

Oregon Health & Science University  
School of Medicine

**Scholarly Projects Final Report**

**Title**

Proyecto Bienestar: What Wellness Means to the People of Alto Cayma, Peru, A Qualitative Study.

**Student Investigator's Name**

Amity Calvin

**Date of Submission**

12/18/20

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2021

**Project Course**

Scholarly Projects Curriculum

**Co-Investigators**

Karen Falkenstein, RN, MPH

Nursing and Evaluation Director, Health Bridges International Inc.

Wayne Centrone, MD, MPH

Executive Director, Health Bridges International Inc.

Rebecca Cantone, MD

Director of Student Education, OHSU Family Medicine

**Mentor's Name**

Rebecca Cantone

**Mentor's Department**

OHSU Family Medicine

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## Concentration Lead's Name

David Buckley

## Project/Research Questions

1. What themes emerge when the people of Alto Cayma, Peru discuss what wellness means to them?
2. Given a choice between six different categories of wellness (environmental, emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual), what do people in Alto Cayma identify as the most important?
3. What services or programs do the people of Alto Cayma wish could be implemented by community stakeholders such as governmental or non-governmental organizations, in order to improve their wellness?

## Type of Project

Exploratory qualitative project.

## Key words

Peru

Wellness

Well-being

Global Health

Rural

South America

Qualitative

## Meeting Presentations

n/a

## Publications

n/a

## Submission to Archive

n/a

## Next Steps

An alternative approach to the current study would be to use semi-structured interviews without providing prescribed types of wellness, to see what emerges without the priming bias of the graphics. Further studies are needed to explore other areas of Peru with open-ended approaches to defining wellness, to see what parallels or differences exist between rural/urban/mixed communities. Additionally, follow-up studies in Alto Cayma are needed to address how views of wellness have changed or not changed as a result of the COVID pandemic, in which Peru has been one of the hardest-hit nations in the world.

**Student's Signature/Date** *(Electronic signatures on this form are acceptable.)*

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*This report describes work that I conducted in the Scholarly Projects Curriculum or alternative academic program at the OHSU School of Medicine. By typing my signature below, I attest to its authenticity and originality and agree to submit it to the Archive.*

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's full name

December 18, 2020

## Mentor's Approval (Signature/date)

12/18/2020

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rebecca E Cantone MD

Mentor Name

Signed by: cantone@ohsu.edu

**Report:** *Information in the report should be consistent with the poster, but could include additional material. Insert text in the following sections targeting 1500-3000 words overall; include key figures and tables. Use Calibri 11-point font, single spaced and 1-inch margin; follow JAMA style conventions as detailed in the full instructions.*

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## Introduction (≥250 words)

Especially in the last decade, wellness and well-being have become buzzwords, woven into healthcare, education, and business.<sup>1</sup> This cultural attraction to wellness is reflected in published literature, all attempting to answer the question: what makes people well? Existing qualitative wellness studies tend to focus on students and employees, but very few have explored wellness at the residential community level. The subject of wellness in Peru is not well studied, apart from a 2008 book which identified key needs in seven poor communities in Central Peru.<sup>2</sup> The three key needs were: finding place to live better, building family, and progressing with security. The rural population of Peru is estimated at 6.7 million people, or 21.1% of the total population.<sup>3</sup> According to 2006 estimates, 44.5% of people living in Peruvian live in poverty, and the majority of this percentage live in rural settings.<sup>4</sup>

