IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STOPLIGHT FRAMEWORK –
STOPLIGHT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ARGENTINA
A CASE STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Introduction

We present here a case study of the implementation of the Poverty Stoplight (PS) —developed by Fundación Paraguaya— in a rural area of extreme poverty in the province of Chaco, in the northeast of Argentina. This study analyzes in depth the experience and explores the potentialities and impact of the implementation of the PS. The document uses the abbreviations PS or Stoplight interchangeably in reference to the Stoplight for Community Development, the name acquired by the PS in Argentina through Fundación Irradia.

The objective of this study is to keep a record of the implementation process of the PS in two central aspects: survey and mentoring. For this, the quantitative information obtained through the baseline survey was analyzed, and a diagnosis of the characteristics of poverty in the study area was carried out. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of two Stoplight measurements (baseline and follow-up survey) was also carried out, evaluating trends of changes in the situation of poverty and interpreting them. Based on this, the potentiality of the information provided by the Stoplight was highlighted. Following this, the survey and monitoring process was reconstructed with primary information obtained from facilitating a Stoplight survey and in-depth interviews.

The PS has three main characteristics: i) it asks about multidimensional poverty; ii) it does this from an alternative angle to standard poverty studies (considering the point of view of people affected by poverty, according to their prioritization and evaluations); iii) it focuses on mentoring as a key strategy. The self-assessment recording modality makes challenges immediately visible to the people who respond and allows the researcher to become aware of the interpretations and subjectivities of the people.

The population under study resides in seven rural areas located in the surroundings of the city of Tres Isletas, department of Maipú, province of Chaco. This population is characterized by extreme poverty and constitutes a target population of the National Social Protection Program of the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina. At the same time, it is located in a rural context that is weakly connected to the regional productive system and strongly depends on the social protection of the State. Despite this exclusion from the system, the incorporation of urban consumption patterns –by proximity, by circulation, by the media– is observed, which has led to a gradual loss of the self-consumption culture in agriculture, with its implications, not only in savings, but also in the maintenance of traditional activities that are part of the social identity.

Chapter 1 makes a brief presentation of the Poverty Stoplight and a reflection on the mentoring strategy according to the most recent bibliography on the subject in

Latin America. Chapter 2 states the objectives of the work. Chapter 3 presents a brief analysis of the study area. Chapter 4 makes a diagnosis of the poverty situation of the analyzed population. This constitutes the first product of the present work. Chapter 5 develops a comparative analysis of the results of the two Stoplight surveys carried out in the study area in terms of dimensions and indicators. Chapter 6 reports on the reconstruction of the mentoring process used in our case study.

Chapter 1. Conceptual Framework

The Poverty Stoplight, developed by Fundación Paraguaya, is a multidimensional poverty measurement tool and an intervention methodology to address it[1]. PS allows participants to carry out a self-diagnosis of their extreme and moderate challenges through 50 indicators that account for various dimensions of poverty. The measurement procedure constitutes a participatory process whose first objective is for families to have information and graphically visualize their reality of poverty, as well as identify achievable situations of non-poverty. At the same time, using the intervention methodology, participants define their priorities and objectives, and develop strategies to achieve them with the support of a mentor[2].

People who participate in the PS immediately access the results of the survey, expressed simply with green, yellow and red markings. This allows them to visualize their needs and challenges in a disaggregated form, indicator by indicator. The green ones allow identifying the satisfactory resources that are available to participants, and the results in yellow and red markings give the possibility of knowing in detail their moderate and extreme deprivations. The 50 indicators cover a wide spectrum of topics that make poverty multidimensional. They include, in addition to conventional indicators related to income, health, and education, other less conventional ones, such as self-esteem, recreational activities, and participation in community groups[3]. The 50 indicators are grouped into 6 dimensions: a) Income and Employment; b) Health and Environment; c) Housing and Infrastructure; d) Education; e) Organization and Participation; f) Interiority and Motivation. (See detail in Annex 1).

The implementation of the Stoplight constitutes an innovative instance, not only for the measurement of poverty in its multiple dimensions, but also to generate real and sustainable changes, emphasizing the role of families and communities as protagonists in the face of challenges to overcome their deprivations and vulnerabilities.

Studies carried out by developers of the PS estimate that it is possible to find that "participation in the PS program is effectively associated with a decrease in the probability of being moderately poor and with a decrease in the number of deprivations."[4] However, the presence of papers that discuss the subject is still incipient.[5] We must clarify that the objective of this work is not to evaluate the Stoplight's capacity to measure poverty precisely and effectively, nor its capacity to enable people to overcome this situation; but rather to explore and identify the

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[1] *The "Poverty Stoplight" Approach to Eliminating Multidimensional Poverty*
[2] Hammler y Pane Solís paper, Buenos Aires, 2017.
[3] Burt 2013, 2014; Fundación Paraguaya
[4] Katharina Hammler, Martin Burt, 2017
[5] EAConsultants, 2013.

various (micro) impacts on people's lives and attitudes that take place from the use of the Stoplight.

The intention of this study is to explore the potential of the Stoplight as a tool for surveying information on multidimensional poverty and, at the same time, as a mentoring proposal that allows families to measure their own multidimensional poverty and develop and implement a plan to overcome it. In this sense, we focus on its character as an instrument to promote change, to overcome unfavorable situations through the accompaniment of families in this process, thus contributing to their empowerment.

In other words, this study provides a contribution to the knowledge of rural poverty in its multiple dimensions; knowledge that generally suffers from serious statistical measurement limitations. At the same time, the contribution of the Stoplight to strengthening community development, a central concern of Fundación Irradia, is highlighted.

In relation to the mentoring strategy, numerous studies have pointed out in recent years, the challenges facing public policies aimed at ending poverty in order to effectively achieve their objective: to generate human capital in the poorest families and define itineraries for out of poverty.[6] These studies consider that the final impact of resource transfer programs is usually unsatisfactory and recommend reviewing the models of intervention with which policies reach their beneficiaries. It is within the framework of these considerations and warnings that mentoring methodologies are inserted, acquiring an increasingly important role.

In effect, mentoring, a strategy implemented by several countries in Latin American, is identified in the specialized literature as one of the most innovative strategies that have been tried to tackle poverty and as an intervention strategy against poverty that privileges proximity, the continuity and monitoring of families in the long term.[7] The objectives of family support are usually associated with generic issues, including: promoting family autonomy, developing capacities for self-management and improving the participation of families in the structure of opportunities. It aims for each of the families to recognize their strengths and potentials, consolidate their ties and networks of social interaction and develop the necessary capacities to take courses of action and overcome their situation of extreme poverty.

The challenge presented by the Stoplight lies in implementing this framework to define and achieve goals proposed by the actors themselves. To do this, it proposes to focus on finding specific solutions that are within the reach of families and communities with the help of mentors. In this way, through this support relationship, a process of reflection and prioritization of the identified problems is

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[6] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo BID, 2013 A y B
[7] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, BID 2013

carried out according to the possibilities, and from there a plan that expresses those decisions is created.

In general, the mentoring models are not rigorously fixed. The PS is not the exception; Beyond general considerations and some concrete examples, it does not develop a corpus to carry out this central activity. Our case study contributes to reflection on these issues.

Chapter 2. Objectives and Methodological Strategy

The Stoplight was implemented by the Monte Adentro Civil Association, which carries out its activities in the region, in an area of extreme poverty, identified as such by the National Social Protection Program of the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina and where various social programs are implemented.[8]

The approach selected to carry out this case study has two axes. The first is to use the quantitative information to produce two products: an in-depth diagnosis of the needs of families in the target area based on the Stoplight baseline and follow-up surveys and a comparative analysis of these two measurements. The second is to generate qualitative information –carried out in the field– to reconstruct the experience of mentoring families as a strategy to contribute to gradually overcoming poverty.

As already mentioned, the objective of this work is not to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the PS to overcome poverty, but rather to evaluate the various transformations that occur in people's lives and attitudes since its implementation. How does it happen and what are the results of the self-assessment carried out by people living in poverty? How is the mentoring process developed and what effects does it have? The general objective of this case study is to describe and analyze an experience of implementing the PS in a rural area of northeast Argentina.

Specific objectives:

I. Make a diagnosis of the poverty situation of the study area based on the information gathered through the Stoplight baseline survey.
II. Carry out a comparative analysis between the first and second PS measurements (baseline and follow-up surveys respectively) that allows - in an exploratory way - to detect and interpret changes in attitudes and results.
III. Reconstruct and analyze the qualitative work carried out by mentors: the strategies used, the strengths and difficulties detected in them, etc. As a result of this objective, we decided to revalue this aspect of the implementation of the PS in our specific case. This involved traveling to the territory, holding individual meetings with mentors and members of the Monte Adentro Civil Association.

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[8] The program's target population is households in a situation of extreme vulnerability, with children aged 0-4 as a priority. It aims to identify and support households in situations of extreme social vulnerability. Actions include family support, community development, and resources for social promotion (promoting food security through the food card).

