

**Water, Health and River  
Pollution in Urban Poverty  
Stricken Areas of Latin  
American**

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Argentina

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Studies on environment and health commissioned by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada



# Case studies

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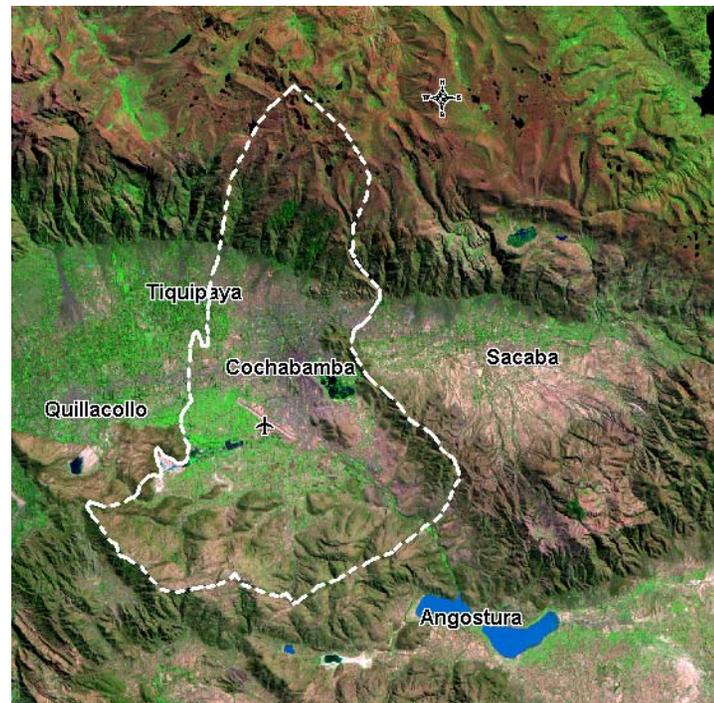
- Cochabamba, Bolivia (Carmen Ledo)  
Lima, Peru (Gustavo Riofrio y Luis Garcia)  
Moreno Argentina (Alejandro Rofman et. al.)  
Sao Paulo, Brazil (Pedro Jacobi & Rizpah Besen)
- Framework analysis (Beatriz Cuenya & Gonzalo Rodriguez)
- Coordination (Maria Onestini)

# Purpose of the studies

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- Examine (from an integrated perspective) the inter - connected issues of health, environment, and poverty in these Latin American urban areas

# Cochabamba



# Cochabamba

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- Illness perception associated to unsafe water by urban poor
  - 63 percent of the poor (with a slight gender differential) perceive unsafe water as associated to illnesses