Our community of focus is Alto Cayma, in the Arequipa region of southern Peru. Alto Cayma has a population of 32,000 and is located 10km north of the center of Arequipa, the second-largest city in Peru.<sup>5</sup> Alto Cayma is positioned on the slope of the *Chachani* volcano and overlooks the city of Arequipa. The average reported income for people in Alto Cayma per day was 28.46 Peruvian Soles (less than \$10USD). Regarding access to basic services, most households (92.5%) have access to at least rudimentary electricity, and only 43.5% report having potable water in the home.<sup>5</sup> The community of Alto Cayma is significant for our study because it exists on a hypothetical dividing line between “urban” and “rural”, sandwiched between the city of Arequipa and the Andes mountain range. Most Alto Caymans arrived there from the high mountains in an effort to escape the difficulty of life in the Andes.<sup>5</sup> It is understood that governmental services are insufficient to meet the needs of the people of Alto Cayma, but it is not known to what extent. Alto Cayma social programs and services are primarily funded and operated by non-governmental organizations.<sup>6-8</sup>

The aims of this project were to identify themes among Alto Caymans’ perceptions of individual wellness, and explore the gaps that exist between governmental and non-governmental services and the stated priorities of wellness of the people. This project serves to inform community stakeholders, such as the municipality and local NGOs, of what services are desired by the people of Alto Cayma to enhance their perceived wellness. In developing countries such as Peru, there are few formal means for the government to contact its citizens who live in deep rural regions, and even impoverished communities such as Alto Cayma with geographic proximity to cities struggle to be heard by their governing structure. This study was designed to gather insight through conversation. Health Bridges International is a non-governmental organization based in Portland, Oregon and is the sponsoring organization for this study. Health Bridges has worked in Peru for over 23 years, creating collaborative projects, developing health programs, and connecting underserved communities to health resources.<sup>9</sup> The organization is seeking new ways to have a positive impact on Alto Cayma, and is moving their focus towards the exploration of wellness in this unique little community, with the goal of creating desired programs and services that reflect the values and priorities of its people.

### *Our research questions:*

1. What themes emerge when the people of Alto Cayma define and discuss their wellness?
2. How do Alto Caymans’ first responses when asked about their wellness compare with their responses to wellness questions throughout the rest of the interview?
3. What services or programs do the people of Alto Cayma wish could be implemented by community stakeholders such as governmental or non-governmental organizations, in order to improve their wellness?

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## Methods (≥250 words)

Participants were recruited from the community of Alto Cayma, Peru. Convenience sampling was employed, utilizing the existing relationship between Health Bridges International and Maria Valdivia, a highly trusted social worker in Alto Cayma. One-on-one interviews were held in various locations in Alto Cayma, with a total of 39 adults, 38 of whom identified as women, 1 as a man. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, with simultaneous translation by a certified interpreter. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in English following each session. Interviews began with open-ended questions regarding perceptions of wellness then transitioned to more structured questions regarding their top three choices of wellness category out of the suggested six types (environmental, emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual) as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Wellness Wheel, from Clark College's Healthy Penguin initiative. Source: <http://www.clark.edu/tlc/healthy-penguin/index.php>

Data was analyzed by coding for a conceptualization of underlying patterns and themes. Representative quotes for each sub-theme were identified and compiled into descriptive tables. Dedoose coding software was then employed to organize and code all interview transcripts for analysis.

The following sections for results and discussion are each separated into two parts. 'Part I: What Wellness Means' addresses the themes emerging from definitions and discussion of individual's current wellness. 'Part II: What Community Stakeholders Can Do' explores the responses of participants to our question "What kinds of programs or services would you like to see developed in your community, in the future, that would improve your [specific wellness type] wellness?"

## Results (≥500 words)

### Part I: What Wellness Means

Eight overarching themes emerged from the analysis of how the people of Alto Cayma define and think about the state of their own wellness, *su bienestar*. These themes include Self, Environment, Community, Religion, Basic Needs, Physical Health, Education and Family. Each theme and sub-theme, along with common topics within each sub-theme, and representative quotes for each, can be seen in Tables 1a and

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1b. Discussed below are the top four most prevalent themes.