To carry out objectives I and II, the database provided by Monte Adentro was refined and the data was reprocessed for subsequent analysis. To achieve objective III, primary information regarding the mentoring process was collected. For these purposes, firstly and as a preparatory activity for the trip to the territory, a questionnaire was sent to mentors with questions about the experience of implementing the Stoplight. The objective of the questions was basically exploratory; the mentors were sought to remember the experience taking into account that a year had already passed (Annex 2). Second, we traveled to the city of Tres Isletas, around which are the study places. In-depth interviews were conducted with the Monte Adentro Coordinator and five mentors (Annex 3).[9]

The baseline survey was carried out in late December 2017 and early January 2018. The follow-up survey in September 2018. The quantitative information available in the database provides information on the responses of participants on the 50 indicators of the PS, per person and by location, although it does not provide contextual information about the participant, such as age, number of children, whether she or he is the head of the household, etc. For the analysis of the quantitative information at the dimension level, the percentages refer to the universe of the responses. On the other hand, when performing the analysis at the indicator level, the percentages refer to the population.

The study applied a triangulation between quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to illustrate and highlight the process of implementation of the PS by measuring and evaluating the result of its implementation. We believe that this analysis at the micro level is extremely enriching.

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[9] In future research, it is suggested to expand the return of the Social Stoplight implementation, in this case, focusing on the families. Probably through workshops in which they can receive and work on their opinions of the Stoplight.

Chapter 3. Characterization of the target area and study population

The province of Chaco - where our study area is located - is situated in the northeast of the country (map 1) and, together with Misiones, Corrientes and Formosa, integrates the region of the same name. In the framework of the Provincial System of Planning and Evaluation of Results, in 2003 the province of Chaco was divided into eight microregions that make up the different departments with the main objective of promoting the articulation of actions between local governments. The department of Maipú integrates, together with that of General Güemes, the V Impenetrable ecoregion.[10]

Map 1. Location of Chaco in Argentina

Source: Ministry of Education, Argentina.

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[10] Cepal, 2017 Las brechas estructurales de desarrollo de la provincia del Chaco

The province of Chaco had, in the year 2010 (when the last National Population Census was carried out) 1.06 million inhabitants; in other words, 2.6% of the total population of the country and 28.7% of the inhabitants of Northeast Argentina (NEA). The rural population reached, for the same year, a higher participation in the Chaco region than in the average of Argentina (15% vs. 9%). The rural population is characterized by its great dispersion: 79% reside "in the open country".

According to the poverty measurement by the Unsatisfied Basic Needs Index (NBI), the province registered 18.2% of poor households (2010). This percentage doubles that of the country, which was 9.1%. Specifically, in the department of Maipú, within which the study area is located, the NBI level is much higher, reaching 28.1%.[11]

The percentage of people under the Poverty Line (PL) for the Gran Resistencia agglomerate[12] - the province's capital - was the third highest in the country in the first half of 2017 with 34.7% of the population in that condition, while the percentage of people in a situation of indigence (5.2%) was lower than the national and regional average.

It should also be noted that in 2018, when the Stoplight surveys were carried out, there was a considerable exacerbation of the economic crisis in Argentina. Between December 2017 and November 2018, the exchange rate increased 106%, which accelerated inflation and accumulated 43.6% year-on-year. There was also a severe drought that affected agricultural exports, a decrease in GDP and an increase in unemployment that reached 9.1%. The loss of the purchasing power of wages and the increase in unemployment led to an increase in urban poverty that reached 32%. The number of poor children from 0 to 14 years old went from 39.7% in the second half of 2017 to 46.5% at the end of 2018.

However, as will be seen in the analysis of the survey data, the impact of this deep economic crisis was partially offset by the implementation of the Food Card - a cash transfer for the purchase of food – that benefited the study population during the period between the baseline and follow-up surveys.

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[11] INDEC. The Poverty Line is calculated only for large urban agglomerations.
[12] Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censo (INDEC).

Map 2. Chaco Province - departments - Poverty NBI
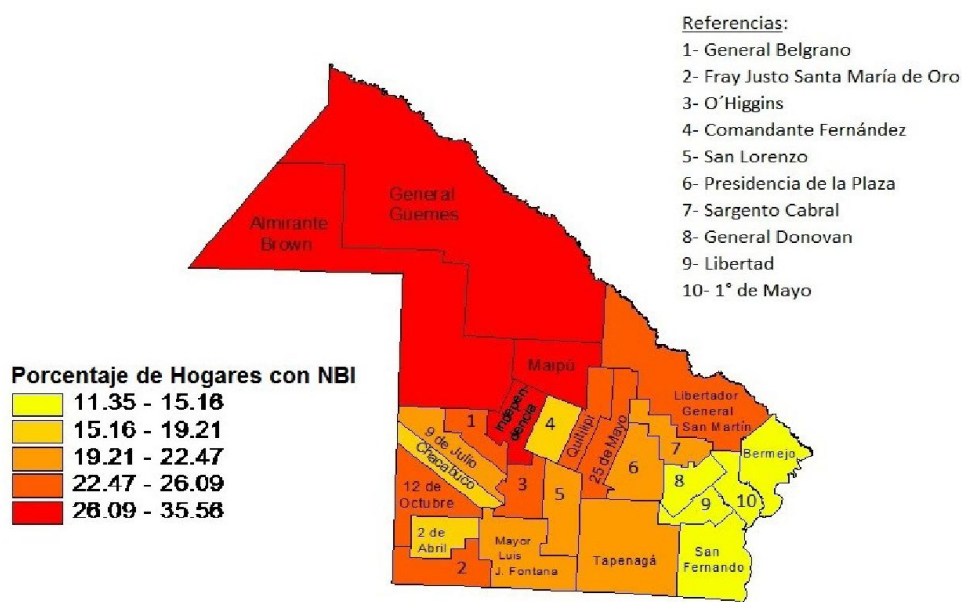
Source: National Directorate of Provincial Affairs, Chaco.

The area where the PS was implemented is located in the department of Maipú; It encompasses seven sites located in the surroundings of the city of Tres Isletas, capital of the department. These places are located in rural areas, where the lack of weather-resistant access roads turns them into isolated territories. This problem, it should be noted, characterizes most of the rural environment.

The study population is in a rural context, very weakly connected to the regional productive system and strongly dependent on the social protection of the State. Its main economic activity is wood extraction from the native forest (the "monte") for its commercialization and for the production of coal. Its productive insertion is highly unstable and vulnerable. The extraction of wood from the forest is part of the cultural and economic survival tradition of this area and much of the province of Chaco[13]. Previously, a small cotton production had been developed and was abandoned.

Most people live on public lands and are victims of isolation due to the lack of weather-resistant access roads and transportation. Despite this exclusion from the system, the incorporation of urban consumption patterns –by proximity, by circulation, and by the media– is observed, which has led to a gradual loss of the self-consumption culture in agriculture, with its implications, not only in savings,

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[13] Forestry activities are also important in the framework of the provincial economy. The Chaco is part of the Parque Chaqueño region, from which 94.9% of the country's native forest timber was extracted in 2013. CEPAL, 2017, Territory and Development in Argentina: the structural development gaps in the province of Chaco.

but also in the maintenance of traditional activities that are part of the social identity.

Their way of life is halfway between rural and urban. In general, few self-consumption activities are carried out. Much of the families receive the Universal Child Allowance (UCA), which constitutes a money transfer to women for each child. They also receive the Food Card. In general, they buy food and clothing from shops in the city.

Their precarious housing conditions, the isolation to which they are subjected, and the low level of access to basic health, education, and safe drinking water services, undoubtedly allow the rural inhabitants of Chaco to be considered one of the most disadvantaged populations in the country.

Chapter 4. Diagnosis of the Poverty Situation

In Argentina, poverty is measured according to the NBI (Unsatisfied Basic Needs Index), which is carried out every 10 years based on the National Population and Housing Census, and according to the Poverty Line –that is, by income– that has updated data, but it is calculated exclusively for urban areas, so the current quantification of poverty in rural areas is always an approximation. In this context of scarcity of information on rural poverty, this diagnosis constitutes a contribution to the knowledge of poverty in a rural area with current data. It must be admitted, however, that the PS also has a bias towards urban poverty, since many satisfactory response alternatives define the realities for cities. Some of them are discussed throughout the chapter.

The information from the first application of the PS in the study area made up of seven sites is analyzed in this chapter. The baseline survey was administered in the last days of December 2017 and during the month of January 2018. 126 people responded the questions in the survey, using colors to indicate extreme deprivation (red), moderate deprivation (yellow) or satisfactory situation (green) in relation to 50 indicators referring to their housing situation, environment, participation in community life, their relationship with the State, health, as well as their capacities and economic skills, among others (dimensions and indicators are detailed in Annex 1). Each site had a mentor who collaborated in the completion of the survey and in the subsequent work of reflection and definition of goals. Likewise, the families were followed up with weekly visits.

