

## Connect. Organise. Improve. Overcome.

"These trainings make us better as human beings."

María Gómez Ramírez, Colombia



María Gómez Ramírez is a community leader with more than 15 years of experience in her village of La Lejía in the municipality of Andes. Seeing that water in her community is getting increasingly scarce, she organized community workshops on water conservation. However, there was a major problem: the outdated aqueduct, responsible for most of the drinking water, was not working properly. The water came out with a lot of mud, hardly drinkable.



People complained: "We talk about saving water, but we have to leave the tap running for a long time for the mud to decrease and boiling costs us a lot of money and time." What is more, particularly the children regularly suffered from parasites drinking contaminated water.



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Colombia has one of the highest numbers of environmental conflicts in the world and is one of the deadliest countries for environmentalists.

As part of the Environmental Committee of Andes, María and her colleagues finally applied to the 'Salvaguarda' project of the NGO Conciudadanía. This innovative project aims to strengthen a proactive environmental citizenship for water use and conservation.



## The Salvaguarda Project



Natalia Arenas,  
Project Advisor

Together with residents, the Conciudadanía team was quickly able to make improvements to the aqueduct. Key parts such as grids and new tanks were installed. In addition, each household was provided with low-maintenance filters. To make these changes sustainable, Conciudadanía initiated trainings to strengthen processes of community water management in order to conserve the local watershed.



# Raise Awareness. Conserve. Benefit.



"We organise activities where we can be like researchers and analyse things ourselves".

- María Gómez Ramírez

## Today

116 families benefit from the improved aqueduct. Everybody can drink clean water directly from the filters now. Not only diseases have been reduced, but also time and gas/wood for boiling saved.



## Collectively

The Aqueduct Board now maintains the infrastructure and organises regular activities to take care of the environment. All this has contributed to improving the quality of life of the community.



Water jugs with triple filter system for households