day to make ends meet, but acquiring an own roof is unaffordable for

the vast majority, where monthly rates reach 300 US\$ for a period of 15 years, not to mention the necessary initial quote that is even higher.

Together with 4,000 families, Rubén participated on January 20, 2002, in the occupation of a piece of land in the district of Carabayllo, located in the north of Lima. Despite the resistance of the occupants, the public force dislodged them in less than three weeks, fortunately without fatal victims but with wounded and arrested. The action, however, fulfilled the purpose of the participants of the take, achieving great media coverage, evidencing the failure of public policies regarding popular housing in the city and the country. During the next nine years, until 2011, the policy did not change, but after the takeover in Carabayllo the conviction was born in people like Ruben to actively demand the State his right to affordable and dignified housing. Every January 20th of the following years, this date was remembered as "the right to housing in Peru". It was on June 12, 2011 when the Movement of the Homeless (MST) was founded.

"The founding members," recalls Rubén, "were inspired by the region's progressive governments (Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela) and followed the example of similar movements in Argentina and Brazil." The founding of the MST coincided with the office of the the President Ollanta. But once in office all his promises were forgotten.

In the case of the mayor of Lima, Susana Villarán, the MST found more receptivity. Taking lesson from the experience of 2002, the movement sought and managed to articulate alliances with the workers' movement and other popular initiatives that seek alternatives to the model and to social exclusion. Under the slogan "Management and struggle", the MST established a dialogue with the authorities, since it was clear to the movement that the strategy to demand their right to housing would not involve occupation or land grabbing anymore, but rather the demand to competent authorities of the enforceability of their rights

First victories

In June 2011, the MST obtained its legal status, and due to several marches and other actions of protest, the MST had gained weight and power to convene in the political party scene in Lima. At the end of October of the same year, a public hearing was held with the presence of the president of the Congress, the



“Neoliberalism does not answer the basic question of housing, and the right to housing has become a commodity. The poor people, faced with this situation, rents a room in precarious conditions or participates in informal placements, settling in vacant and inadequate lands” .

(Rubén Pérez Flores, MST president).

housing minister and the mayor of Lima, treating as affordable housing as only subject. Taking advantage of the presence of television, the MST surprised the congress president by delivering a law proposal. In this event, the mayor, moved by the testimony of the MST bases, committed the municipality of Lima to act on the matter.

Presentation of the 2002 dialogue with representatives of former President Toledo (during the interviews with Rubén Pérez)

"The talk was mainly about the state-run social housing program "Techo Propio (Own Roof)", which subsidized the construction and purchase of small apartments (39 square meters), lower income families did not generally meet the bank 's requirements, and despite the enormous housing deficit, the state has never undertaken any serious efforts to solve this problem, and, apparently, urbanizing companies exercise much power in the political spheres"



With various actions, the "Movimiento Sin Techo" (MST) achieves the adoption of the Ordinance N ° 1643 in December 2012, paving the way for a social housing program of the city of Lima.

For the preparation of the proposed law, the MST approached the urban development institute, CENCA. Since then CENCA, supported by Misereor, with other NGOs, are strategic allies of the MST. The bill submitted to Congress intends to force the Peruvian state to implement the two social housing programs ("Mi Vivienda" and "Mi Techo") without systematically excluding the neediest. This bill has been approved by the congressional commission on housing. The mayor, using the powers granted by the Law of Municipalities on the subject of popular housing, managed, supported by the MST, the endorsement of Ordinance No. 1643 - Municipal Popular Housing Program, approved by the Council in December 2012.

Due to the lack of political will to implement the current ordinance, the MST changed its strategy, opting for its own territorial programs with the collective purchase

of land, challenging the mayor, Congress and Ministry of Housing to achieve direct administration of the subsidy to housing by the MST.

Territorial Program Jesus Nazareno de Collique

The first territorial program of the MST is the Jesús Nazareno de Collique Special Housing Project, located in the Comas district in the north of Lima. 250 families, belonging to the MST have formed a territorial organization and managed to buy a land of 4 ha in more accessible conditions, since the owner preferred to sell before the threat of clandestine invasions. During the last months, part of the land has been urbanized by the families themselves. It is a quarry, an advantageous circumstance because it allows them to use materials of the place (sand, rock and stone) in the construction of the houses. The purchase of the land has been financed by an initial payment of \$ 623 per family and 18 monthly installments of approximately \$138.

