

The Community Leadership Experience in the Context of COVID-19



I. SUMMARY

**THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS
CAME TO INTENSIFY THE
SITUATION OF VIOLATION THAT
ALREADY EXISTED IN THE
POPULAR SETTLEMENT.**

**THE COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN THE
MAIN COPING MECHANISM.**

**IT IS NECESSARY TO
IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF
HABITAT AND HABITABILITY
AND TO GENERATE
EFFECTIVE AND BINDING
DIALOGUES.**

We present the results of the struggling in the global emergency because of the pandemic caused by COVID-19 with the Community Leadership; Therefore we interviewed 196 community leaders from 136 Popular Settlements in 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries, through descriptive analysis. The report describes the experience of community leaders, the mitigation actions promoted in their territories, and it identified the proposals and expectations they have about the society to which we need to resolve.

° Argentina, Brasil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haití, Honduras, México, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, República Dominicana, Uruguay y Venezuela.



II. INTRODUCTION

On January 30th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a public health international emergency. In Latin America, the first case was detected on February 26 in São Paulo, Brazil. On 11 March; Therefore the World Health Organization declared it as pandemic because of its spread around the world and the large number of people affected.

On March 13th TECHO decided the suspension of all mass activities; considering the prevention and well-being of the inhabitants of the communities in which we work, volunteers, donors, temporary so far new indications and develops an immediate communication with institutions, companies, community organizations and collective partners on the decisions taken, in order to promote proposals to safeguard the impact of suspended activities.

We created strategies to recognize the necessities of the community; the immediate response we had as a team allows us the situation that they are suffering in the middle of this situation; we were able to contact with them despite the implementation of social distancing measures and strict quarantines, the mechanism for dealing with this new scenario was mostly community organization.

It was extremely important for us to know how the Community Leadership have been facing the new reality for the pandemic caused by COVID 19 and how they are counting with the support with the community, therefore we decided to do interviews to let us know the following points:

- The results of the struggle in the global emergency because of the pandemic caused by COVID-19 with Community Leadership.
- Recognizing the necessities of the community.
- Identified the proposals and expectations they have about the society to which we need to resolve.



We point out , three important aspects to consider in this study are highlighted: (1)The coronavirus crisis came to intensify and exacerbate a situation of vulnerability that already existed in the popular settlements of Latin America. (2)Community organization has been the main coping mechanism for people living in popular settlements, a mechanism that had been used since before the arrival of the coronavirus. (3)The imminent need to improve habitat and habitability conditions is recognized, as well as the generation of effective and binding dialogues that formalize public-territorial spaces, where community leaders are an active part of government decisions on the transformation of their territories. Not today, tomorrow.

III. METHODOLOGY

Model

This study was developed from a qualitative approach, favoring the approach to the experience of the interviews, to build a narrative of their experience. The work focuses on the description of the dimensions analyzed, emphasizing mainly:

Current diagnosis, Infrastructure, essential elements, personal experience, community capacities, personal and collective expectations, recovery.

Participants

For the selection of the participants, a sample of typical cases was used (Hernández Sampieri, 2014), because of the study's emphasis on describing the meanings and experiences of the interviewees in a given context. The interview was applied in 16 of the 18 countries where TECHO has a presence in Latin America, to 196 community leaders for a better selection of participants, two criteria were established: 1) to be recognized as a leader, leader or referent of the community, 2) To belong to a position in the association of neighbors or community development, housing committees, or any communal movement. It is worth mentioning that these criteria were mainly indicative, not decisive. Leadership was selected by the territorial directorates of each country.

Gathering of information

During 5 weeks we interviewed by telephone, leaders of popular settlements in where TECHO has presence. The information was recorded through the Kobo Toolbox platform, a tool for collecting information in the field, through the use of mobile devices, Generally used by personnel dedicated to working in humanitarian crises.