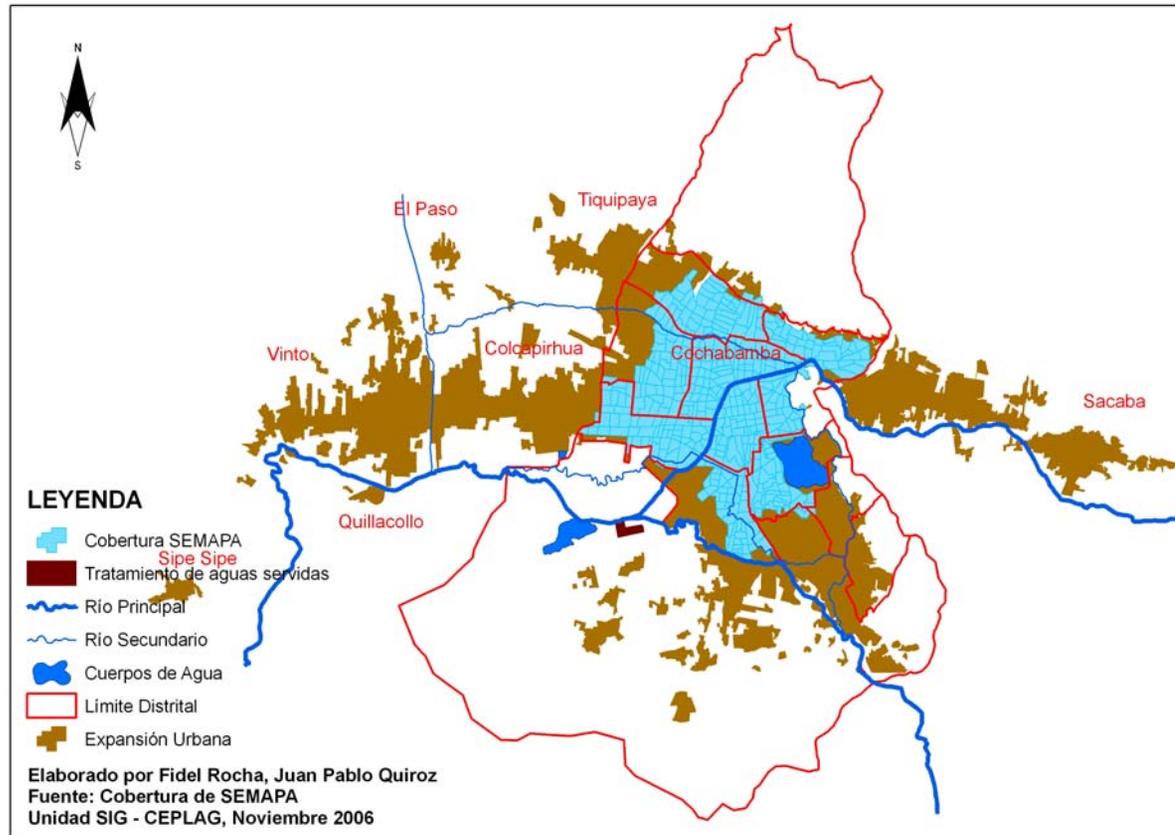
# Cochabamba

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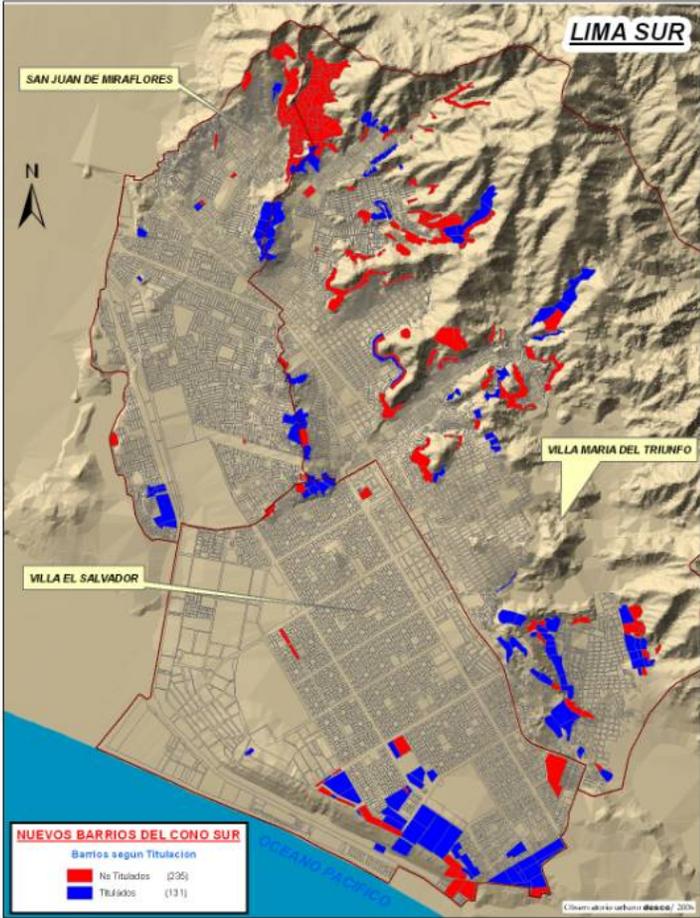
- A high degree of use of ***rivers*** as garbage dumping grounds has also been identified as a direct factor in a variety of health problems

# Cochabamba

## COBERTURA DE DISTRIBUCION DE AGUA POR CAÑERIA



# Lima



# Lima

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- Newly urbanized areas: 95% homes lack potable water.
- Diseases associated to lack of safe water have increased to reach an estimated 22 percent in the last few years

# Lima



# Moreno

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- Even water provided by municipal systems in Argentina is non potable (high content of arsenic, nitrates, bacteria, for example)