Theme (N)	Topics Included	Quotes
<b>SELF</b>		
Emotional intelligence (48)	Self-development, managing interpersonal and family relationships, approach to obstacles, stress management	"If you're not well yourself, you're not going to find solutions for your problems. You won't be able to achieve the other wellnesses, you won't be able to socialize with other people, practice sports, you won't be feeling like studying. If I was in my own case not emotionally okay, I would not be able to do other things, even if they were small."
Self-advancement (14)	Desire to learn, professional growth, role models, personal achievement, motivations	"If you feel well and you have the knowledge of how to do things, I think you have a clear path to do things. Because if you want to do things but don't have the knowledge, or the skill, you won't be able to generate solutions for personal things or for work, if you want to have a professional career."
Hobbies (6)	Stress management, self-care, keeping busy	"When I have back pain, sometimes my neighbors ask me if I can knit something for them, and I don't want to, but at the same time I don't want to be lazy, I want to be active. And that's my life- I come here and continue knitting, and with that I distract myself from my pain. I have a good time, and I just get sleepy if I stay at home."
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>		
Outdoor environment (47)	Contamination, pollution, trash collection, poor quality dirt roads, stray dogs, greenery, recycling, health of the planet, respiratory health, community responsibility	"It is very important to have a good environment. There's so much pollution coming from the city, it is important to have trees because when they grow up they're going to produce oxygen, what we're going to breathe. Because that is going to affect the health of an individual. It's their health as well."
Gardening (15)	Planting trees in public spaces, plants and gardens at home	"In my case, I was one of the first women here to plant trees around the place next to here. They're growing big now, and others have seen that, and now there are a lot of people planting trees. And that is something that I am happy that I helped to start. In five years, you'll find more trees in a green area."
Indoor environment (9)	Importance of cleanliness, personal space	"It's necessary to be clean, it's okay to be poor but not dirty. Poverty doesn't mean dirtiness. We need to maintain the house always clean. We have to clean ourselves, or we get sick."
<b>COMMUNITY</b>		
Community relationships (39)	Communication, supporting others, building trust, seeking advice, being heard	"It's important to communicate, converse, whatever thing you can share with others with trust, advice, right? Many times we don't do it because we're afraid, there's no trust. But little by little we're improving it. So we can have more work too, when you have trusting relationships in your community." "When you socialize with others, you can share ideas, which gives you a better idea of how to improve, how to improve our houses, our neighborhoods."
Community service (12)	Helping others, collective efforts towards common goals, reaching out	"You need to love yourself, so in that way you can help others. You need to love your neighbors. Continue helping people, especially here in Alto Cayma that need a lot of help, in this neighborhood. They need a lot of help. That's what I think we need to do, maybe find a family that needs help, not only economical help, but in other ways too."
Social activities (12)	Sharing ideas, gathering spaces, keeping busy, stress management	"When we are able to talk to other people, we can learn new things. When you are apart from people, you don't get to learn from them. We all have different ideas, and I've tried some other ideas and sometimes they work."
<b>RELIGION</b>		
Relationship with God (43)	Prayer, reading the bible, attending mass or bible groups	"There are so many things happening in the world now, and sometimes, there's no trust in anyone. So then, we need to know, and get closer to the Lord."
Sharing the word of God (17)	Increasing the community of faith	"There are many people who don't know about God, they don't go to mass, so we need to encourage them. It would be good for people to go visit people in their houses because maybe they wouldn't go by themselves to the church."

Table 1a. The first four most predominant themes out of eight in descending order of total code frequencies (N = frequency of the sub-theme), that explore how the people of Alto Cayma define and discuss their wellness.

**Self.** The process of introspection, problem-solving, and self-development were predominant topics within this theme, as many participants regard the solutions to difficulties in their lives to lie within themselves.

Sub-theme 1: Emotional intelligence- this refers to the practice of understanding one's emotional state in reference to their context, with the goal of managing emotions so that the stressors of daily life and relationships do not become overwhelming.

Sub-theme 2: Self-advancement- this refers to participants' desire to learn and grow and achieve their personal and/or professional goals. Several participants discussed the value of motivation, both from self and others.

Sub-theme 3: Hobbies- this refers to the practice of engaging in activities that make individuals feel good and help them re-center in times of difficulty.