IV. FINDINGS FROM THE TERRITORY

I. COVID-19 of the Settlements

The lack of knowledge about the pandemic caused great uncertainty in the face of a scenario that provided little clarity and certainty about what would happen, not only in the coming days, weeks, and months. All of us felt at some point that what had been declared "officially" half an hour ago lost its validity half an hour later with a new report on the progress of the virus.

Leaders said their routines had changed significantly with the implementation of isolation measures, promoted by governments to prevent coronavirus. Fear, stress, and concern are some of the emotions that better describe the feelings of neighbors in popular settlements. The situation that existed before the coronavirus in the region seems to be an important matter, compared to the way in which the leaderships express the experience of the virus.

In Latin America, more than 185 million people are living in poverty and 104 million of them live in popular settlements. These territories are characterized by a lack of healthy housing and basic services, as well as limited and even non-existent access to preventive and emergency health systems.

Another factor that intersects facing the new reality is the employment situation, with labor informality and unemployment predominating at the Latin American level. According to data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), for 2018, the first was 52.6%. For the second, by the end of 2020, it is estimated that 17 million formal jobs will be lost and informal employment will increase to 62%. Although coronavirus can affect everyone and everyone equally, its impact on people's lives has a bias that discriminates by socio-economic stratum, directly influencing the capacity for response and mitigation.

"We are afraid because we have to leave the community to work". Ricardo Gualim, Guatemala.



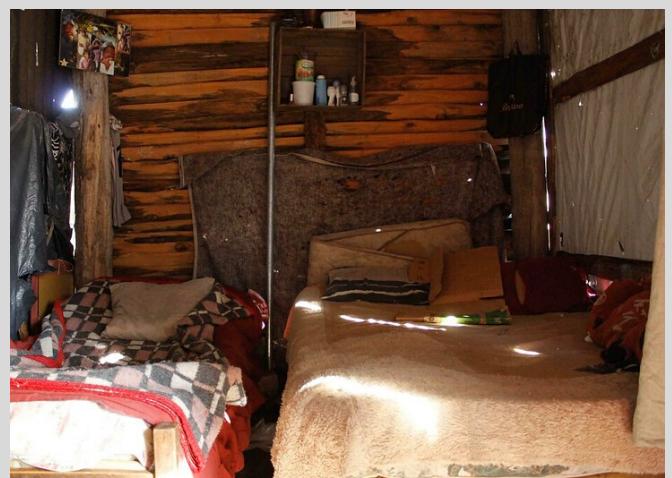
According to the Special Report: Latin America and the Caribbean in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic and social effects, published by ECLAC (2020), due to the economic and social inequality prevailing in the region, Unemployment is expected to have a significant impact on people living in poverty and those belonging to the vulnerable middle-income strata.

Without having reached month 12 to know the official records on the employment situation in the region, it is enough to know the situation of families in the settlements, to realize that this projection is already accumulating the figures:

"Before we went through a difficult situation, now with the confinement and the lack of work every day is more desperate, mainly the last few weeks, we can not access the family basket we are waiting for the quarantine to be lifted and go to work but first health. We are with fear and despair". (Viviana Tacuri, settlement leader of Las delicias, Argentina).

For the most part, the leaders referred to having lost their jobs or having their income-generating activities interrupted. They also said that this scenario was repeated for many of their neighbors.

"It is an event that has changed our lives in general, the arrival of the virus and has affected us in many areas, right now problems to be able to work". (Pascual Sebastián Bajaña Marmolejo, settlement leader of Cooperativa los naranjos, Ecuador).



This situation has only exacerbated vulnerability. The income generated by the informality of work barely meets daily needs and is insufficient to withstand the abrupt interruption of economic activity caused by the coronavirus.

"It has been difficult because La Risota is an invasion and the majority of residents are independent, live from day to day, none have permanent work and the inability to leave makes it difficult to meet their basic needs." (Elaine Marcela Osorio Rodríguez, settlement leader of La Risota, Colombia).