Places of study area	Nº of families
Tacuruzal	25
Palmar Chico	12
La Matanza	10
La Peligrosa	17
Pampa Sena	19
Boquerón	31
La Gloria y la Medialuna	12
Total	**126**

Of the total of 6,300 responses to indicators obtained, 1,758 were marked in red. This amounts to 28%. The number of responses in yellow was 1,880. This amounts to 30%. Finally, the responses in green that reflect the absence of needs represent 42% (Table 1).[14]

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[14] All the tables in this chapter refer to the first Stoplight measurement.

Table 1. Proportion of responses according to color

Answers by color	%
% red	28
% yellow	30
% green	42
Total responses	**100**

Next, the results in red that account for extreme deprivation (point 5.1) and the results in yellow, referring to moderate deprivation (point 5.2), are analyzed separately.

4.1. Extreme Poverty (answers in red):

To characterize the extreme poverty situation of the population in detail, the data is broken down by dimensions. First of all, note that extreme deprivations are observed in all dimensions. The dimension that presents a greater proportion of the reds is Income and Employment (42%). They continue in importance, but with a much lower percentage, Health and Environment and Housing and Infrastructure, where the reds represent 34% and 35% respectively. On the other hand, in the Organization and Participation dimension, the responses in red represent 32% of the total. As can be seen, the Education dimension (with 20% of reds) is well below the previous ones, as well as the Interiority and Motivation dimension (Table 2).

Table 2. Proportion of red, yellow and green responses according to dimensions

Dimensions	Answers (%)			Total
	Red *	Yellow*	Green*	
Income and Employment	42	27	31	100%
Health and Environment	34	36	30	100%
Housing and Infrastructure	35	32	33	100%
Education	20	30	50	100%
Organization and Participation	32	25	43	100%
Interiority and Motivation	8	25	67	100%

* in regards to the total responses of each dimension.

Next, the most problematic indicators are displayed within each dimension.[15]

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[15] At this level of indicators, the percentages refer to the population in our study.

As just pointed out, the Income and Employment dimension ranked first in terms of the proportion of extreme deprivation. Not only the indicator Income Below the Poverty Line, but others such as Diversified Income and Family Savings are grouped here. The most problematic indicators are, precisely, Family Savings (78% of people marked this indicator in red) and Diversified Income (51%). The latter means that, in half of these young families with small children, only one member works, and with only one source of income.[16] This organization of the home, with the man going out to the bush and the woman taking care of the house, animals and firewood collection, is predominant. A set of factors explains this situation: cultural patterns, but also the lack of kindergartens that limit mothers' possibilities of working and generating another family income.

Finally, only in third place is the indicator Income Below the Poverty Line (42% of people with answers in red) (Table 3). It should be borne in mind that the majority of women receive monetary subsidies, which constitutes not only one more income but a secure and relatively stable income, which considerably improves the results of this last indicator.[17]

Table 3. Extreme Poverty in Income and Employment Dimension according to selected indicators.

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Income above the poverty line	53	42
Stable Income	40	32
Access to credit	45	36
Family Savings	98	78
Diversified Income	65	51

The second dimension with the highest proportion of extreme deprivations is Health and Environment. It groups 10 indicators, which include, on the one hand, structural problems, such as access to safe drinking water, the existence of nearby health posts and, on the other, people's attitudes, such as preventive health actions, pregnancy control, food, etc. The indicator that shows the highest proportion of reds is Insurance, with 87%, and refers to whether they have social work or unemployment insurance (Table 4). Among the "structural" indicators, the nearby Health Post[18] registers 64% of answers in red and Access to safe drinking

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[16] Yellow indicates that "there are at least two sources of income from the same member" and only green indicates that "there are at least two sources of income from different members of the family".

[17] We are referring to the Universal Child Allowance and the Food Card.

[18] "The family does not have access (physical and financial) to a functioning Health Center within one hour (by means of transportation available to the family) from the family's residence and which provides basic health services: emergencies, drug store and medicines".

water (59%).[19] Difficulties in accessing health services and safe drinking water undoubtedly constitute two key deprivations - and at the same time absolutely common in rural areas - that seriously affect the quality of life of the population. The high proportion of people who marked the Sport and Physical Activity indicator with red (61%) is striking as it includes children in school. As we were told in the interviews, schools do not have this subject, largely because they cannot find physical education teachers who are willing to move to the area.

Table 4 also shows some indicators with a very low proportion of people who marked it in red, as in the cases of Food[20] (15%) and Sexual and Reproductive Health[21] (10%). In relation to the latter, an underestimation of the data is likely taking into consideration the discomfort of the question for people and the tendency therefore to respond positively. It is discussed later.

Table 4. Extreme Poverty in the Health and Environment dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Access to safe drinking water	75	59
Sport and Physical Activity	77	61
Insurance	110	87
Nearby Health Post	81	64
Food	19	15
Sexual and reproductive health	13	10

The third place considering the amount of reds corresponds to the Housing and Infrastructure dimension. Again, structural indicators are included here on the one hand and housing indicators on the other. The highest percentage of reds corresponds to Weather-resistant Access Road[22] (70% of families). This indicator, together with Regular Means of Transport (42%), account for a key problem in these areas: isolation (Table 5). Indeed, isolation is a central problem in the area, derived not only from the lack of Weather-resistant Access Road and Means of Transport, but also, as already indicated, from health posts. As will be seen, this situation generates a feeling of vulnerability and significant lack of protection.

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[19] Red in this indicator implies "the water that the family drinks is not safe for consumption and/or it has to be carried from someone else's property, river or stream".

[20] This indicator refers to the fact that "the family does not have a regular daily diet or regularly consume any of the foods mentioned in the first level (vegetables, fruits, legumes, cereals, dairy products, meat and oils). A member of the family has gone to bed hungry in the last week.

[21] Red in this indicator means that "adolescents and adults have no knowledge of the principles of sexual health and family planning, and do not have gynecological or prenatal check-ups.

[22] The roads are made of dirt and become inaccessible in the face of bad weather.

There are also indications that other problematic situations, such as family violence, would be favored by this isolation.

Regarding housing conditions, 69% of people do not have an adequate bathroom. This is also a typical problem in poor rural areas. Red in this indicator refers to "The family does not have a sanitary latrine or an adequate bathroom. And if it does, the bathroom does not meet several of the requirements a) it has a toilet, b) a cistern, c) it ensures privacy, d) it has a good evacuation system and e) it is kept clean". Lack of an adequate bathroom is related to the broader problem of lack of water.[23] The absence of separate bedrooms for three groups - adults, adolescents and children - is registered in 35% of families. Remember that the red in this indicator implies that the three groups mentioned before share the same bedroom. (Table 5).

Table 5. Extreme Poverty in the Housing and Infrastructure dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Adequate Bathroom	87	69
Weather-resistant Access Road	88	70
Separate Bedrooms	44	35
Electricity	28	22
Home comfort	33	26
Regular means of transport	53	42

In fourth place is Organization and Participation. This dimension is interesting since it considers aspects not normally considered in the standard measurements of poverty. The baseline survey registered 32% of red on the total of the responses for the dimension (Table 2), twelve points above Education. It clearly constitutes a problematic dimension for people. 59% of families marked the indicator Group Participation in red and 53% the indicator Influence in the public sector. High percentages, but not surprising and that show the need for community strengthening (Table 6).

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[23] In the context of other work, schools in the Chaco area have been visited on numerous occasions and, although they have modern bathrooms, they do not have water.

Table 6. Extreme Poverty in the Organization and Participation dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Group participation	74	59
Influence on the public sector	67	53

The Education dimension groups indicators that include literacy, compulsory school attendance for children and adolescents, but also indicators referring to skills to carry out activities that generate income, as well as skills to plan budget and social relations beyond the family; it also contains other indicators such as school supplies, access to information, among others. It is a wide and heterogeneous dimension. Education presents few deprivations in comparison with the others. School attendance has a low proportion of reds, like the indicator of school supplies and books, since these are provided by schools. The indicator Knowledge and skills to generate income clearly prevails in the number of red responses, that is, no member of the family possesses such knowledge and skills (32% of people) (Table 7). This particularity of the historical tradition of the Argentine society is interesting, where education is highly valued, even in the most excluded sectors. School attendance is rarely suspended by families, on the contrary, they request more establishments, especially kindergartens and middle schools.

Table 7. Extreme Poverty in the Education Dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Knowledge and skills to generate income	40	32
Respect cultural traditions and historical heritage	24	23
Human Rights awareness	14	11
Entertainment and recreation	28	22
Ability to plan and budget	28	22
School supplies and books	15	11

Finally, the Interiority and Motivation dimension exhibits an extremely low proportion of the responses in red (8%). The set of indicators of this dimension reveals non-material information referring to personal development and the ability to set goals in life: some selected indicators are shown in Table 8. It is highly probable that there exist serious limitations in the study population to understand

the ideas contained in those concepts. These limitations are not necessarily resolved with explanations from the mentors at the time of the survey; these are concepts that require time and mentoring for their complete understanding. On the other hand, mentors have repeatedly observed a tendency for people to mark as satisfactory (green) questions that are not fully understood, as well as those that inquire about issues of intimate family life. Consequently, the results obtained in this dimension would be underestimating the problems that are being asked about. This question is taken up again later.

