



Laboratorio de
Investigaciones
Comunitarias
Patagonia

"From good intentions to political change in community interventions: lessons from the field in Argentine Patagonia"

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Facts

- Latin America is a region characterized by a large socioeconomic gap. (Almeida, Kawachi, 2003)
- Environment-related health problems remain a relevant part of the burden of disease and mortality. (Korc & Hauchman, 2021)
- These problems are deeper, more serious and with greater consequences in vulnerable communities. (Garcia, 2019)



¿Why...

... there is a lack of studies or publications of community environmental health interventions? (Prosser Bravo & Caro Zuñiga, 2021)

Photo: members of communities of the Chubut plateau complaining against the installation of megamines. 2021



How do we explain this phenomenon?

1. Policies that limit or hinder the development of comprehensive interventions;
2. Promising actions, but with limitations in their impact and possibilities of replication
3. Actions that achieved a demonstrable impact but could not extend their benefits

Photo: Labyrinth of Epuyen
Andean Patagonian region.
2020.



1

Policies that limit or hinder the development of comprehensive interventions.



Experience A: "HEALTH CAMPAIGNS"

- *A long history of powerful field activities in a short space of time.*
- *Oriented mainly to anthropometry, immunizations and a rapid physical examination.*
- *Carried out in a context of precarious infrastructure.*
- *In general, these activities condition the payment of the universal assistance system (conditional economic transfer programs).*



Photo: campaign carried out in Treorky area (area adjacent to Trelew), 2023.
Courtesy CAPS Ramon Carrillo.

Why does it limit or hinder comprehensive interventions?

- They occupy a disproportionate fraction of the care efforts in the First Level of Care (in our series up to 40%!).
- Its logic is one of restricted service provision: a GOBI-FFF* culture. (Cueto, 2014)
- This restrictive logic limits the possibilities of comprehensive interventions that include the environment.
- A double pressure users-managers of health policies to privilege this type of activities (the double edge of interventions based on behavioral economics).
-

* Growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breast-feeding and immunisation--female education, family spacing and food supplementation

Formulario Libre ANSES Versión 1.0

Form. P.1.07 - Asociación Universal - Acreditación de datos de salud, vacunación y educación

Nombre: CUIL: _____ Apellido y Nombre: _____

Complejidad de la/del Menor: _____ Apellido y Nombre: _____

Responsable: CUIL: _____

Domicilio de la/del responsable:

Calle: _____ Localidad: _____

Número: _____ Provincia: _____

Piso: _____ Teléfono: _____ Es Celular?

Código Postal: _____ Email: _____

Fecha: _____

NO RECOMIAR. Firma y Acreditación de la/del adulta responsable Intervención ANSES

Vacunación y Control de Salud Educación

CUIL de la/del Menor: _____ CUIL de la/del Menor: _____

Cumple con el/los Control de Salud para su edad Nombre del Establecimiento de Salud: _____ N° de Código Único del Establecimiento (CUE): _____

Código Establecimiento: _____ Nombre del Establecimiento de Educación: _____

Apellido y Nombre de la/del Profesional Certificado/a

Tipo de Matrícula: Número de Matrícula: _____ Fecha: _____ Firma y Sello de la/del Profesional: _____

Enfermería de Vacunación para la Edad Completa En Curso Grupos: Escolar Privada Otra Privada Secundaria Otra

Nombre del Establecimiento de Salud: _____ Fecha: _____

Código Establecimiento: _____

Apellido y Nombre de la/del Profesional Certificado/a

Tipo de Matrícula: Número de Matrícula: _____ Fecha: _____

Firma y Sello de la/del Profesional: _____

Fecha: _____

Firma y Sello de la Autoridad del Establecimiento: _____

Miembro de Trabajo Intermunicipal Social Intervención ANSES

The "Payroll of Anses" annual requirement to obtain the Universal Child Allowance

Key Note on Experience A

My expressions do not imply at all that the enormous effort made by the health team does not work, only that the realization of these activities under these terms does not generate value and reproduce a system of dependency of low efficiency.



WAIT

Experience B: Going Nowhere

Mass deworming program (“CHAU LOMBRIZ”)

2004-2007

1. Try to reduce the impact of geo helminthiases in children.
2. Work on an assumption: recommendation of mass treatment when the prevalence of geohelminthiasis exceeds 20%.
3. Its main objective is to reduce the associated malnutrition problems.



Merchandising del programa “Chau Lombriz”

Why does it limit or hinder comprehensive interventions?

- Their massive and mechanical character prevents them from a cultural and geographical adaptation.
- The environment (fundamental in the development of a high prevalence) in a second place.
- They produce a phenomenon of pseudo-institutionalization ("They must" be realized).
- Mass initiatives leave little room for effective community participation: they ignore social constraints.

