BACKGROUND
Peru’s economy is growing, but among the poor, death of newborns and women in childbirth remains high, and chronic malnutrition stunts young minds and bodies.

More than 6,700 primary health care centers exist, but many have suboptimal quality and are underutilized. To improve quality, the Ministry of Health (MOH) gives communities a direct role in planning and managing local health services.

Local Health Administration Committees (CLAS) co-manage 2,158 primary health care centers. This program is among the first in the world to transfer public funds into commercial bank accounts that are co-managed by the community and government. CLAS Committees operate as legal non-profits and co-manage these funds. Local oversight improves transparency and efficiency, which reduces corruption, improves quality, and increases utilization of services.

With advocacy and technical advice from Future Generations Peru, this program received landmark political support through a new national law and regulations that provide legal stability for CLAS. Future Generations continues to support MOH efforts to evaluate and promote the strengths of this national health system.

STRATEGY
Future Generations Peru identifies the most successful CLAS-managed health centers in a region and builds their capacity for community-oriented primary health care that focuses on poor mothers and children. These model centers are then developed as training sites to share lessons with the staff of other primary health care centers, municipalities, and communities throughout a region.
Maternal and Child Health & Nutrition

Huánuco: With training from Future Generations from 2002-2008, the Las Moras and Umari Health Centers have become self-sustaining regional training centers. Las Moras and Umari demonstrate innovative strategies for linking health centers with communities. Improved health outcomes in Las Moras include a 28% reduction in chronic child malnutrition and a significant increase in the full coverage of immunizations in children. With the continued support of the Huánuco Regional Directorate of the MOH, local health workers and community health agents maintain these two facilities as regional training centers.

Health in the Hands of Women: From 2010 to 2014 with a four-year Child Survival and Health Grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Future Generations Peru strengthens partnerships and capacity among 22 health centers, four municipalities, and 230 communities. This project pilots and tests a community-based health education strategy to improve health services and sustain health outcomes.

Cusco: From 2005 to 2009, Future Generations Peru strengthened the capacity of 28 rural health centers and 17 municipalities to improve the quality and extension of primary health services to 258 rural Andean villages where Quechua is the dominant language. With support from USAID, the project increased community participation and health knowledge through the training of more than 700 villagers as community health agents (CHAs). Data shows that:

- Chronic malnutrition in children (6-23 months) declined from 38.0% to 29.8%
- Underweight children 0 – 23 months of age declined from 17.6% to 12.0%
- Diarrhea rates dropped from 27.6% to 17.4%
- Exclusive breast feeding increased by 9%
- Maternal deaths declined by 75%

In 2011, with a sub-grant from the Engender Health Maternal Health Task Force, with funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Future Generations Peru pilots an approach to training village women as Women Leaders (community health workers). This training methodology empowers 70 women from 28 remote communities with new health skills. Training occurs in women’s only workshops where women begin sharing stories of their own pregnancy histories. A trained health nurse/facilitator uses these testimonials as the “textbook” for improving knowledge and skills for healthier pregnancies and behaviors.