Table 8. Extreme Poverty in the Interiority and Motivation dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Reds (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Needs awareness and establishment	15	12
Confidence and self-esteem	16	13
Entrepreneurial spirit	23	18

4.2. Moderate poverty (answers in yellow)

The responses in yellow, which denote a situation of poverty - not extreme - slightly exceed those of extreme poverty: of the total responses given by our population, the red ones represent 28% and the yellow ones 30% (see Table 1).

As can be seen in Table 9, it is the Health and Environment dimension that registers the highest percentage: 36% of yellow responses in relation to the total responses. Housing and Infrastructure receives 32%, followed by Education with 30%. In the Income and Employment dimension, 27% were marked in yellow.

Table 9. Poverty (answers in yellow) according to dimension

Dimensions	Total number of questions	Nº yellow answers	Yellow % of total dimension responses
Income and Employment	756	206	27
Health and Environment	1260	449	36
Housing and Infrastructure	1386	441	32
Education	1386	421	30
Organization and Participation	504	125	25
Interiority and Motivation	962	238	25

It is interesting to assess whether the situation of poverty - not extreme - is identified with the same problematic indicators (analyzed in the previous point with the answers in red) or if, on the contrary, other deprivations arise.

Regarding the Health and Environment dimension, the most problematic indicator is Food (75%). That is, "the family consumes 2 or 3 meals a day and can include only some of the foods mentioned in the diet", a situation associated with malnutrition.[24] The satisfactory situation (green) is "people in my family eat four meals a day with a variety of foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat. " It is worth asking if the green color in this indicator, as well as in others, expresses a situation that is too far from what is possible, not only in these areas of extreme poverty, but also in areas of non-poverty. Second, the indicator Sexual and reproductive health (47%) is recorded. Third, the lack of access to safe drinking water presents 41% of responses indicating that: either the water is not certified, participants do not have constant access to drinking water, or they do not have taps, but rather a well or cistern. Table 10 shows some indicators with an asterisk that refer to moderate deprivations only, that is, they were not marked with red. Thus, 27% of families have at least one family member with addictions.

Table 10. Poverty in the Health and Environment Dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	Yellows (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Access to safe drinking water	52	41%
Nearby health post	22	17
Food	80	75
Sexual and reproductive health	59	47
Addictions	34	27
Sport and physical activity	42	33

The second dimension with higher percentages of yellows is Housing and Infrastructure. The highest percentage corresponds to the indicator Separate bedrooms, which in yellow means that children and adolescents share a bedroom (48%). This, as will be seen, was a suggested goal and carried out in numerous cases as reported to us by the mentors. Secondly, the indicator Home comfort, in which the yellow color implies that they lack –or there are insufficient – comfort elements (tables, chairs, beds) but they do have a refrigerator (36%) (Table 11).

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[24] As defined by the Poverty Stoplight indicator.

Table 11. Poverty in the Housing and Infrastructure Dimension according to selected indicators.[25]

Indicators	Yellows (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Adequate Bathroom	27	21
Weather-resistant Access Road	25	20
Separate bedrooms	61	48
Electricity	28	22
Home comfort	46	36

In the Income and Employment dimension, 44% of families said they had income that barely exceeded the Poverty Line, and the percentage of families with stable income is similar (that is, "their income varies slightly from month to month or they feel it could decrease in the next few months")[26]. The proportion of informal loans reaches 13%, in terms of diversified income (referring to "there are at least two sources of income, but from the same family member) 19% is observed (Table 12).

Table 12. Poverty in the Income and Employment Dimension according to selected Indicators.

Indicators	Yellows (absolute)	% in relation to the population under study
Income above the poverty line	55	44
Stable Income	59	47
Access to credit	17	13
Family savings	22	17
Diversified Income	24	19

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[25] The indicator Safe Bathroom marked in yellow means the family has a sanitary latrine or a modern bathroom that does not meet one of the requirements indicated in comments Table 5 Ut supra. Energy refers to moderate poverty so that families have access to electricity, albeit clandestine. The indicator Weather-resistant Access Road means in Moderate Poverty roads that may be paved, paved or similar but become impassable in case of heavy or prolonged rains.
[26] "The family has been saving for less than 6 months and/or has saved occasionally"

Chapter 5. Comparative Analysis between two Stoplight measurements

The results of the second measurement, the Stoplight follow-up survey, and the variations with respect to the first reflect a varied series of circumstances, such as: a resignification, reinterpretation of the question and its answer by the person surveyed, and changes actually made by the families jointly with the mentors. It is also possible to interpret them as inconsistencies that, in future measurements, must be detected in real time or at least in time to formulate questions and / or corrections. Indeed, regardless of whether the objective here has not been to accurately assess the impact of the use of the PS, there are changes in the number of red markings that, up to now, have not been explained. This is particularly notable in the case of indicators of a structural nature and beyond the reach of families, such as access to safe drinking water, the existence of a nearby health post, the lack of Weather-resistant Access Road, etc. Therefore, the changes in the number of reds especially –in most cases decreases– must be relativized. Nor were there satisfactory clarifications in the interviews conducted with the mentors in the field. The goals-actions-achievements process would require further development of the mentoring registration instruments. This is discussed later. Finally, in other cases, the improvement in the situation of the families is clearly associated with changes specifically made by them, which clearly emerges from the accounts obtained from the mentors.

A first general comparison of the second measurement with respect to the first shows that the number of responses in red decreased by 26%, from 1,758 to 1,291. Responses in yellow increased slightly, from 1,880 to 1,948, an increase of just 3.6%. Therefore, most of the decrease in extreme poverty (red) was transformed into non-poverty situations (green). This with respect to the totals. Recall that the time elapsed between one measurement and the other was approximately eight months (Table 13).

Table 13. Comparative global data 1st and 2nd measurement (calculated on the total number of responses)

1st Measurement			2nd Measurement		
% red	**% yellow**	**% green**	**% red**	**% yellow**	**% green**
28	30	42	20	31	49

The decrease in the number of reds was registered in the six dimensions, although in different magnitudes. The most important improvements were registered in two dimensions, where in reality the proportion of the reds was lower (Education and Interiority and Motivation). In both, the responses in red in the second measurement compared to the first decreased by 42%. The Organization and

Participation case also shows an important improvement (41%). One of the indicators of this dimension accounts for community strengthening, an aspect on which the mentoring process placed special emphasis. The mentors promoted and collaborated in the creation of neighborhood meetings, the organization of courses and workshops, as well as the holding of various celebrations and recreational activities; all activities that, in addition to having their specific training objectives, etc., facilitated social interaction - before almost non-existent interactions- and the organization - in most cases for the first time - of community activities. (Table 14).

Table 14. Comparison of number of red responses in first and second measurements according to dimensions

Dimensions	Answers in red	Answers in red	Difference %	Difference (absolute)
	1st measurement	2nd measurement		
Income and Employment	322	242	-25%	-80
Health and Environment	426	334	-22%	-92
Housing and Infrastructure	490	415	-15%	-75
Education	273	157	-42%	-116
Organization and Participation	162	93	-42%	-69
Interiority and Motivation	85	50	-41%	-35

Figure 1. Quantity of reds in the two measurements according to dimensions
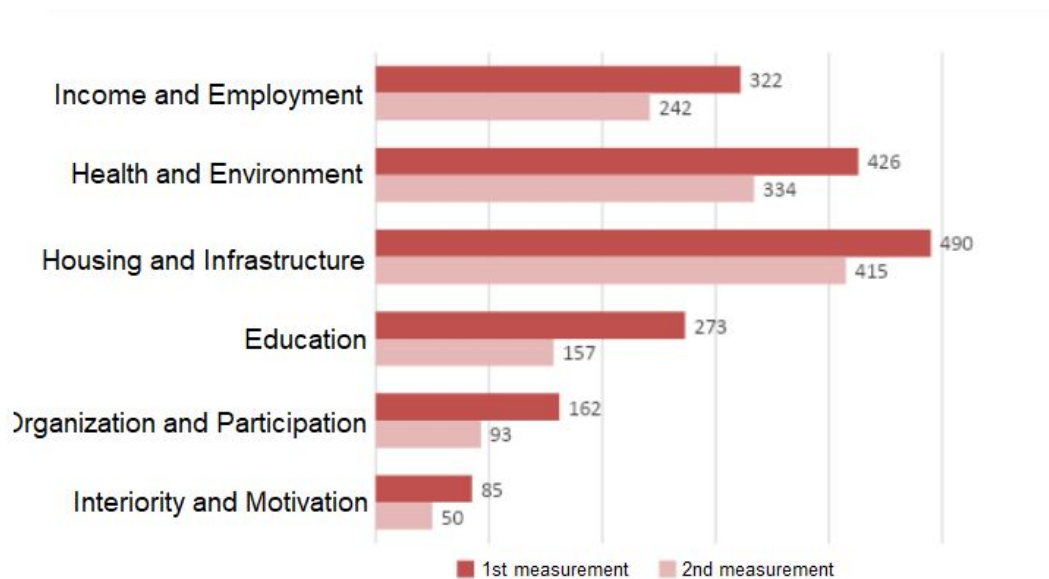
Table 15 compares the weight of the red responses over the total responses in the six dimensions for the first and second measurements. Significant decreases are observed in all dimensions except Housing and Infrastructure, where the drop is less noticeable. In Education, the percentage of reds over the total responses goes from representing 20% to 11%. In the Income and Employment dimension, the responses in red represented 42% in the first measurement and 32% in the second. In the case of Health and Environment, said percentage goes from 34% to 26%; In Housing and Infrastructure, the percentages registered minor decreases, going from 35% to 30%. In Organization and Participation there is also a strong decrease in the weight of the reds.