TABLA 2.- Prevalencia basal del Programa Nacional de Desparasitación Masiva (2005-2007), N = 1943 niños de 12 provincias

Provincia	Localidad*	n	Prevalencia (%)					
			AL	UN	TT	Combinada estimada	SS	Combinada + SS reportada
Misiones	NA	99	2	12.1	0	13.1	10.1	18.2
Entre Ríos	NA	216	2.8	0	1.9	4.4	1.4	7.4
Chaco	NA	115	3.5	1.7	0	4.9	10.4	14.8
Formosa	NA	136	8.8	0	0.7	8.9	19.9	28.8
Santiago del Estero	NA	94	1.1	0	0	1.04	0	1.1
Tucumán	NA	150	33.3	0	18	42.7	9.3	47.3
Salta	NA	104	14.4	2.9	1	16.7	7.7	22
Jujuy	NA	125	8	0	0	7.6	2.4	10.4
San Juan	NA	142	1.4	0	0	1.3	0	1.4
Córdoba	NA	99	3.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0	3
B. Aires	Avellaneda	77	13	1.3	3.9	16.5	0	15.6
B. Aires	Gra. Pueyrredón	106	2.8	0.9	2.8	6.0	0	7.5
B. Aires	Lanús	86	14	0	0	13.2	0	14
B. Aires	Lomas de Zamora	99	17.2	0	2	17.8	0	18.2
B. Aires	Quilmes	93	7.5	0	1.1	8.0	0	8.6
B. Aires	San Nicolás	72	9.7	0	9.7	17.4	0	15.3
B. Aires	Tigre	64	4.7	0	14.1	17.1	3.1	17.2
Chubut	NA	66	0	0	0	0	0	0

AL: *Ascaris lumbricoides*; UN: uncinarias; TT: *Trichuris trichiura*; SS: *Strongyloides stercoralis*; NA: no aplica
 *Para aquellas provincias donde el número de niños evaluados por localidad fue menor a 50, se reporta la prevalencia agrupada por provincia

Socias, M. E., Fernández, A., Gil, J. F., & Krolewiecki, A. J. (2014). Geohelmintiasis en la Argentina: Una revisión sistemática. *Medicina (Buenos Aires)*, 74(1), 29-36.

2

Promising actions, but with limitations in their impact and possibilities of replication.



Experience c: An outbreak of shigellosis in Bº Moreira (2021)

1. *An outbreak of Shigella Flexneri dysenteric syndrome with 22 confirmed and treated cases.*
2. *Cases concentrated in a very specific, highly precarious area*
3. *Water source and other factors (waste disposal, children's canteens, construction of latrines) at high risk*
4. *Early warning signs and preventive guidelines were communicated to the community.*
5. *A rapid response system for suspected cases was agreed with the health team.*
6. *The need for infrastructure works was communicated to the municipal authorities*

Fotos de la zona con mayor cantidad de casos. B Moreira (Trelew)2021.



Conexión a red de agua ilegal con filtraciones

filtraciones y contaminada frente a comedor comunitario

Conexión a red de agua ilegal con filtraciones

It wasn't enough for the development of healthy environments but...

- It generated a positive association with the community on an issue.
- Provided a rapid response to a high-impact outbreak in the community.
- He analysed the elements of the environment that favoured and perpetuated this situation.
- It generated some community mobilization.
- It generated a response from the government.





What if...?

- ... These experiences could be systematized and transferable
- ... Skills were provided to design comprehensive interventions with quick and dirty approaches.
- ... Does each emerging phenomenon serve as a platform for further development of community capacities?
- ... Develop experiences of social mobilization based on existing needs?



Experience D: Social Cartography for adaptation of public policies (2021-present)

- *The policy of low-risk childbirth care was modified in Argentina, excluding the possibility of performing deliveries in low-complexity hospitals.*
- *In order to understand the impact of this policy in rural areas, a research program was developed by the National University of Patagonia.*
- *Through a participatory approach, it was possible to demonstrate the design problems of the initiative to adapt to rural environments and to contemplate the particularities of context and the problems it generates in the development of vulnerable communities.*
- *In a second stage of the project, an initiative is developed in conjunction with government authorities to adapt current policies (parallel approach).*

Social Cartography Workshop,
Gan Gan 2022. Courtesy of
IGeoPat



It wasn't enough for the development of healthy environments but...

- It generated a solid experience on how to conduct formative research.
- It provided a systematized experience on how to adapt public policies to unique environments.
- It created a space for harmonization between public policies and local expectations.
- He developed a series of motivating experiences in each community.
- Develop a space where you can explore and promote a community agenda
-

Social Cartography Workshop,
Gastre 2022. Courtesy IGeoPat

What if...?

