

Overcoming flooding in Peru



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In March 2017, the worst flooding in a lifetime hit northern Peru. Districts like Cascas, where Water For People works, was hit especially hard. The flooding was attributed to the combined effects of a changing climate and El Niño, and many people in Cascas were left to rebuilt homes and livelihoods and even entire water systems in the aftermath. To commemorate the floods and celebrate the resiliency of the people of Cascas, we want to share how three people overcame challenges brought by the flooding.

Don Ángel

“The force of nature was so strong that I saw huge rocks and big trees moved by the force of water,” Don Ángel said.



Don Ángel leads the water and sanitation office in the district of Cascas, Peru. He says he was hired because of his experience in environmental management and past work in rural communities. That experience was invaluable when the 2017 flooding washed away most of the district's water systems.

“Eighty percent of the water systems in Cascas were affected,” said Ángel.

District water and sanitation offices like those Ángel leads provide direct support to community water committees that manage water systems. Because of its close relationship to those committees, Ángel's office could quickly understand the damages and create a plan to repair water systems.

Read how Ángel helped the entire district recover after the flooding.

Doña Maria

Like many families in Cascas, Maria Montalvo Arce grows grapes. Cascas is known for its winemaking, which is an economic driver for the region.

Last year, the floods washed away nearly all of Maria's harvest. She said she harvested less than 10% of her usual harvest.





Maria surveying her grapes after the flooding

The floods also left Maria without water for the first time in 20 years.

“The rain this year was different,” Maria said. “Every year there is rain in this area, but never rain so strong that it cut off the water supply.”

Read how Maria is moving forward.

Don Michael

“Everything was gone,” Michael said. “The rain left nothing.”

Michael next to the rehabilitated water source for his community

Michael Sagastegui is the president of the water committee in his small town of Pampas de San Isidro. In 2016, Michael spent his first year as president overseeing some much-needed repairs to the community water system, only to watch last year's flooding wash it all away.

With support from the Cascas district water and sanitation office and Water For People, and with hundreds of hours of hard work from his community members, Pampas de San Isidro rebuilt their water system. Michael says they rebuilt it stronger than before, protecting it from future disasters.

Read how Michael led his community to rebuild their water system.

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