**Environment.** The environment is clearly a priority in order to achieve wellness at all levels, for self, family,

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and community, because it is a well-known focal point of distress in the geographic area of Alto Cayma.

Sub-theme 1: Outdoor environment- this refers to the general pollution, trash in the streets, poorly maintained dirt roads that exacerbate respiratory conditions, and lack of greenery in the entirety of Alto Cayma.

Sub-theme 2: Gardening- this refers to participants' desire to plant greenery in both public spaces and around the home, and the pride taken in this act.

Sub-theme 3: Indoor environment- this refers to the desire for cleanliness in and around the home of participants.

**Community.** This third theme centers on the experience of living in harmony with non-family members.

Sub-theme 1: Community relationships- this refers to the development and maintenance of the network of interpersonal bonds that create a tight-knit community.

Sub-theme 2: Community service- this refers to participants' desires to help others, particularly those who are less able to care for themselves, or those who are isolated from resources by distance.

Sub-theme 3: Social activities- this refers to participants' engagement in activities with members of their community as a means of strengthening the interconnectedness of their community.

**Religion.** This fourth theme centers on the spiritual beliefs of the participants.

Sub-theme 1: Relationship with God- this refers to participants' expressions of closeness with God and the importance of that personal relationship to them, in order to overcome difficulties.

Sub-theme 2: Sharing the word of God- this refers to participants' will to increase the community of faith by talking with others directly, often expressing a degree of urgency.

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Theme (N)	Topics Included	Quotes
<b>BASIC NEEDS</b>		
Access to water (21)	Scarcity of water, bureaucratic obstacles	"Unfortunately, there is no water. You have to choose between watering the plant or cooking. Sometimes I have to decide between washing my child and cooking that day. That's how it is."
Safety and security (15)	Youth delinquency, substance use disorders, sexual violence, robbery, homicide, absence of police	"Sometimes in the neighborhood there's a lot of violence, but we don't speak of it, and the ones who pay are the kids. This is what I would like to change, that the authorities see this. The authorities delay a lot, and that's not justice."
Financial security (12)	Steady paycheck, financial independence, scarcity of job opportunities	"There's no work and without work you can't eat well, and there are so many kids to take care of. And many times the kids when they grow up can't help much because they also don't have work. So no one succeeds. Everything is about money, and without money, you can't do much."
<b>PHYSICAL HEALTH</b>		
Nutrition (16)	Balanced diet, avoiding junk foods, scarcity of affordable healthy food	"Food is the root of everything. If we don't have healthy food, then we are going to eat whatever is available, even if it isn't healthy."
Physical activity (15)	Keeping youth busy, stress management, community events, group exercises	"Physical activity is very important because when I feel a little bad, I do exercises, I dance, I do yoga, and with those I feel good, and for me that's enough."
Illness prevention (12)	Avoid seeking healthcare due to distance and cost, inadequate health insurance	"People with low income that aren't able to bring their relatives to good clinics, it is important for them to take good care of themselves more than others with plenty of resources."
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Access to education (11)	Distance to schools, inadequate transportation, poor roads, lack of libraries	"There needs to be more cars that come to the smaller towns, always the kids continue suffering because for school they have to go to the center [of the city]."
Adult education (10)	Desire to learn, keeping busy, sharing knowledge, educational talks, self-advancement	"There are some programs like English classes, or classes to learn how to knit, so I try to participate in those programs, so I can learn a little bit more. I would like to learn a little bit of everything, especially if there's something I don't know."
Youth education (9)	High drop-out rate in secondary school, poor quality education, high youth pregnancy rate, lack of at-home educational resources	"The kids now, are fourteen or fifteen years old with kids, they're already pregnant, and the father leaves, and has another partner, and has more kids...that's not life. We need to teach and help the youth, to avoid delinquency and pregnancy. You need to work with the youth, because it's difficult to change older people."
<b>FAMILY</b>		
Family harmony (18)	Happiness in family unit, collective achievement, cooperation, stress management, marital problems	"When we are able to solve problems within a family, when we encourage communication. To start with ourselves, try to improve the areas that need improvement."
Parenting (10)	Teaching values, how to contribute to society	"Education of my children, to take care of them, so they can have good education, clean environment, teach them about respect, honesty, responsibility, that would be wellness for my family."