- ... We managed to place on the agenda the need for public policies on transcendent issues to be sensitive to local expectations.
- ... Could we make all the participants of these mobilize towards locally felt objectives?



3

Actions that achieved a demonstrable impact but could not extend their benefits.



Context: heating in the Patagonian plateau

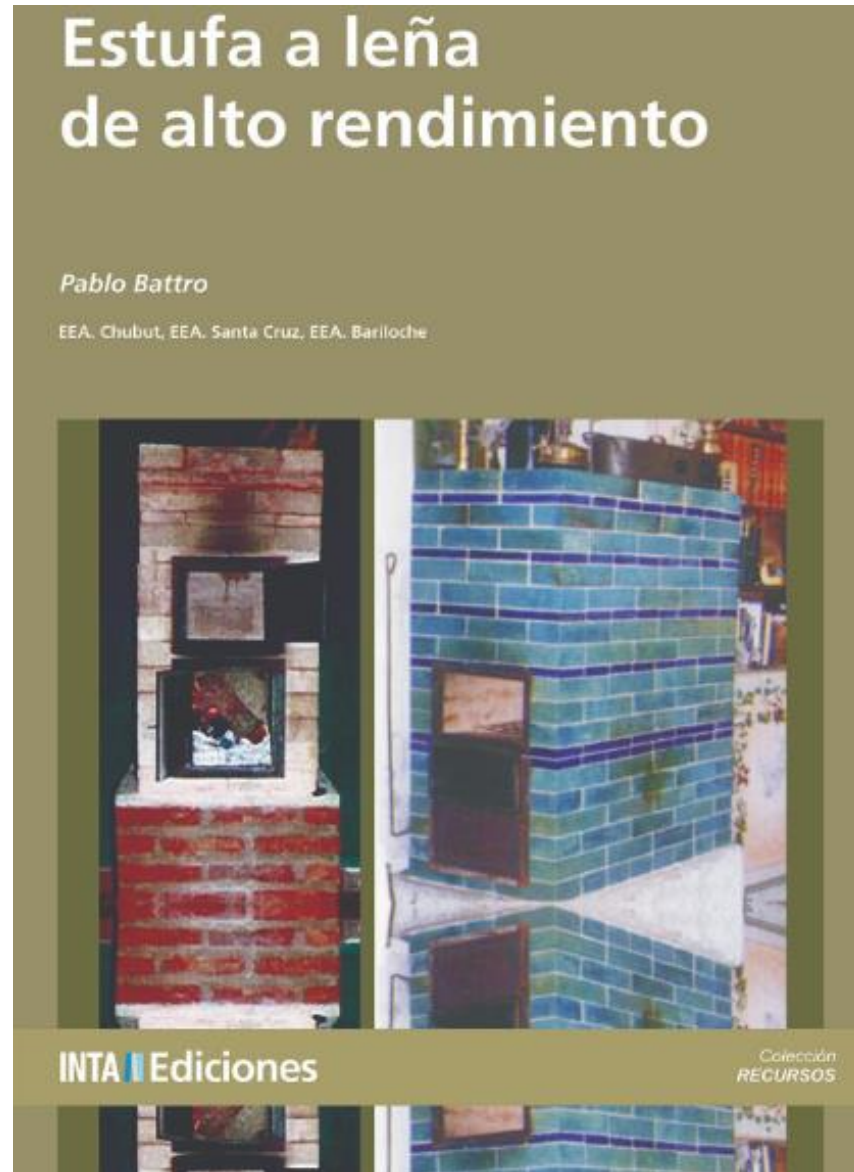
- The Chubut plateau is a semi-desert area with great climatic adversity.
- The intradomiciliary habit is the dominant one.
- The usual way of heating and cooking is with firewood.
- Firewood is a scarce resource.
- There is evidence that indoor pollution is a transcendent phenomenon. (Bruce et al, 2000, Lopez et al, 2014)

Photo: courtesy of Community Health Workers Rio Mayo (Chubut)



High performance wood stoves

A high-impact cross-sectoral experience



Pablo Battro, 1994.