The possibility of complying with the recommendations of the World Health Organization, not only depend on the willingness to care for and implement them, or on the solidarity of taking care of oneself to take care of others, depends also and mainly, to have adequate and minimum objective material conditions for the protection of life.

"For some families hunger represents more risk than the virus". (Josney Marques de Oliveira, settlement leader of Vila Nova, Brazil).

Another phenomenon that affects the region harshly is violence. In the study, The 50 Most Violent Cities in the World (2019), by the Security, Justice, and Peace Foundation, in its ranking of the top 10, places 7 cities in 3 Latin American countries: Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil. The fear when arriving and leaving the house for the possibility of being intercepted by people who attempt against your life, the fear of being a victim of a stray bullet or the need to pay a "tax" to the band that dominates the town, are situations that without a doubt, increase and worsen inequality. The sense of security and tranquility that the home should generate for everyone also has a bias that discriminates by socioeconomic stratum.

¿Who takes the control?

During these weeks, we have witnessed the behavior of the leaders of the countries against the coronavirus. Their way of acting has served to take the pulse of the advance of the pandemic, to measure its impact and to feel the effect on the settlements.

According to the WHO, Brazil has the highest number of cases, both in contagion and in deaths in Latin America. The reaction of its president has certainly not been the most accurate in the face of the magnitude of the problem. In a BBC World publication of 18 May, "Coronavirus in Brazil: 7 errors that led Brazil to the current critical situation", he describes a series of decisions and behaviors in the face of the crisis that has seriously aggravated the problem, between them, the disagreement of the government to coordinate actions and confused and ambiguous communication.

"When I knew I felt scared, but I felt a lack of information. The first dissemination was through television and then people began to comment in the community, but there was still disbelief that it would get here". (Valquiria Soares da Silva, settlement leader of Capadócia, Brazil)

On the other hand, according to WHO monitoring, Mexico currently reports more than one hundred thousand people infected, besides it is among the top five countries with the most cases and with the highest mortality rates in the region.

Many of the people interviewed in Mexico reported having little information about the symptoms and how to prevent it, mentioned that there was very little talk about the issue and that the complexity began to be dimensioned when the neighbors began to lose their jobs and/or be forced to stay at home.

"We are living a moment in the history in which people are scared, because of the lack of knowledge of the disease"
(Margarita Ladrillero, settlement leader of Barrio de Mexico Mexico).



To deal with the pandemic, we also need information that is timely, truthful, and current. Like everyone else, the people in the settlements had to face a myriad of fake news, but in the cases of Brazil and Mexico, they also had to deal with disinformation and lack of clarity of the messages issued by their rulers.

We also asked interviewees about the recognition of their Governments' assistance measures. While among those who have not received and those who know of the existence of such support, but have not yet received anything, another important group referred to the receipt of aid, but mostly of a low and/or insufficient nature, both the number of family members and the level of shortages caused by the lack of income-generating opportunities.

"The government says a lot in the press and television, but not in reality. The only thing they have complied with is in the health system, because to assign appointments they do it faster". (Marta Azucena Cañón, settlement leader of the Los Laureles, Colombia).

"Yes, in the first week they were delivering food rations. The Mayor of La Vega fumigated in other communities, but did not reach the community, We heard say that the Trustee or Mayor in an interview said that he did not know the community Professor Juan Bosch or El Guabal". (Roselio García, settlement leader of Juan Bosch, Dominican Republic).

"They arrived last Sunday to leave a single bag of food for each family, the families have many people and a bag is not enough". (Viviana Jaramillo, settlement leader of Camellia, Panamá).