Table 15. Comparative. Proportion of reds in total responses in first and second measurement according to dimensions

	% red 1st measurement	% red 2nd measurement
Income and Employment	42	32
Health and Environment	34	26
Housing and Infrastructure	35	30
Education	20	11
Organization and Participation	32	18
Interiority and Motivation	8	5

Within Education, the improvements occurred in the indicators referring to Knowledge and Skills to generate income, to plan a budget, etc., and in the Interiority and Motivation dimension, improvements occurred in the indicators of Awareness of needs, Confidence and self-esteem, and Entrepreneurial spirit. These are aspects where the mentors worked intensely –especially with women–, as reported by them. In some cases, suggestions and reflections made by the mentors gradually began to generate stimuli and some changes in the families. Indeed, it is these aspects, compared to more structural factors such as roads, access to water, etc., where mentoring and intervention are more effective.

Seeking to identify changes in the reds in more detail, which specific indicators showed improvements in each dimension?

Table 16 presents the most important of the Education dimension (greatest decrease). Knowledge and skills to generate income decreased from 40% to 25% families that marked it in red. This variation is important since this indicator had the highest amount of reds. Something similar happened with the ability to plan and budget. It should be remembered, however, that Education was one of the least problematic dimensions, with the least number of extreme deprivations. But obviously, these indicators are more sensitive to mentoring work.

Table 16. Comparative 1st and 2nd Measurement. Extreme Poverty in the Education Dimension according to selected indicators.

Indicators	Red Absolutes	% population under study	Red Absolutes	% population under study
	1st measurement		2nd measurement	
Knowledge and skills to generate income	40	32	25	20
Respect cultural traditions	24	19	15	12
Human Rights awareness	14	11	5	4
Entertainment and recreation	28	22	28	22
Ability to plan and budget	28	22	15	12
School supplies and books	15	12	20	16
Communication and social capital	11	9	16	13

Of the 4 indicators that make up the Organization and Participation dimension, in the first measurement, 2 are identified that present a significant proportion of families by marking them in red: They are group participation and influence in the public sector. The second measurement shows a considerable improvement in the first one. This improvement is explained by a series of initiatives that generated changes, from the creation of workshops by the Monte Adentro to the creation of neighborhood associations carried out by the residents with the support of the organization. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter corresponding to the mentoring process. On the other hand, the difficulties to petition the State remain largely the same (Table 17).

Table 17. Comparative 1st and 2nd Measurement. Extreme Poverty in the Organization and Participation dimension according to selected indicators.

Indicators	Red Absolutes	% population under study	Red Absolutes	% population under study
	1st measurement		2nd measurement	
Group Participation	74	59	19	15
Influence on the public sector	67	53	66	52

In the case of the Income and Employment dimension, whose improvements are in third place, the three indicators with the highest number of red are in both measurements: Family Savings, Diversified Income and Income above the Poverty Line, in this order. Except for the Diversified Income indicator, which increased the number of people who marked it in red, the other two decreased. The factors that largely explain this situation were discussed in the previous chapter. To that previous explanation should be added the lack of job opportunities in the area. This was worked throughout the mentoring and surely has influenced the improvement of the indicator. Secondly, the deprivation referred to the Income above the poverty line indicator, which went from representing 42% of families to 36%, can be explained by the monetary subsidies received by families, which partially lessened the impact of the economic crisis and allowed the indicators to improve (Table 18).

Table 18. Comparative 1st and 2nd Measurement. Extreme and Moderate Poverty in Income and Employment dimension according to selected indicators

Indicators	1st measurement		2nd measurement	
	% red	% yellow	% red	% yellow
Income above the poverty line	42	44	36	48
Stable Income	32	47	25	41
Access to credit	36	13	31	13
Family Savings	78	17	69	22
Diversified income	51	19	55	31

The two most problematic indicators in the Health and Environment dimension refer to infrastructure deprivation: nearby health post and access to safe drinking water. Regarding the nearby health post, in the first measurement 64% of the population marked it in red, which means that "The closest health post that offers basic services is more than an hour from the household and the family must wait more than two hours to be treated." In the second measurement, said percentage is reduced to 41%. The decreases are explained by what happened in three of the seven places (Tacuruzal, Boquerón and La Gloria-La Medialuna).

Something similar occurred with Access to safe drinking water. In the first measurement, 60% of the families marked it as an extreme deprivation, which implies that "The family does not have more than one of the elements mentioned in the satisfactory situation. The water that the family drinks is not safe and / or

has to be carried from someone else's land, river or stream".[27] In the second measurement, said percentage had decreased to 41%. The improvements observed in the indicator Access to safe drinking water are the average of very different behaviors between places: thus, only in two places did the situation improve (Tacuruzal and Pampa Sena), while in the rest a relative maintenance of the situation was observed, and in the case of the Boquerón area, a worsening. Regarding the behavior of these structural indicators, the improvements between the first and second measurements would be due to a series of factors: the aforementioned disparity between sites; it is also possible that there have been some flaws in facilitating the proper interpretation of the questions, which in our opinion, could stem from the fact that the survey would require more time and probably more than one meeting to carry out adequately. These aspects are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Excluding these structural indicators, the other indicator that registers a high percentage of families that consider it to be an extreme deprivation is Sport and Physical Activity. This indicator accounts for the deficiencies of rural schools, since they do not teach the subject Sport and Physical Activity. Still, an improvement is seen. The rest of the indicators show red markings in smaller magnitudes (Table 19).

Table 19. Comparative. Extreme Poverty in the Health and Environment dimension according to selected indicators.

Indicators	Nº of people marked red	% population under study	Nº of people marked red	% population under study
	1st measurement		2nd measurement	
Access to safe drinking water	73	60	52	41
Sport and Physical Activity	77	61	51	40
Nearby health post	81	64	52	41
Food	19	15	5	4
Sexual and Reproductive Health	13	10	11	9

The Interiority and Motivation dimension includes indicators such as Awareness of needs, Self-esteem, and Entrepreneurship. Although in the first measurement it did not register a significant number of reds, in the second measurement they all experienced significant improvements. In any case, it stands out with the highest percentages of the population, marking the indicator Entrepreneurship in red (Table 20).

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[27] Green - satisfactory situation - indicates availability of quality water during most of the day and in sufficient quantity (family has a faucet in their household).

Table 20. Comparative 1st and 2nd measurement. Extreme Poverty in Interior Dimension and Motivation according to selected indicators

Indicators	Nº of people marked red	% population under study	Nº of people marked red	% population under study
	1st measurement		**2nd measurement**	
Awareness of needs and goal setting	15	12	4	3
Confidence and self-esteem	16	13	9	7
Entrepreneurial spirit	23	18	14	9

The Housing and Infrastructure dimension is the one that observed the smallest decrease in the percentage of families that marked it in red, going from 35% to 30% (see Table 15 above). As for the indicators, it is also worth distinguishing here one that accounts for an infrastructure situation: Weather-resistant Access Road, which 70% of the families marked red in the first measurement and 83% in the second.

The other indicator that stands out for the significant proportion of the reds refers to family homes, and it is the lack of an adequate bathroom, a situation in which 71% of families are found (2nd measurement). It should be noted here that the poverty thresholds between colors in this indicator account for an urban reality. The non-poverty situation (green) is defined as follows: "The family has a adequate bathroom, which implies that: (a) it has a toilet and a hot and cold water shower (WC), (b) a cistern, (c) ensures privacy, (d) has a good evacuation system, e) it is kept clean ". Another important indicator, albeit with a smaller number of reds, is the existence of separate bedrooms for adults, adolescents, and children. Their proportion decreased from 35% to 24%. This improvement is interesting and can be attributed to the mentoring work, since, as reported in the interviews, the need for separate bedrooms in relation to quality of life was extensively discussed. It is known that, in numerous cases, the family built a new bedroom (Table 21).