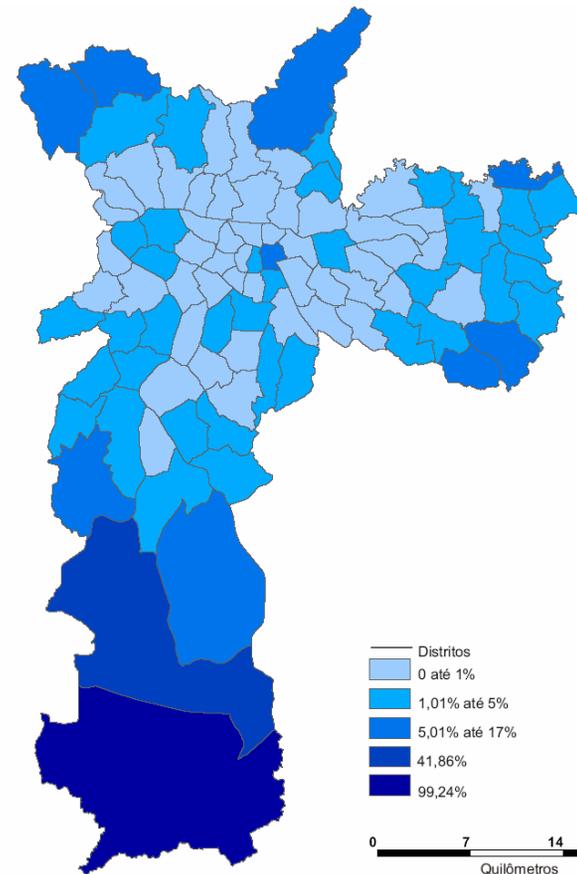
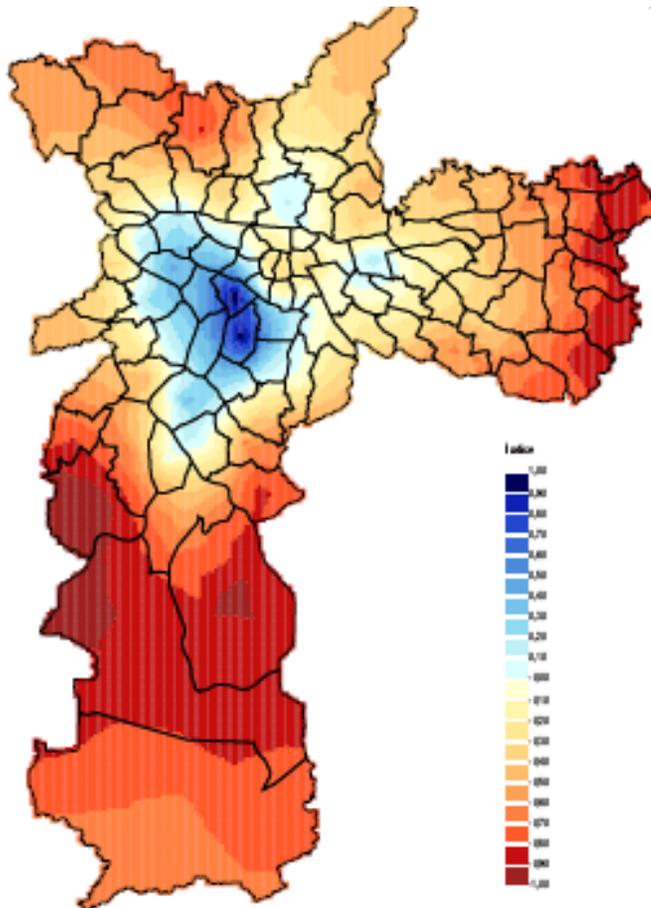
# Moreno

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- In Moreno water-related gastrointestinal conditions 40% of all pathologies reported within the municipal health system
  - Associated to **river and basin** contamination