*"No, the government has not spoken. Where we have had a response is from the municipality, we have made efforts and have helped us with food and water".
(Pascual Sebastián Bajaña Marmolejo, settlement leader of Cooperativa Los Naranjos, Ecuador).*



Homelessness hampers preventive isolation

The coronavirus crisis has worsened the situation of the settlements and has highlighted the vulnerability of those who inhabit them. People do not have the basic conditions to comply with the protection measures that the World Health Organization has defined against the pandemic; with mostly self-constructed dwellings and where overcrowding prevails. Guaranteeing the space itself was already a challenge before the first case of the coronavirus, but now that everyone should be, all day long, the challenge is even greater. Furthermore, due to loss of income, some families have had to abandon their rented premises and share houses with relatives living in settlements.



"more family members who live on rent come in so they don't have to pay the rent and stay in their family rooms. Even in the worst cases when they do not enter because they are many they become a precarious quarter that does not meet the basic conditions". (Cristian Valverde, settlement leader of Nilo source, Bolivia).

According to the report Sustainable Development, Urbanization, and Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: Dynamics and Challenges for Structural Change, published by ECLAC (2017), settlements represent the scenario of social inequality. Despite the efforts made in recent years to narrow this gap, there are still profound disparities between different sectors of the population and geographical areas (ECLAC, 2015b).

"Beyond having the same problem of no water, electricity, bad roads, ambulances and police cars don't come in, with the coronavirus we are lonelier, fewer doctors, and police, nobody from the neighborhood comes in. Everything is even more abandoned, and you can't find anybody to turn to... or they don't answer." (Elena Gonzaga, settlement leader of Luján, Argentina).





IV. FINDINGS FROM THE TERRITORY

II. Manage the crisis: the role of the the community organizations and leadership in the pandemic scenario

One of the dimensions of priority interest were the community capacities, mainly referred to networking and organization for its relevance in enhancing territorial development. For it, we investigated the actions that have been made from the community to face the effects of COVID-19, as well as articulations with other actors for the same purpose.

We often hear that in the worst solidarity ties and mutual help flourish, trying to face a reality that hits hard. florecen los lazos solidarios y la ayuda mutua, tratando de hacer frente a una realidad que golpea con fuerza. Popular settlements are not strangers to this dynamic, in fact, living in a permanent critical state, community support mechanisms are cooperating and in situations like these, they are expanded to reach more families and alleviate more problems.

These community spaces are often the cradle or development of potential leaders, testing their management skills, both in terms of economic and human resources, planning and organization.

Through the analysis, we identified that in the current context, the community leaderships in charge of these spaces are strengthened, relying on new skills to make available to their community, and consequently, the social capital, understood as the degree of trust that exists between the social partners of a community, the norms of behavior practiced and the level of associativity (Putnam, 1994) is also strengthened.

"We don't meet to prevent the spread, the community leader informed person by person the security measures to prevent the entry of COVID". Rosa López.
El Salvador.

On the other hand, we will try to identify what has been the role of community organization during the first months of the pandemic in Latin America, marked mainly by the measures of partial or total isolation.

At the beginning of the arrival of COVID-19 to our continent, and the prevention measures against contagion, two very different attitudes could be observed in terms of the reaction of community leaderships, but with a common result: community action was minimized, reserved for virtual devices or directly paralyzed. Many of the experiences surveyed show a big fear of the virus, and with it, an attempt to respect isolation and work on prevention measures from the individual or family point of view. In this first moment, the actions at community level had to do with the setting up of groups to disseminate prevention and information protocols through the application of whatsapp.

The other attitude identified was the underestimation of the possible effects of the virus, and also the lack of clarity regarding the duration of the isolation, which was estimated to be short.



Take action

"We hadn't took actions till now because it was expected that the quarantine didn't last longer and we were waiting for help but, the help didn't arrive, so now we are trying to help those families who are having a hard time, we are thinking about doing a soup kitchen but, we don't know how to get the means yet." (Viviana Tacuri, settlement leader of Las delicias, Argentina).

Once it was realized that isolation was here to stay, and on the other hand, that subsistence and community well-being would depend, in large part, on partnership between peers and community organization, several leaders expressed that a stage of action had begun.