Table 21. Comparative 1st and 2nd Measurement. Extreme Poverty in Dimension Housing and Infrastructure according to selected indicators

Indicators	Nº of people marked red	% population under study	Nº of people marked red	% population under study
	1st measurement		**2nd measurement**	
Adequate Bathroom	87	69	90	71
Weather-resistant Access Road	88	70	105	83
Separate Bedrooms	44	35	30	24
Electricity	28	22	28	22
Home comfort	33	26	38	30

Selected Dimensions and Indicators	% red 1st measurement	% red 2nd measurement
Education dimensión		
- Knowledge and skills to generate income	32	20
- Respect cultural traditions and historical heritage	19	12
- Human Rights awareness	14	4
- Entertainment and Recreation	22	22
- Ability to plan and budget	22	12
- School supplies and books	12	16
- Communication and share capital	9	13
Organization and Participation Dimension		
- Group Participation	59	15
- Influence on the public sector	53	52
Income and Employment Dimension		
- Income above the poverty line	42	36
- Stable Income	32	25
- Access to Credit	36	31
- Family savings	78	69
- Diversified Income	51	55
Health and Environment Dimension		
- Access to Safe Drinking Water	60	41
- Sport and Physical Activity	61	40
- Nearby Health Post	64	41
- Food	15	4
- Sexual and Reproductive Health	10	9
Interiority and Motivation Dimension		
- Awareness of needs and goal setting	12	3
- Confidence and self-esteem	13	7
- Entrepreneurial spirit	18	9
Housing and Infrastructure Dimension		
- Adequate bathroom	69	71
- Weather-resistant Access Road	70	83
- Separate Bedrooms	35	24
- Electricity	22	22
- Home Comfort	26	30

Table 22. Extreme Poverty: Variations between 1st and 2nd measurement according to indicators

Figure 2. Extreme Poverty: Percentage of reds in 1st and 2nd measurement according to indicators
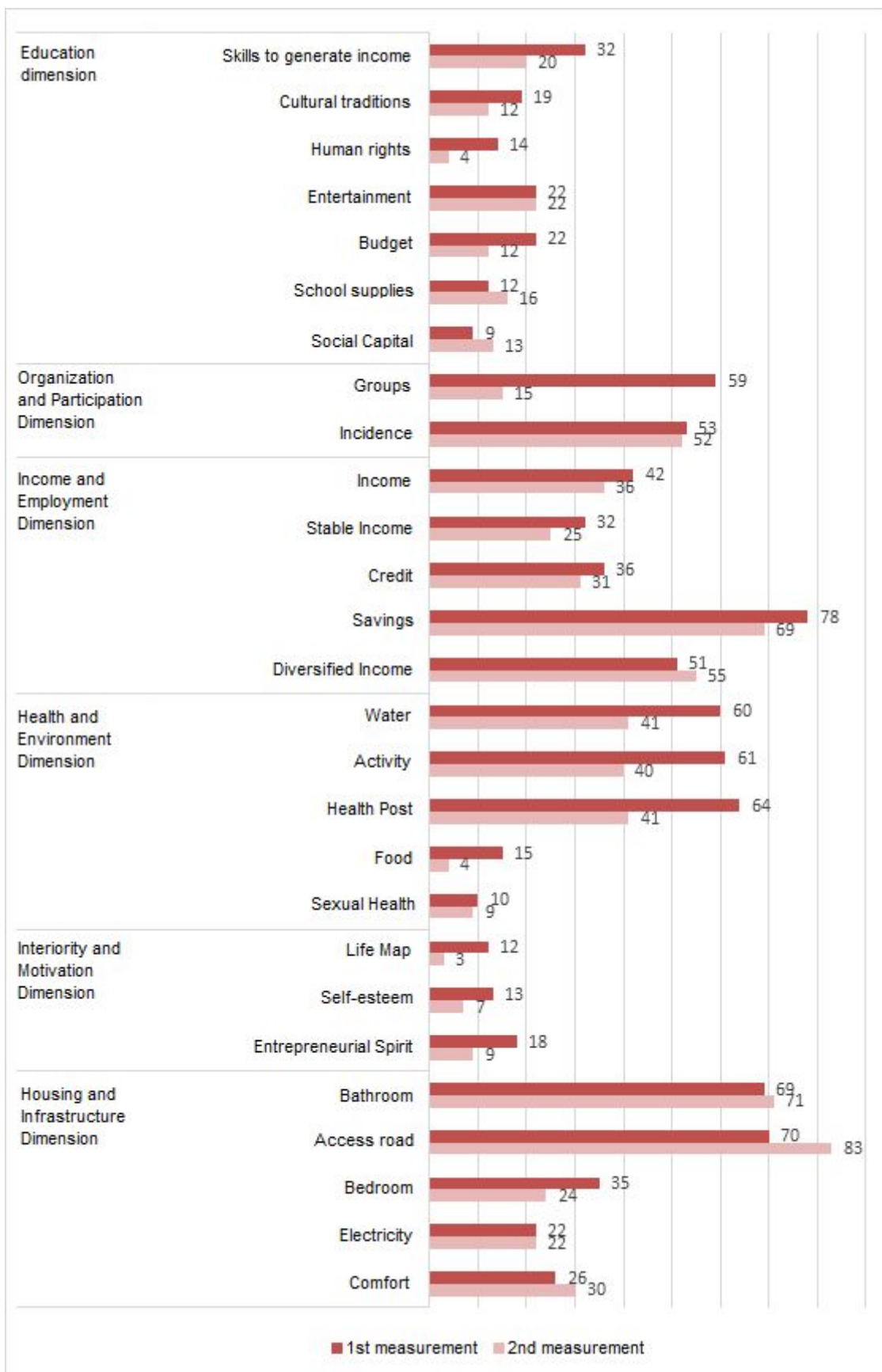
Chapter 6. About the Mentoring Process

This chapter reconstructs the mentoring process carried out between the baseline and follow-up surveys administered by Monte Adentro, in agreement with the Ministry of Social Development of Argentina to carry out mentoring in the implementation of certain social policies. The organization incorporated the Stoplight as a tool to advance in this task, for which it contacted Fundación Irradia, the Stoplight Hub in Argentina.

For the reconstruction of the mentoring, a qualitative information survey was carried out through two mechanisms: firstly, a survey was sent to the mentors in order to obtain a preliminary account of the implementation of the Stoplight and to promote a memory exercise for mentors, to account for the time that elapsed between the 2nd measurement and the time of this study (Annex 2). Secondly, a trip was made to the city of Tres Isletas, Chaco, to carry out in-depth interviews with the Monte Adentro team, coordinator and mentors (Annex 3).

The population on which the Stoplight was applied was identified as a target population by the National Social Protection Program (NSPP), that depends on the Ministry of Social Development, for the implementation of the Food Card program, a money transfer for the purchase of food for young families with children up to four years of age in extreme poverty.

Fundación Irradia transferred the Stoplight framework and trained the Monte Adentro team to implement it. Although the Stoplight was used as a tool for the implementation of the national program, it allowed, at the same time, to identify new goals arising from the families themselves, achieving a synergy between the national program and the Stoplight program for the benefit of the community.

Monte Adentro was in charge of managing the national program in the territory through the use of the Stoplight; they selected the mentors and carried out the mentoring process. To do this, they adapted its internal organization with the appointment of coordinators, a psychologist and a social worker to advise, coordinate and supervise the work of the mentors. The latter are recognized men and women in the community, with diverse tertiary studies (teaching staff, nursing, etc.), and with personal competences such as a strong social vocation and empathy: "trusted people", "well-known", "kind", "strong-willed", as detailed by the Coordinator of Monte Adentro. The PS was a key instrument for Monte Adentro to identify deficiencies, generate intervention and support initiatives for families individually and at the community level aimed at improving their situation of poverty.

Below we discuss different aspects of the Stoplight implementation process and the monitoring of families based on data gathered through the interviews.

About the facilitation of the Stoplight survey

The Stoplight survey booklet - its simple methodology, using drawings for the questions and colors for the answers - was well received by the people who participated, which undoubtedly made the survey easier; furthermore, in many cases it generated enthusiasm and a good predisposition. It is possible to attribute this enthusiasm not only to the characteristics of the survey but also to the great expectation and satisfaction generated by the families in the fact of "being visited".

This is usually a common situation in rural areas, characterized by a central problem: isolation. In this regard, the Coordinator of Monte Adentro reports that it is possible to identify two types of isolation: "The internal one, referring to the distance between one house and another, the lack of a signal for cell phones, etc. This is compensable with the creation of community spaces and activities. But there is another isolation, with respect to the city, the school, hospital, etc., derived from problems with the roads and the lack of transportation. There is a strong sense of isolation in the places, of not being connected; "Since the Internet age began, it has been difficult for us to find teachers who stay to live in the areas". This situation generates a feeling of vulnerability, in the sense of lack of protection, fragility due to lack of resources - social and material - against potential risks such as heavy rains, accidents, etc. This adds a share of "discomfort" to the concrete deprivations of poverty. There are also indications that other problematic situations, such as family violence, would be favored by this isolation.