# Sao Paulo

## ■ Unsafe water



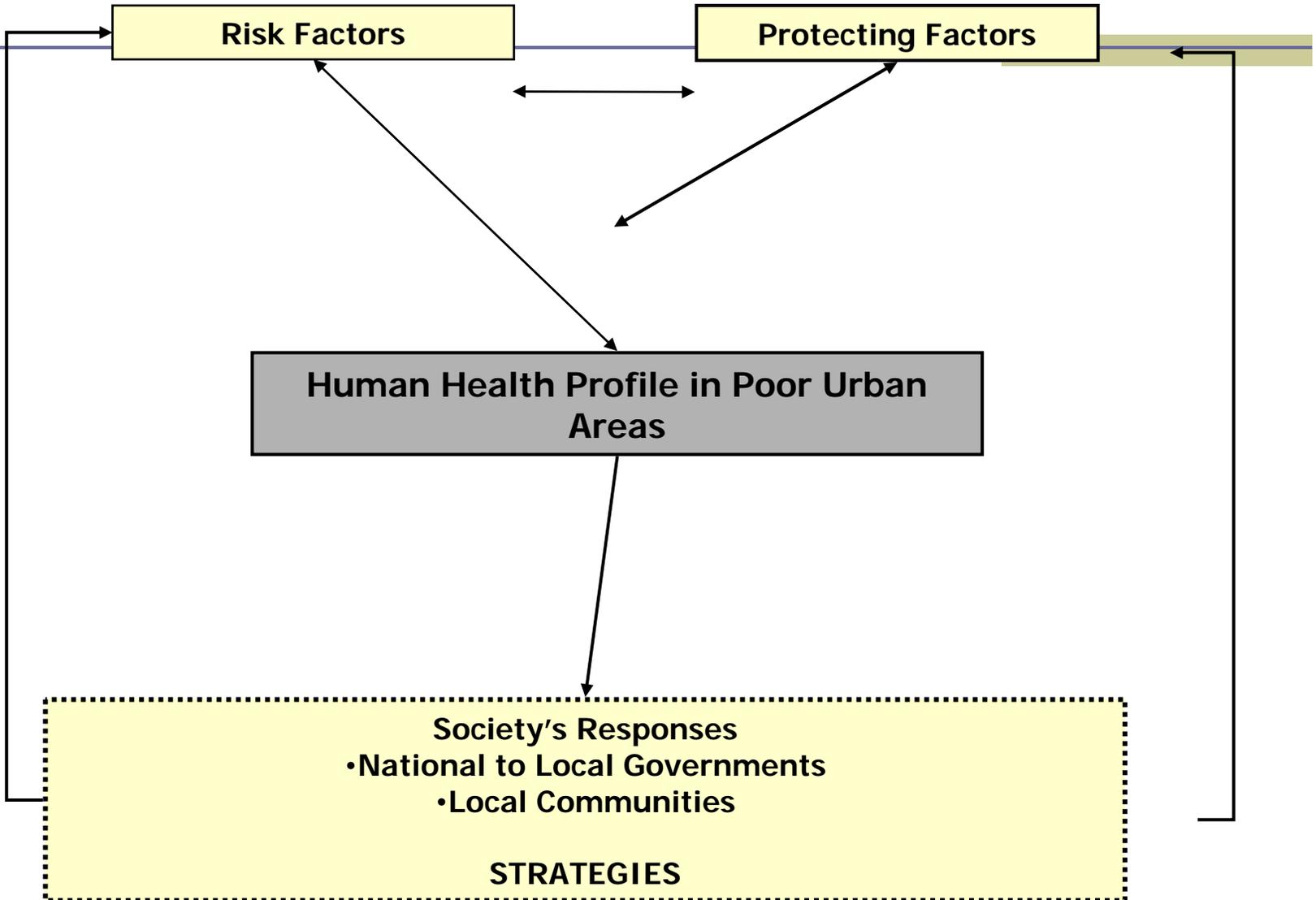
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# Sao Paulo

Tendency of poor urban settlements developing close to highly contaminated courses of water is highly visible, with health issues associated to this adjacency



# Health – Society Response Interactions





# ■ Conclusions

# River issues

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- Lack of integrated river management manifests lack of holistic / integrated urban planning
- Recommendation: Proactive policy alternatives that link health and poverty as related to water problems

# Health related measurements

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- Under reporting of water – related illnesses for the poor
- Recommendation: progress be pressed by analysis that confronts under reporting as well as unreliable official data

# Lack of Safe Water



# Lack of Tenure

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- Lack of safe water associated with informal property rights on land
- Progress is evident when tenure is secured
- Recommendation: move forward to more formal tenure situations leading for better water provision and sanitation

# Positive Experiences / Progress

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- Infrastructure programs in poor urban areas
- Community projects
- Health vigilance programs.

# General Conclusion

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- Health ecosystems interventions in rivers can have positive outcomes for health of urban poor in LAC.

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