In this sense, two major groups can be identified in terms of the way in which the actions were carried out. A first group refers to those communities that initiated the activities in a spontaneous way, responding to the needs perceived in an intuitive way in their neighborhood. The second group corresponds to those communities where this stage began with a census to identify needs and population in situations of greater vulnerability.

An interesting point that emerges from the survey is that many of the people consulted about the actions that were being developed in the neighborhood to face the coronavirus, responded that no action had been taken at the community level, while at the same time they went on to list several activities related to the dissemination of information, disinfection, cleaning, distribution of goods and supplies, and negotiations with local governments, among others.

The strategies deployed were of different intensities and lines of action, but the main response was aimed at solving the food crisis. In those communities where there was already a space for this purpose, coverage was expanded, either in terms of the number of families or the number of meals provided or days worked, while in the settlements where this did not exist or those that were active could not meet the present need, new spaces emerged, known as "soup kitchen."

In general, those permanent neighborhood canteens, managed by formal or consolidated grassroots organizations, have either state or private supplies, so they have an income or food base to function, while those that emerge in the crisis depend exclusively on occasional supplies from the state or donations from individuals, which do not have a clearly established frequency, whose rations vary, often being only dry food and it is not known when the last delivery will be.



"As the quarantine is extended, more people are joining in because there is less food, less supply in the homes, more desperate people are. The pots are also difficult to make because of the lack of meat, chicken, vegetables." (Elena Gonzaga, settlement leader of Luján, Argentina).

On the other hand, in this same axis, there were also actions related to the distribution and/or assembly of merchandise bags, with the objective of reaching families in their homes. Some community gardens were even created to provide food security in the medium term, while in other cases it had not yet been developed, but it was in the plans, within a vision of generating sustainability and capacity to face future crises within the community. In turn, there were less organized efforts, mainly related to peer solidarity, such as sharing one's own household food with another family in a more vulnerable situation.

"Between neighbors we try to help each other and make sure there's no shortage of bread. As a member of the community, I try to look for little help to give to the community because "Between neighbors we try to help each other and that there is no lack of daily bread. As a member of the community, I try to find small ways to help the community, since we are all of limited means. Practically no one leaves their home because they have no reason to, since most of us are unemployed." (Dionisio Samaniego Rotela, settlement leader of Santa Ana, Paraguay).

Another important line of action was the dissemination of information related to the virus and prevention measures. The most used methodology was the virtual one, through the telephone, with community groups destined to an end. However, door-to-door tours were also organized, promoting the hygiene habits necessary to avoid the spread of COVID-19 and encouraging people to stay at home. In some cases, signs were also installed indicating preventive measures.

All these efforts demonstrate extensive capacities for the organization and management of resources and people, which are not particular to the contexts of the situation, but respond to the needs of families in popular settlements, who live in a permanent state of emergency.



Even before the coronavirus, women were already organizing the house and the community

With the arrival of the coronavirus in the region and its impact on vulnerable populations, it has become evident that it is impossible to guarantee social distancing to the letter, as indicated by the World Health Organization. But this situation has not prevented the residents of popular settlements from organizing themselves, making their resources available and collectively facing up to the onslaught of the pandemic, but who is leading these initiatives? For this study, we interviewed 196 community leaders, and of this group, 116 are women.

The coronavirus landed in Latin America on Feb. 26, when the first case was identified in São Paulo, Brazil. Before this date, women were already leading actions to improve the situation in their communities. In a research, carried out by TECHO in 2019, on the experience of community leaderships, it was found that three out of four (75.8%) women are at the head of community organization in their territories. Also, through this same source, it was identified that one out of three (34%), carries out three days of work: the care of the community, the home and the generation of assets.

Most of the women are leading the organization of soup kitchens, the dissemination of information, the collection of food and the establishment of contact with potential networks that provide support to satisfy basic needs.