Table 1b. The last four most predominant themes out of eight in descending order of total code frequencies (N = frequency of the sub-theme), that explore how the people of Alto Cayma define and discuss their wellness.

## First Thoughts

Using solely the responses to our first interview question, *what are the first thoughts that come to your mind when you think about 'wellness'?* we ran a Code Frequency analysis, to see if it differed from the remainder of the interviews. As seen in Figure 2, we found that the order of most prevalent themes is drastically different than can be seen in Tables 1a and 1b. The top three most prevalent themes from our first question alone become Community, Family, and Basic Needs. The themes Self and Environment, which predominate the collective body of interviews, are much less prevalent.



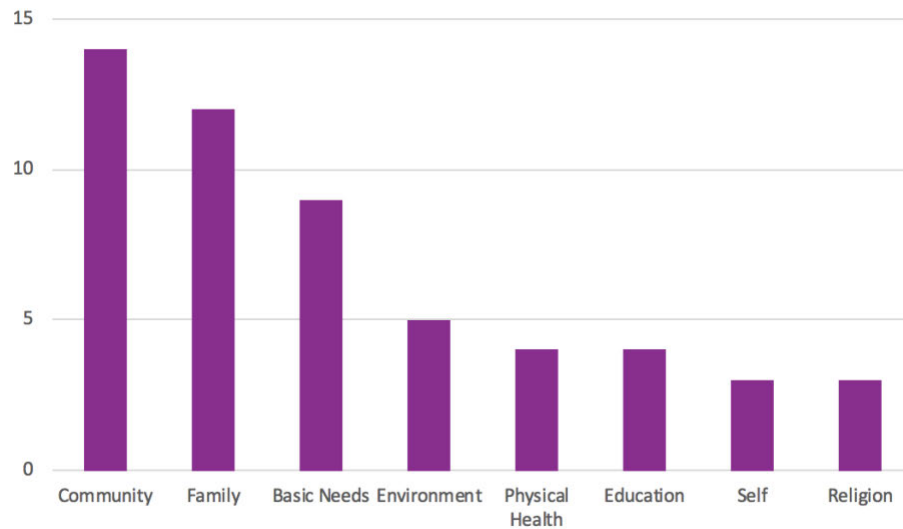


Figure 2. Frequency of themes from participants' responses to our first question only: What are the first thoughts that come to your mind when you think about 'wellness'?

## Part II: What Community Stakeholders Can Do

### *Emerging Themes*

Six overarching themes emerged from the analysis of what the people of Alto Cayma identify as unfulfilled needs that could improve their wellness. These themes include Educational Advancement, Health Services, Group Gathering, Community Recreation, Gardening, and Youth Groups (Table 2).