The implementation of the Stoplight showed a series of difficulties. Many questions were difficult for the respondents to interpret (the concept of "saving", for example); others referred to sensitive issues of family privacy and created discomfort (violence, addictions, etc.); in some cases, the desirable (green) alternatives were obviously urban, and eventually became overly extensive. Indeed, questions abound that people failed to understand. Although it was the function of the facilitator to collaborate in understanding them, it is possible that in many cases they were answered without having fully understood the topic. Practically all the questions in dimension 6, Interiority and Motivation, had this difficulty. They were mostly marked in green, which casts certain doubts in this regard according to the mentors' opinion. In general, nothing specific was said, but the mentors were able to perceive tense and complex situations related to this topic. In relation to indicators such as Respect for cultural traditions, Respect for diversity, Awareness of human rights and Ability to plan budget, belonging to the Education dimension, are in the same situation. In the case of the Income dimension (Savings and Access to credit required explanations).

According to what could be gathered in the surveys and interviews, there were questions that were extremely uncomfortable and others that "made them sad". The reaction to these feelings was not to not answer them, but to respond positively that "everything is fine." This is where most of the questions associated with people's intimacy come in: from whether family members sleep in separate rooms, to whether there are problems with addictions or violence. Although the discomfort generated by these questions is predictable, the questions about income, income generating capacities, solving problems, etc. were also uncomfortable. The same with questions about home comfort, etc. It was not easy to answer about the deprivations.

In other cases, the green option in some indicators expresses a situation that is far from possible, not only in these areas of extreme poverty, but also in those of non-poverty. The case of Food is paradigmatic: taking into account the extremely vulnerable nature of the population on which the survey was applied, it seems that the satisfactory situation (green option) "My family eat four meals a day with a variety of foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat", is too far from a possible goal. 75% of the families marked yellow, that is: "My family consumes 2 or 3 meals a day and only include some of the mentioned foods in the diet", a situation associated with malnutrition.[28] This information on what happened in the survey provided contextual elements to evaluate the results of the survey. Most of these questions were answered with green markings. It is possible that both the questions that were not fully understood because they are not part of the language of the families, and the questions that generated discomfort, were answered in green, even if they did not correspond to reality.

The second Stoplight survey and the variations with respect to the first reflect a varied series of circumstances such as: resignification; reinterpretation of the question and its response by the person surveyed, derived from a gradual understanding of the questions; changes actually made by the families together with the mentors. It is also possible to interpret them as inconsistencies that, in future measurements, must be detected in real time or at least in time to formulate questions and / or corrections. Indeed, beyond the fact that the objective here has not been to accurately assess the impact of the use of the PS, there were drops in the number of red markings that, up to now, could not be explained. This is particularly notable in the case of indicators of a structural nature, and therefore, beyond the reach of families, such as access to safe drinking water, the existence of a nearby health post, the lack of weather-resistant access road, etc. Therefore, changes in the number of reds, especially, must be relativized and / or analyzed in context. These results could not be satisfactorily clarified in the interviews either. The goals-actions-achievements process could not be verified, nor that it was duly recorded in the mentoring registration instruments. This is discussed later. Finally, in other cases, the improvement in the situation of

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[28] As defined by the Poverty Stoplight indicator.

the families is clearly associated with changes specifically made by them, which clearly emerges from the accounts obtained from the mentors.

On the other hand, the Stoplight, as a methodology, was extremely useful, it allowed organizing work in the field. Furthermore, in some cases it became a tool used by families themselves - including children - to evaluate their own initiatives and achievements over time, beyond measurement. Numerous families have the Life Map, the paper version of the survey that remains in the families' possession, hanging on the wall and continue to use them to remember how they were, or to change the colors, carrying out their own home registry, regardless of the measurement itself. This detail that was reiterated in the mentors' account is revealing of empowerment aspects in the sense of taking ownership of the changes made by themselves. It would not be the only example. Children were highly stimulated by this methodology. In several cases they participated in the coloring of the answers or, in the second measurement, in the application of color stickers to their Life Map. They also collaborated, in the case of slightly older children, in the interpretation of the questions and in the answers themselves. The mentor Fabián tells us how during the follow-up survey he saw the "Life Map hanging" in the houses: you look, you compare, you count the greens. The Life Maps are seen as something that belongs to them and they can change the answers as they improve. There was a real appropriation of the instrument by the people.

The Stoplight survey was generally carried out flexibly, over more than one visit; time was given to build trust with people and with the Life Map (for many it was "stressful"). In some cases, in the following visits, the person who responded –by a large majority woman– asked to change the answers and this was accepted. Joint reflection between the respondent and the mentor on the results after the first measurement was completed was difficult. Large numbers of people were extremely passive and resigned. In almost all cases, it was necessary to make suggestions about actions by the mentors. "Hey, look how nice would be for the boys to have their own room" (facilitator Fabián). However, throughout the visits, the enthusiasm and the creation of initiatives by the families themselves began to increase in some cases. "After the first visit I left the Life Map at the family home and when I came back they had been thinking and wanted to change some answers. When completing their Life Map, gradually, in stages, goals and initiatives began to emerge" (facilitator Roxana).

Thus, the goals recorded in the Life Map inevitably tended to express criteria and suggestions of the mentors. These gave priority to the actions recognized as requirements by the social programs, such as obtaining an identification document and health controls. Although the goals of the reflection proposed by the PS were also present.

About mentoring

As already mentioned, the mentoring was organized based on the goals established by the Ministry of Social Development in Argentina as consideration for various programs that were applied in the area. The operational modality of family monitoring was characterized by rigorous compliance with routines, weekly visits to families, and registration of activities carried out by the mentors, in a form with weekly delivery. In some cases, non-compliance with established routines forced some mentors to be replaced. This rigor responded largely to the requirements of the National Program.

Throughout the implementation of the Stoplight, new goals emerged, in some cases by the families and, in others, proposed by the mentors. Some suggestions were taken by families and others were not. Most of the population needed, and continues to need, extensive work over time to incorporate the idea of "defining goals and planning actions to achieve them". We are referring here in particular, to the process of defining goals, concrete objectives in life, and believing in the possibility of achieving them at the time of completing the survey. References were made previously to our opinion on the need to have more time to carry out this process. It is a real challenge to be questioned about our situation and about our possibilities. However, what seems to emerge is that, during the mentoring, in some cases, the initiatives for change soar and begin to flow. Further in-depth and time-consuming studies are required to evaluate these aspects.

The mentors reported the existence of an attitude of acceptance and resignation in the population towards their poverty situation and towards the possibilities of partially reversing it. Also, they noticed a feeling, especially in women, of "not trusting themselves", of "not believing that they can do something to change their situation". On the other hand, mentors also noted the important positive effect of the examples of some members of the community who effectively initiated actions to modify their reality. This was the case, for example, with the vegetable gardens: at the beginning, at the suggestion of creating vegetable gardens for self-consumption and possible sale, the reaction was a lack of enthusiasm. However, learning that a neighbor was doing it had a stimulating effect.

In the mentoring process, mentors turned permanently to the Life Map, talking about what could be done. Mentors emphasized that, in the face of difficult hardships, it is always possible to do something. "Ok, we don't have a pavement road, but maybe we can make a gravel road." "I try to encourage them to have confidence, to have a drive." "In the absence of electricity, in some cases rechargeable light bulbs began to be used. In one case, the father-in-law of the responding woman is a former combatant and receives a pension. The woman, having her Universal Child Allowance (UCA), said to herself: "I'm going to make a house for myself." In six months, the house was made. In another case, bricks were needed to start building, instead of buying them "Why not make them?" was suggested. The participant then built a brickyard that now supplies other families.

Another initiative that was originally suggested by the mentors was the creation of vegetable gardens for self-consumption" (facilitator Natalia). In one case, "the priority of a new room was changed by putting a door". "Almost everyone has a latrine, why not take a bathroom?" "One of them appears with a new drive and the others are motivated" (facilitator Marlén).

The mentoring was central to working with women and to strengthening the community. Work was carried out developing and stimulating skills to generate complementary income; to plan, for example, evaluating whether you can have savings for building a new room. It also aimed to strengthen the interrelationships between women through workshops, but with initiatives to return to study. According to the mentor Roxana, a new schedule during the day was requested and obtained so that the women could attend, since their husbands did not want them to assist after the afternoon. In addition, sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy control, and child health care courses were organized. One of the mentors, Marlén, is also a nurse and organized several of these workshops, to which men have also recently been invited.

Regarding the second axis of community strengthening, mentors encouraged the creation of neighborhood centers, organized community activities, such as meetings for Mother's Day, for example. As observed in the comparative analysis, the participation indicator improved significantly and it is plausible to attribute it to these activities.