But the work does not end here, because of the precarious situation that characterizes housing in popular settlements, it is necessary to make extraordinary efforts to try to protect groups at risk and prevent them from becoming infected. Inequality in access to water for human consumption also exacerbates the problem. The report, *The COVID-19 Pandemic Deepens the Care Crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2020), indicates that 13.5% of the region's households do not have access to improved water sources, which adds more hours to unpaid care work.

On the other hand, women are also caring for children in these households, whose academic activities have been disrupted by the impossibility of providing continuity through digital means. Not all households or educational centres have the tools, skills and technology to sustain formal education remotely.

It is necessary to rethink the ways in which care tasks are currently conceived and distributed. The crisis of the coronavirus and its adjacent effects have highlighted the precarious lives of women and triggered an alert about the true contribution to the economy, which is care for others. The work being done today by women in popular settlements is not only having a direct impact on their localities, but also, according to research carried out by UN Women (2016-2017), is making a significant contribution to sustaining the economy and reducing public spending on social services and infrastructure.





IV. FINDINGS FROM THE TERRITORY

III. Recovery must go beyond the starting point

"I don't expect much from the government, if they should start changing the way they see the people most in need, see how they organize them, accommodate them and stop ignoring us. I would like them to look at us with different eyes." (Gladys Gonzalez, leader of Rincón del Lago, Colombia).

When we think of recovery, the first thing that comes to our minds is the return to a previous state, to a "better past. The problem is that, in the case of popular settlements, reaching the pre-pandemic situation is not enough. That stage, characterized by lack of access to basic services, inadequate housing, and lack of community infrastructure, cannot be the goal. In this sense, it is key to carry out actions that not only mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in these communities, but also attempt to recover, but that are sustainable and lasting actions, which aim to be part of the structural solutions that these neighborhoods require.

In this sense, we believe that it will no longer be possible to hide the reality of popular settlements, therefore governments will have to come up with answers.

These communities want and expect changes in the government's actions in the post-pandemic context, although there is always a certain disbelief in the State's capacity to truly carry out development actions for the most vulnerable sectors.

"Put yourself in the people's shoes, make a reform where you help a redistribution."
(Hoover Edilberto Peña, settlement leader of the Mirador de Corinto 3, Colombia).

The redistribution of wealth is one of the central axes in the view of community leadership. A fairer redistribution structure can bring about real changes in our societies.

Other changes that the people who lead the popular settlements demand from their governments have to do with the fight against corruption and also with bringing the State closer to their neighborhoods. This last aspect seeks a greater presence of the government, accompanying the development of the settlements, listening to their claims and paying attention to their ideas, knowledge and proposals.

On the other hand, according to the experiences gathered, **the new forms of help and accompaniment that have emerged in the pandemic could give way to a new society with more solidarity**. The change, according to some leaders, is already taking place, and they see it reflected in the actions that are being carried out from the settlement itself to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19.

"Everyone's way of living, of performing in daily life (will change). The basic thing for me, as they say, is to think about the coexistence of people, we are human beings and we must tend to respect the other. After the cholera, people changed their way of living and thinking". (Susana Fernández, settlement leader of La Tosquera, Argentina).

"Já está mudando. As pessoas já estão se preocupando mais com a necessidade do próximo do que antes, então espera que pós pandemia as pessoas continuem se preocupando com outros." (Marcela Ferreira, lideresa del asentamiento Bemfica, Brasil).

United We Will Win

The leaderships were also consulted about the characteristics that the neighborhood itself should develop or strengthen to face the changes that will arise in the post-pandemic context, and the word most mentioned was union.

"Uniting strength: in difficult times it is really important that everyone works hand in hand to be able to move forward and face the crisis. (Jean Marie Mimose, Te Nwa, Haiti).

