
Facts and figures

Land area

1.3 million sq km (the third largest country in South America)

Population

26.7 million (2002 est.); growth rate: 1.5 per cent pa

Urban population

72.1 per cent (2001)

Main cities

Lima 7.7 million inhabitants; Arequipa 663,000; Trujillo 620,000

Average life expectancy

69.7 years (2002): men 67.2 years; women 72.3 years

Infant mortality

33 per 1000 live births

Child malnutrition

22.9 per cent (under 5s, by size for age, 2000)

Poverty

54.8 per cent of the population lives in poverty (2001), and 24.4 per cent in extreme poverty. In rural areas, 51.3 per cent live in extreme poverty.

Inequality

31.9 per cent of income goes to 10 per cent of households (2000); Gini coefficient (1999) 46.2

Urban employment

49.7 per cent of labour force employed (2000); unemployment 7.4 per cent; sub-employment 42.9 per cent

Housing

Homes with piped water 71.4 per cent (2000); with access to sewerage within the home 58.8 per cent

Literacy

Illiteracy rate 7.2 per cent (2000); among women in the rural *sierra* 25.2 per cent

Healthcare

17.9 hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants (1996); 10.3 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants

Gross Domestic Product

US\$ 53.6 billion (2000); US\$ 2091 per capita

Average annual growth (1996-2001)

2.15 per cent

Major economic activities

Agriculture (7.6 per cent of GDP); mining and oil (4.7 per cent); manufacturing (16 per cent); commerce (14.6 per cent); services (39.2 per cent)

Foreign debt

US\$ 27.7 billion; budget for debt service (2002): US\$ 2 billion; budget for education: US\$ 540 million; budget for health: US\$ 370 million

Exports

US\$ 7.03 billion (2000); main exports: minerals (copper, gold, zinc, silver), fishmeal, coffee, textiles

Imports

US\$ 7.35 billion (2000)

Foreign investment

Spain (US\$ 2.4 billion), UK (US\$ 1.9 billion), USA (US\$ 1.9 billion) (2000)

Currency

The Sol; average exchange rate (2000): 3.49 soles = US\$1.00

Dates and events

- 11,000 BC** Earliest remains of human settlement in coastal Peru
- 800 BC** The beginnings of the Chavín culture in the northern highlands
- 600 AD** Tiahuanaco and Wari cultures flourish in southern Peru
- 1400** The beginnings of Inca imperial expansion
- 1532** Arrival of the first Spanish *conquistadores* in Peru under Francisco Pizarro
- 1780-82** Rebellion of Túpac Amaru II
- 1821** Proclamation of the independence of Peru, following San Martín's invasion
- 1824** Battle of Ayacucho and final defeat of Spanish armies
- 1879-83** War of the Pacific, in which Peru loses Arica and Tarapacá to Chile
- 1895** Nicolas de Piérola becomes president; initiation of the 'aristocratic republic'
- 1919** Augusto Leguía becomes president, initiating the '*oncenio*'
- 1930** Death of José Carlos Mariátegui
- 1932** Suppression of the APRA (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*) Trujillo rising; APRA outlawed
- 1932-33** Border war with Colombia
- 1941** Border war with Ecuador
- 1948** Coup brings General Odría to power; APRA outlawed
- 1963** Election of Fernando Belaunde
- 1968** Belaunde toppled by General Juan Velasco
- 1969** Agrarian reform decreed
- 1975** Velasco replaced by more conservative General Francisco Morales Bermúdez
- 1979** Enactment of new constitution; vote granted to illiterate people
- 1980** Election victory of Fernando Belaunde; initiation of armed struggle by *Sendero Luminoso*
- 1983** *El Niño* crisis; left-wing victory in Lima mayoral elections
- 1984** Peru defaults on part of its foreign debt
- 1985** Election victory of Alan García and APRA; debt servicing limited to 10 per cent of annual exports
- 1986** Massacre of Sendero prisoners in three Lima jails
- 1990** Election of Alberto Fujimori as president
- 1992** Fujimori's *autogolpe* and the closure of Congress; capture of Abimael Guzmán
- 1993** New constitution enacted, allowing Fujimori's immediate re-election
- 1995** Fujimori re-elected for a second term; border war with Ecuador
- 1997** Japanese embassy siege, following MRTA hostage-taking
- 1997-98** *El Niño* crisis
- 2000** Fujimori re-elected in fraudulent election; election bribery scandal; Fujimori driven into exile in Japan; interim administration of Valentín Paniagua
- 2001** Alejandro Toledo elected president; new Congress elected

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Sources and websites

Amnesty International, <http://www.amnesty.org>
Various reports on the human rights situation in Peru

Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (Aprodeh), <http://www.aprodeh.org.pe>
Many publications, with an emphasis on human rights

Caretas, <http://www.caretas.com.pe>
Weekly magazine, usually with a fairly critical focus

Cuánto: Perú en Números, e-mail: cuanto@terra.com.pe
This is the best available compendium of statistics about Peru.