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Theme (N)	Topics Included	Quotes
<b>EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT</b>		
Topics for education (37)	Workshop ideas	Workshop ideas include: wellness, environmental programs, gardening, recycling, goal-setting, self-development, emotional health, intimacy and sex, birth control, family planning, masculinity, parenting, technical skills, sewing/knitting, crafting, cosmetology, cooking, nutrition, language
<b>HEALTH SERVICES</b>		
Health post (11)	More affordable healthcare, improved transportation to healthcare	"It would be good to have a health center that is affordable, because a lot of people go to health centers that are free. But you have to wait a long time. If you have to pay, people usually don't go and they just bear the pain because they don't have the money."
Mental health services (11)	More mental health services, services for family violence, support groups, stress management	"It would be good to have psychological help or guidance. Especially family violence, it is important to have talks about that, therapy about that. If we have mental health centers, therapists, psychologists, I think it will lessen those problems. Because it is a disease, to be surrounded by violence. But to fight that we will need to be mentally healthy."
<b>GROUP GATHERINGS</b>		
Spiritual gathering (9)	Group discussions	"It would be good to have bible study groups so everyone who is interested can come. It's beautiful, to talk about the word of God."
Social gathering (8)	More social gathering spaces, expanding the reach of the church, sharing ideas, working in groups	"I think we should have more talks, for those people who don't socialize as much. Groups for women, where they share ideas, where they learn how to bake. It would be good to have them, so people can gather, share, exchange ideas."
<b>COMMUNITY RECREATION</b>		
Youth recreation programs (9)	Youth center, increasing safe recreational spaces, youth sports, group activities	"It would be good to have classes for sports. My kids love sports. Maybe we could have groups where we could do different activities. Maybe a space where kids can play, have a court or green area, so they could do different games, and that way work more with children."
Community events (5)	Organized sports/competitions, community entertainment, family involvement, exercise classes	"The municipality used to have these games, or activities they'd organize in neighborhoods. I would like for those to happen again. There were different competitions, with biking, things like that. They were good for distracting the mind. Also to spend time with family."
<b>GARDENING</b>		
Gardening programs (11)	Planting in public spaces, greenhouses, organized gardening groups, gardening education	"Teach people how to take care of plants, how to plant them, water them appropriately. Like kids, it's necessary to learn how to feed them properly, how to dress them, and plants as well."
<b>YOUTH GROUPS</b>		
Youth guidance counseling (6)	More youth mental health services, addiction/violence services, support groups, therapy	"I would like a center of psychologists for the youth because the youth right now are totally involved in delinquency, addiction, the internet."
Youth academic support (3)	Youth center, pre-university preparation classes, technical skills classes, summer school	"It would be good to have recreational centers for young people so they can have access to different courses or trainings, and learn different skills. Especially here because there's so much poverty they can't go to school. It would be good for the government to invest in young people and women's education."

Table 2. The predominant six themes in descending order of total code frequencies (N = frequency of the sub-theme), including sub-themes, that explore what the people of Alto Cayma identify as unfulfilled needs that could improve their wellness.

**Educational Advancement.** When asked what could be added to Alto Cayma, 24 of 39 participants suggested education, most often in the form of a workshop.

Sub-theme 1: Topics for education- Topic ideas included: wellness, environmental programs, recycling, goal-setting, self-development, emotional health, intimacy and sex, birth control, masculinity, parenting, technical skills, sewing/knitting, cosmetology, nutrition, and language.

**Health Services.** This second theme centers on the expressed frustration of accessing healthcare, made difficult by the severe scarcity of healthcare centers in Alto Cayma.

Sub-theme 1: Health post- this refers to the participants' appeal for healthcare services that are both affordable and accessible.

Sub-theme 2: Mental health services- this refers to the participants' hope for mental health services, which are even more scarce than health posts.

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## Discussion (≥500 words)

This research explores the perceptions of the meaning of wellness by the people of Alto Cayma, Peru, and their recommendations to community stakeholders for programs and services that could improve their wellness. We found that the key overall components of wellness for our participants are self, environment, community, religion, basic needs, physical health, education, and family. Within these general concepts, the most prevalent ideas were emotional intelligence, outdoor environment, relationship with God, and community relationships. When comparing participants' initial responses when asked what wellness means to them, and the remainder of their interviews, we found an interesting duality of individualism and collectivism. In examining participants' stated ranking of wellness category by importance, we found an incongruence regarding the category of Spiritual wellness, which was ranked as number one by the majority of participants. The concept of religion was discussed relatively infrequently compared to the concepts of self, environment, and community, which suggests that spiritual wellness may not be as subconsciously important to the people as they consciously believe it to be, when compared with the other components of their wellness. Finally, we found that what is desired by the people of Alto Cayma to improve their wellness falls into the following categories: educational advancement, health services, group gatherings, community recreation, gardening, and youth groups.