Community participation and organization are identified as key pillars for the recovery phase, and this is understood from the previous analysis that we did: it was the community organizations, whether grassroots or spontaneous, that emerged at the beginning of the pandemic that accompanied and assisted their neighbors. Although there was external assistance in several of the neighbourhoods that participated in this study, most of the time these were isolated actions that did not have a clear strategy or planning that would allow the community to anticipate or rely on such assistance.

Another of the aspects mentioned for the recovery scenario was the need to generate new jobs, considering that several of those that the population of the settlements carried out, mostly within the popular economy, will be affected, not only by the conditions of isolation and social distancing, but also by the economic situation of the population in general: many of the services provided or the goods offered by the people of the popular settlements are acquired by the middle class, which is seeing its income affected by the present crisis.



"You have to learn to undertake and innovate to get your money's worth."

*(Julio César Familia,
settlement La Paz,
Dominican Republic)*

On the other hand, within the community, the leaderships recognize the need to revise their own structure of wealth distribution, so that those who have more can help the most vulnerable families in the neighborhood.

In this sense, they highlight the need for local merchants to be able to adjust their prices, lowering them in order to be accessible to the common population.

Finally, the popular settlements will have to continue working on the development plans previously outlined. As we have mentioned throughout this report, the problems that afflict the settlements most deeply are of a structural nature, and the people who live there cannot wait for solutions, so, as with the present crisis, the communities are organizing themselves to mobilize their own development.

"We would say that since we are all healthy and one joins in and makes plans in the community for the developments that we had before, having alternatives for the development of the community, to continue looking for options where to go, what doors to knock on, after the asphalt the development is at the door." (Carmen, leadership of Villa Hortensia, Dominican Republic).

V. CONCLUSIONS



We recognize that the coronavirus pandemic came to detonate a minefield of inequality in the geographic space of the settlements. These territories are limited to a region that in recent months had been shaken by convulsive mobilizations that were putting the established social order in check and increasing a deep distrust in the leaders of state.



We easily associate that this uneasiness was due on several occasions to the discontent of the citizens with the distribution of wealth, thus returning to the origin of the problem we have raised here. In the Report, Latinobarómetro 2018, the indicator on the perception of justice in the distribution of wealth, showed a significant drop, from 25% in 2013 to 16% in 2018. Likewise, another metric that shows this malaise is the indicator of confidence in the government, which fell from 45% in 2010 to 22% in 2018.

The lack of confidence and legitimacy in institutions only increases the vulnerability of countries to crises, makes exit scenarios more complex and increases the risk of vulnerable populations. We can see that the coronavirus only exacerbated a situation of inequality that was already plaguing the region. This being so, perhaps the "cure" for Latin America is not the vaccine, but the possibility of thinking together in this context and listening to and putting at the center of the conversation those who, after years of experience, have developed the capacity to adapt to face the constant emergencies that life in the settlement demands.

V. CONCLUSIONS



In the research carried out by TECHO in 2019, on the experience of community leaderships, it was determined that those who work together with TECHO, do so mobilized by the recognition of needs presented by their community, also, because they recognize their potential to influence the transformation of their communities and because they believe in the collective action that is achieved by promoting the participation of their neighbors.

In the State of the World's Volunteers 2018 Report, published by UN Volunteers (2018), solidarity and mutual aid appear repeatedly among the main findings. Community leaderships are helping their communities to deal with the tensions inherent in the violation of their rights, and in turn, to respond spontaneously to critical situations.

Post-pandemic life has to consider, without exception, the modification of behaviour and relationship patterns that have perpetuated inequality. Just as society has entered into processes of reinvention to adapt to these new forms of life during the pandemic, it is urgent to think of the day after as a scenario that also demands our adaptation and continuous improvement for survival. But for this to happen, it is necessary to recognize where we stand today, so that recovery begins beyond the starting point, generating effective and binding dialogues that formalize the spaces of public-territorial participation, where community leaders are an active part of government decisions on the transformation of their territories.

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