Ideele, <http://www.idl.org.pe>
Magazine of the Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL), with a focus on the defence of rights

Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), <http://iep.perucultural.org.pe>
Centre for research and publications over a wide range of themes, both contemporary and historical

Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI), <http://www.inei.gob.pe>
Statistics and analysis of a wide range of social and economic problems

La República, <http://www.larepublica.com.pe>
One of Peru's better newspapers

LANIC Peru, <http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/peru>
Produced by the University of Texas, this is one of the most comprehensive portals to information on all things Peruvian.

Peru Support Group, <http://www.perusupportgroup.co.uk>
UK-based information/lobbying agency. Produces bimonthly Peru Update as well as other publications (recent publications on women, political developments, human rights, and the debt problem).

Quehacer, <http://www.desco.org.pe>
Bimonthly publication covering current political, economic, and cultural developments, produced by DESCO (Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo – Centre for the Study and Promotion of Development).

▼ *The second day of the Pérez family fiesta begins with a procession, and a mass in the recently-constructed family chapel.*



Susana Pastor

Oxfam in Peru

Measured in terms of its resources, Peru is an immensely rich country. But measured by the living standards of its population, it is immensely poor. The majority of Peruvians participate in informal and imperfect markets; they have minimal participation in the public decisions that affect their lives; and they are vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and of the recent armed conflict.

Oxfam GB has been working in Peru for over 30 years. Oxfam GB works with local organisations to reduce people's vulnerability to disasters. We do this through the creation of disaster preparedness plans, and through ensuring the inclusion of risk analyses in local development plans. Over the past year, Oxfam GB has been working with other humanitarian organisations to develop a strategy to increase the exchange of information and co-ordination between humanitarian actors in Peru, including the Peruvian government.

Oxfam GB co-ordinates with and supports human rights organisations working with the populations of Ayacucho and Huánuco, which were affected by the political violence during the 1980s and 1990s. The work aims to capture lessons arising from the recovery and restitution of human rights to the affected populations, a process beginning with the work of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, from mid-2001 onwards.

Oxfam GB supports a number of long-term initiatives aimed at the empowerment of poor Peruvian citizens. Oxfam GB's work in this area is focused on building poor accountability. We support grass-roots NGOs in undertaking monitoring projects focusing on public policies and programmes, such as the national food assistance programme. We are also supporting similar activities, organised by local governments in rural areas, to develop participatory planning, transparency in public management, and accountability.

Oxfam GB supports the *Red Perú*, a group of about 150 *mesas de concertación*. The *mesas* constitute spaces for participatory planning, and in a few cases, for the management of local development. They typically bring public authorities and representatives of social organisations together, generating a process of local consultation. Oxfam GB also works with the *Asociación Nacional de Centros*, the national network of NGOs, to support the National Conference on Social Development, the major space where representatives of Peru's civil society groups meet.

Over the next five years, Oxfam has received funding from the UK Department for International Development in order to develop and manage a programme aimed at ensuring access to human rights for poor



Suzanna Pustor



people. Of the US\$10 million allocated to the project, \$6.5 million will constitute a fund for the support of locally-managed projects, based in the Andean region of southern Peru, to promote poor people's ability to exercise their basic rights.

Support for sustainable livelihoods forms another major part of Oxfam GB's work in Peru. In rural areas, this developing programme will focus on the national agrarian policies affecting small-scale producers. By focusing on producers' access to productive assets, and on their ability to produce and market their products, this programme is intended to ensure that poor people have increasing power within markets. In Lima, a future urban programme will support strategies intended to create sustainable livelihoods, building on the experiences of several major urban NGOs with which Oxfam GB has worked for many years. In addition, Oxfam GB will implement a programme aimed at the improvement of working conditions for women in key economic sectors, such as agro-export.

In each of these areas of intervention, Oxfam GB co-ordinates closely with the other members of Oxfam International currently working in Peru: Intermón, Novib, Oxfam America, Oxfam Canada, and Oxfam Solidarité. This co-ordination has been particularly focused around humanitarian response to the June 2001 earthquake in southern Peru. It has also been important in Tambo Grande, where the struggle between civil society, industry, and the government has become a symbol of the struggle of thousands of citizens to have their views taken into account in public decision-making on issues affecting their lives and livelihoods.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to those of Oxfam's partner organisations that I visited, and those who work with them. They went to great lengths to welcome me and to share their views and experiences with me. Their enthusiasm and perseverance are an inspiration. Thanks also to the staff of the Oxfam office in Lima, particularly Martín Beaumont, Ana María Rebaza, and Zorobabel Cancino for their meticulous planning of the visits. Susi Pastor, the photographer, was an excellent travelling companion for the three weeks we were 'on the road' in Piura, Ayacucho, Tacna as well as in many different parts of Lima. Thanks to Martín Beaumont, Constantino Casabuenas, Judith Condor, Isabel Crabtree-Condor, and Lewis Taylor for their comments on the text. Kate Kilpatrick, my editor, provided much encouragement and support as well as exacting deadlines. I would also like to thank Fidelina Vidal, my mother-in-law, who didn't mind her house being treated as a hotel for the time I was in Lima.

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