Rubén says it has not been easy for families to accept the collective purchase via their organization. "People are very distrustful, they have been cheated too often and it is a great achievement that there is trust in the organization. The joint purchase all has allowed to lower the cost. We hope to achieve the same thing with the purchase of construction mate



Collectively paved construction sites

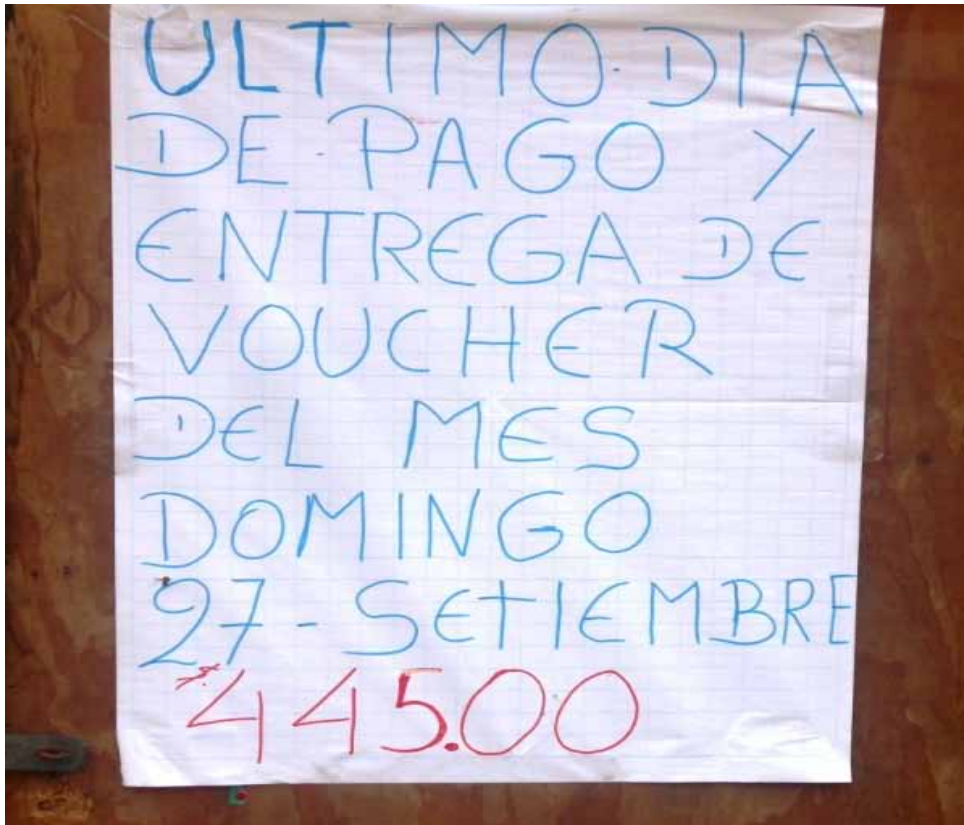


Temporary accomodation in Jesús Nazareno de Collique

The organization of the MST now includes around 4,000 families. 250 Families were involved in the first housing program. The regulation, unanimously approved, requires approval by the assembly in the future if someone wants to transfer their lot and housing to third parties. In this way, it is hoped to maintain the social cohesion that characterizes the collective at this time. Shortly, the MST will start with the second territorial program, located in the sector of Carabayllo, with a capacity for five thousand families.

The fight for state housing subsidized continues

"2016 is a campaign year, and this is a good thing for our concern to get governmental authorities to move forward with our proposal in housing construction through our movement, and no party will like the MST protesting in the middle of the election campaign" Said Rubén. "In this sense, we will also take advantage of our assistance to the Poverty Reduction Roundtable in Lima, an official space for concerted action on the issue."



Last day to settle the monthly rate of 445 Soles: Sunday, September 27th

Susana Paz Jiménez, Richard Soria and Rubén Pérez as representants of the MST share victories and look into the future:

- The first decree of the City Administration of Lima is a first stage victory
- Our law proposal reached the Congress.
- Our organization has entered alliances and exerts a citizen militancy.
- Our strategy of organizing massive events managed to publicly compromise authorities.
- There is a collective agreement to say No to the deprivation of our right to housing.
- We are on the way to overcome our exclusion through dialogue and pro-activity.
- We maintain that it must be possible to channel the state subsidy to social housing in the framework of our residential housing programs.

Messages to the future

- The example of the “Movimiento Sin Techo” (MST) shows the feasibility of breaking schemes, step by step forcing the State to cooperate directly with the collective instead of allowing the merchandizing of the right to housing.
- The pro-activity, the dialogical culture and the social cohesion of the movement manage to attract media attention and oblige authorities to take a public stand in the face of legitimate demands.
- Long breath and small steps characterize the struggle of this group, adapting their strategies to the political conjuncture and, convinced of a militancy from the citizens

The text, which is based on visits and discussions in situ, was created by Jorge Krekeler (Consultant Misereor as AGEH specialist), but initially made consensual with the people visited. Special thanks go to Rubén Pérez, Susana Paz Jiménez and Richard Soria from “Movimiento de los Sin Techo Metropolitano Perú” (MST), Esther Álvarez, Davis Morante and Carlos Escalante from the NGO CENCA (Institute for urban development).



Co-leaders from the organization are sharing their strategies and celebrating their achievements

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