Success and goal achievements in the framework of mentoring

Some examples of setting possible goals and concrete achievements are detailed below.

Mentors agree that, in the study area, families were very disunited. To address this difficulty, various community activities were started. Workshops were organized to develop skills (cooking, sewing, etc.), sexual education, health prevention, etc. These workshops, at the same time, involved an increase in social interaction, basically between women. Motivation is triggered in them; people see that what another did "was good" and are encouraged to take initiatives.

On the other hand, it collaborated in the creation of community organizations with a significant presence of men, but also of women, something that impacted community strengthening. Meetings were held once a month. There are also patron saint festivities, Mother's Day, etc., thus promoting community social relations. In one of the places, the residents are building a community room. A new activity undertaken is that mentors put together a project to carry out with their community.

In some places it was possible to work better than others. In the Boquerón area, a development commission was created and signatures were gathered to request a vocational training program from the school. They are also making a center for social activities. In the Palmar Chico area, the neighborhood commission is highly developed and very active; thus, for example, they built a health center with men from the area as construction workers. It is notable - although not surprising - that these organizations did not previously exist. It is necessary to remember once again that we are in the presence of an isolated rural population, even among neighbors. On rainy days, and even worse during floods, the isolation is total.

As already indicated, obtaining the identity document, even for newborns, constitutes a requirement to access social benefits. However, the population delays this process. Carrying out procedures in public offices is a real problem, partially because of the time and expenses it demands, but also because of the mistreatment they usually receive. "They don't want to do the paperwork because they are being treated badly." "It is important to know that it belongs to me by right." Mentors collaborate strongly in carrying out procedures in different public offices, having the attitude of someone who is demanding what corresponds by right. In some places access to electricity was achieved; others were able to acquire generator sets. In other cases, it was necessary to define new alternatives to achieve their goals: "I can't buy goats, but I can buy chicks." There were cases in which families saved to build their own house. Saving as something achievable was a contribution from the Stoplight.

A mentor, Miguel, tells that, when observing leather works carried out by some men from his area, he suggested the creation of small stalls in the city to display and sell these products. These men, says Miguel, had not considered that their crafts could have economic value, much less that they could have a stall. In another case, raising chickens was encouraged, for which they spoke with NITA (National Institute of Agricultural Technology) to acquire the first chickens. 12 "laying hens" were obtained for each family in addition to seeds. Regarding the vegetable gardens for self-consumption, an issue that is being worked on intensively, the "positive example" and "contagion effect" was very important. At first, it came as a suggestion from mentors: "Let's start a garden," and the answer used to be: "Oh, ma'am ... no." However, many have started their own (Roxana, Boquerón site). These activities are in full development and generate enthusiasm among the residents.

As a mentor, Roxana, told us, by the time the second dimension of the Stoplight came along, families were familiar with the questions: "Participants completed the follow-up survey alone. In the case of this site, eight or nine young mothers were able to return to or start secondary education". "With the Stoplight the initiatives grow. They visualize their needs and want to change them". "A family pasted the two Stoplight Life Maps on the wall... and they continue to use them and change

colors when they accomplish something. Another family bought a door and a refrigerator, and the son said, "Now we can change the yellow to green!"

Final thoughts

The main objective of this case study was to record an experience of implementing the Poverty Stoplight (PS) in the countryside of the Argentine Chaco forest. This experience was carried out by the Monte Adentro Civil Association. The intention was to explore the potential of the PS as a tool for surveying information on multidimensional poverty and at the same time as a support proposal that allows families to measure their own multidimensional poverty and develop and implement a plan to overcome it. In this sense, the focus was on its character as an instrument for promoting change, overcoming unfavorable situations through the support of families in this process, thus contributing to the empowerment of families.

In relation to the survey itself, the novel modality of self-evaluation generated considerable involvement of families to reflect on their own situation. Likewise, the fact that the questions were accompanied by drawings and the answers were in colors, effectively stimulated participation and made the survey easier. Of course, this did not occur in all cases, but it was a result reoccurring in most of the mentors' experiences. Although a good predisposition was detected from the initial moment, many people needed extensive time throughout consecutive visits to complete the survey. In some cases, mentors found that the respondent asked to change the answer "because they had thought about it better." Possibly, it should be considered that the survey is a "process" over several visits.

In reference to the questions, it was noted in the report that, in many cases, these questions and their response options were not clear to the community. We refer both to the language used, to the extremely urban drawings and, in certain questions, to concepts that probably have not been truly understood. Additionally, poverty thresholds between options were sometimes confusing.

On the other hand, the Stoplight was a trigger for gradual changes in attitude, to restore confidence that "they can do anything." The strategy of setting concrete goals with achievable horizons was generally challenging. In this sense, it could be considered that the Stoplight contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty by complementing with attitudinal reinforcements - that is, acquiring confidence for the defense of rights, strengthening self-esteem, reinforcing a proactive attitude, and the feeling that they can have improvements in their quality of life, housing conditions, etc., the indispensable material subsidies. In fact, income transfer programs increasingly begin to observe their limitations for effectively overcoming poverty and resort to complementary mentoring strategies.

In relation to the results analysis of the Stoplight surveys, a diagnosis and a comparative analysis were carried out to illustrate the potential of the PS for the study of poverty, and in this case, rural poverty. Regarding this, the result is highly positive. In the context of the serious limitations of rural poverty statistics in our country, the information obtained from the Stoplight survey constitutes an interesting contribution to inform public social policies and guide the work of social organizations. The Stoplight survey, which records a broad multidimensional spectrum of deprivation, allows this.

Regarding the results of the comparative analysis between the baseline and follow-up survey, a trend towards a considerable improvement in the poverty situation of the families was observed. Reference was made in the report that it cannot be attributed directly and exclusively to the action of mentoring as part of the Stoplight strategy. However, the interviews analysis, which complemented the quantitative data, allows us to hypothesize that the improvement in the situation of the families is associated with concrete and specific actions carried out by the mentors. Still, decreases in the number of reds should be taken with caution.

In the framework of these warnings, we observe, first of all, an interesting decrease in the proportions of extreme deprivations (red). These decreased by 26%, the responses in yellow increased slightly by 3.6%, and most of the decrease in extreme deprivation (red) was transformed into satisfactory situations (green). This improvement was registered in the six dimensions, although in different magnitudes. The dimensions and indicators that registered the greatest decreases are those that did not record the most negative results, but on which the mentoring action is more effective. Clearly, the "complementary" nature of these strategies in relation to resource transfer programs, for example, is evident.

The dimensions that improved the most were Education, Motivation and Interiority and Organization and Participation (42% and 41% percentage difference). These were areas where the reds were lower, but where mentoring was carried out with more intensity: strengthening capacities and skills to generate income in Education, and contributing to the creation of neighborhood centers, activities, and workshops that intensified social activities in Organization and Participation.

In relation to the Income and Employment dimension, the indicator that experienced the greatest decrease was Family Savings. The concept of savings, as reported by mentors, was a relatively incomprehensible concept in relation to their lives. Many interpreted savings exclusively as owning a bank account. This was worked throughout the mentoring and surely has influenced the improvement of the indicator. Second, the indicator referring to Income above the poverty line also decreased. The Housing dimension registered very few improvements, circumscribed to a relevant indicator, such as separate bedrooms. This is also an area where mentoring worked.

The Interiority and Motivation dimension was also worked on during the mentoring, although it was not, in any way, a problematic dimension with indicators such as: Awareness of needs, Self-esteem and Entrepreneurship. These are aspects –especially with women– where mentors worked hard, as detailed before. However, the limitations of the approach with direct questions regarding sensitive issues were evident, which also happened with indicators referring to addictions and violence. People systematically marked these questions in green. More indirect approaches should be developed, through workshops, for example, where these issues arise in a more spontaneous and genuine way. In summary, there is a set of questions (indicators) whose positive results must be emphatically relativized.

Another interesting aspect about the Stoplight refers to its use as an organizing tool for the work of social organizations in the field, for reaching out to families, for developing mentoring strategies and for systematizing the actions carried out.

In order to characterize the mentoring work carried out by Monte Adentro, it should be noted that rigor was observed in the fulfillment of routines (both in visits and in their written record) by mentors. Also, a relative flexibility in their work was evident, allowing families to propose changes, reviewing objectives, etc. This strategy favored a true use of the Stoplight tool to face a central problem of the population, referred to an attitude of resignation, acceptance and passivity towards their situation of poverty. On the contrary, the use of the Stoplight facilitated and stimulated the population to visualize possibilities of change and carry them out. Finally, support focused on women and community strengthening were two key cleavages of intervention for change.

In this study, the interest was in exploring the potentialities of the SP as a tool for surveying information on multidimensional poverty and, at the same time, as an intervention proposal that allows families to measure their own multidimensional poverty and develop and implement a plan to overcome it. In this sense, the focus was on its character as an instrument to promote change, to overcome unfavorable situations through the mentoring of families in this process, thus contributing to their empowerment.

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