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Collaboration to transform communities and improve our service

Key Levers

From the social area you coordinate in Colombia, you seek to strengthen collaboration and the bond between Aqualia and local communities. What approach do you follow for this?

At Aqualia, we aim to create deep and meaningful relationships with the community. To this end, we activate three complementary levers: comprehensive support, active listening, and awareness. We strive to ensure a constant presence in the community, not only through service provision but also in social, educational, cultural, and environmental areas. We want to ensure that needs are met holistically, and permanent support builds trust for this. We also promote open and constructive communication that makes people feel valued and allows us to design tailored actions.

At the same time, we work to raise awareness among local communities about the importance of good water use and other issues such as inclusion and respect. We are convinced that awareness is the engine that drives the gears of society and triggers the participation of all its members.

As a result of community participation, we can also identify improvements and achieve benefits for the whole society. In this, we have seen a clear difference compared to the situation before Aqualia's arrival: for example, in some areas, untreated water was consumed — with the consequent risk to public health

— and now this habit is disappearing thanks to the work done jointly.

Participation and Awareness

Through what means and actions do you work on citizen participation and awareness?

The activities we carry out are numerous and varied, depending on the objective we pursue. One of them is the organization of open forums for the community where people can express their opinions on important issues such as the environment, climate change, gender equality, human rights, or biodiversity.

Another valuable tool is education: we are present in schools with programs on water care and sanitation. Children and young people are also the protagonists of the digital drawing contest we promote to highlight the importance of water care.

We also promote tree planting activities in areas affected by biodiversity loss and citizen participation in projects through volunteering. One of these projects supports the training of women in recycling tasks through micro-enterprises.

Service Improvement

This work of dialogue and participation with the community also helps Aqualia improve the service. How? How would you define this impact?

Firstly, thanks to active listening and dialogue, we know firsthand the needs, expectations, and problems of the communities, with initiatives like 'Aqualia in your neighbourhood' as an example. In addition to helping improve our services, this allows us to anticipate possible incidents and be quicker and more effective in solving them.

Through community participation, we can detect situations that require our intervention, such as communes where access to water is not guaranteed, and it is children and women who are responsible for transporting it to their homes.

"With community participation, people feel valued, and Aqualia can identify improvements that benefit the whole society"

We are convinced that communication builds trust, and trust always improves relationships. For this, it is essential to have key contacts in these local communities and work hand in hand with organizations (government institutions, municipalities, women's secretariats, etc.) that know the area and work towards the same goals of well-being and economic development that we pursue at Aqualia.



Water Culture as a Common Good

What success story from the past year best exemplifies the importance of this work on the ground? What areas for improvement have you identified for the coming years?

The work on the ground, as we said, is the basis of trust. The communities already know us, they know how we get involved, and in case of service incidents, this prior relationship helps us avoid conflict situations that were more common before, especially in areas where vulnerable populations live.

On the other hand, we incorporate technology in the permanent monitoring of the service, and in this way, we can activate a crisis prevention plan as soon as we detect any problem in the distribution networks.

We are also taking steps to consolidate a culture of water as a common good. Awareness paves the way for communities to internalize the value and all that this resource means, so they themselves get involved in reporting situations where irresponsible use may occur.

All this —and this is the most important— leads to a positive impact on the transformation of the areas of the country where we operate. Water belongs to all of us, it is essential for social and economic development, and at Aqualia, we are managing to ensure equitable and sustainable distribution.