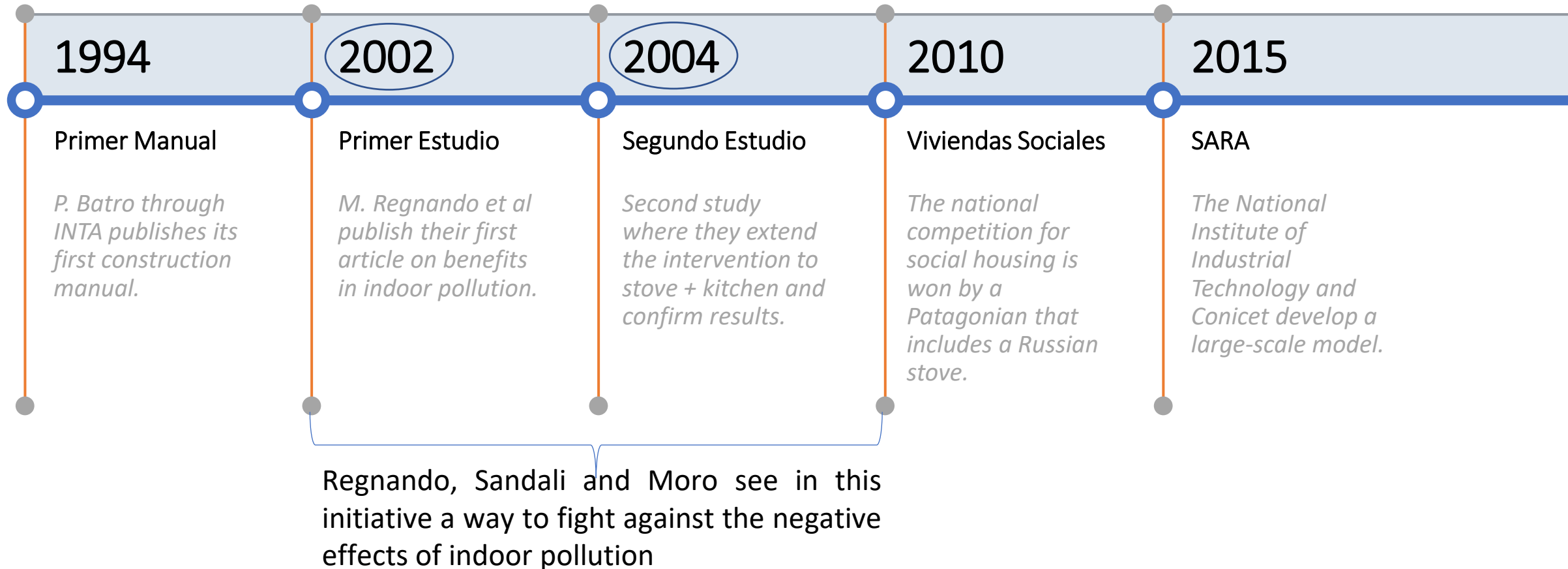
How it started...

- An industrial engineer (Pablo Battro) who worked at the National Institute of Agricultural Technology was sensitized by the process of desertification of the plateau.
- A visit to Northern Europe made him aware of the opportunity for a more efficient heating system (circa 1990)
- It took 3 years until it reached proper design
- He began to implement the design in his area of influence (lower valley of the Chubut River) with the support of the local delegation.

Source: story of his daughter Inés Battro

Como evolucionó en tiempo

De una intervención a un cambio social y político



Hechos



Great territorial dispersion

High Energy Efficiency

Boccaccini, L. I., & Hernandez, A. (2014). Evaluación experimental del funcionamiento de una estufa rusa mejorada instalada en una vivienda unifamiliar de San Rafael, Mendoza. *Avances en Energías Renovables y Medio Ambiente-AVERMA*, 18, 51-58.

Reduction of intradomestic particles product of biomass combustion at very significant levels

Regnando, M. (2004). La Cocina y Estufa Rusa en Zonas Rurales Frías Como Factor de Protección del Aire. *Recuperado de <http://pdfcrop.in/ebook/title/Justificacion-Par-La-Contaminacion-Del-Aire.html>*.

EFFECTIVE

A collage of news articles and photos. The top left article is titled "Entrega de estufas en la comunidad Sierra Huancache" and includes a QR code. The top right article is titled "Construyen estufas rusas para las familias de los barrios populares de Cipolletti" and includes a photo of a family. The middle section features a headline from "LA PROVINCIA" titled "LA PROVINCIA DISTRIBUYE MANUALES PARA CONSTRUIR ESTUFAS ECONÓMICAS DE ALTO RENDIMIENTO ENERGÉTICO" with a photo of a stove. The bottom section features a headline from "nequén" titled "Comenzó la instalación de 50 estufas solidarias a familias vulnerables" with a photo of people.

Advocacy on Public Policies

They are sometimes called "**SOLIDARITY STOVES**"

There are associated **social economy** enterprises.

Decreases the use of **biomass fuel** in areas in the process of desertification.

Low cost and feasible with local inputs.

Sum of values



What can we learn?

1. Outstanding personalities make a difference ("health champions").
2. Understanding the context is critical to achieving a solution.
3. A deep understanding of a need and a carefully designed response are a powerful combination.
4. A problem-response pair in this sense generates a greater impact than initial expectations.

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