### Part I: What Wellness Means

The most important sub-themes were revealed to be emotional intelligence, outdoor environment, relationship with God, and community relationships, which align with the four most important overall themes of self, environment, community and religion. In comparing these themes with existing literature, we find that Alto Cayma has a unique perspective. Findings in Central Peru, per J. Copestake's 2008 book, *"Wellbeing and Development in Peru"*, indicate that well-being is centered around three focal needs: "to find a place to live better, to build a family, and to progress with security".<sup>2</sup> The idea of progressing with security is the most relevant need compared to our study, in that both financial security and physical safety were discussed as part of the concept of fulfilling basic needs. Finding a place to live better was not at all mentioned- most talked about improving their current home as opposed to a desire to relocate. Regarding building a family, many Alto Caymans indicated that their families are already built and their goal is to simply maintain them, or help young people avoid building families so quickly, in order to have more time for self-development.

The first responses of participants to the question *"what are the first thoughts that come to your mind when you think of wellness"* display a leaning towards collectivism and the idea of community over self, with the concepts of community and family predominating, and the concept of self being last and only mentioned in three of 39 first responses. This is in contrast to the rest of their interview responses, in which the concept of self is most predominant, indicating a leaning towards individualism. Latin America is traditionally thought of as endorsing values of collectivism<sup>10</sup>, and yet our research suggests that individualistic values have been infused into the community, possibly a result of the intensifying of global connection by means of the internet. Jennifer Fricas spoke of the *"cosmovision Andina"* (relating to the Andes mountains) as being very collectivist, centering on the *"individual-in-community"* with the principal goal of fulfilling community needs.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the collectivist approach of a high Andean community may serve people well in Alto Cayma, even as they're exploring more individualist ideas of the self, self-growth, development, and personal success.

### Part II: What Community Stakeholders Can Do

Our findings suggest that the wellness of the people of Alto Cayma would benefit from the following from community stakeholders such as governmental and non-governmental organizations: educational

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advancement, health services, group gatherings, community recreation, gardening, and youth groups. Regarding Educational Advancement, it was surprising that workshop ideas were so prevalent, and by far the most commonly identified need, requested by 24 of 39 participants. This indicates a thirst in the Alto Cayma community for expanding one's mind and skill sets, a desire to work, learn, and grow together. May also indicate that a significant amount of boredom characterizes day to day life in Alto Cayma- as the ideas of "getting out of the house" and having "something to do" were prominent rationale for wanting workshops. Regarding Health Services, participants' desire for accessible and affordable health care was a sad though unsurprising finding, as a prior needs assessment performed by Health Bridges International<sup>17</sup> had found that 81% of survey respondents had needed to see a healthcare provider but were unable to access a clinic or hospital, most often due to financial barriers. The explicit request for mental health services was more surprising, given that we'd expected more of a stigma towards seeking help for mental health problems.

### Limitations

A limitation of the study is the nature of the specific Wellness Wheel that was shown to participants in the interview, the categories of which were used in gathering our quantitative data. This particular wheel was selected because it utilized most of the categories we were interested in knowing about (Emotional, Intellectual, Physical, Social, Spiritual, and Environmental) while using pictographs that were the least biased towards first-world countries. However these pictographs may have swayed people's perceptions of what each type of wellness could include- for example, the pictograph representing Physical Wellness is a basketball, which could have biased our participants' responses towards physical activity and exercise, as opposed to nutrition and illness. Another limitation is the predominance of women participants; however this was difficult to account for given that the majority of men in Alto Cayma work or seek work during all daylight hours.

### Recommendations

An alternative approach to the current study would be to use semi-structured interviews without providing a wellness wheel graphic, to see what emerges without the priming bias of the graphics. Further studies are needed to explore other areas of Peru with open-ended approaches to defining wellness, to see what parallels or differences exist between rural/urban/mixed communities. Additionally, follow-up studies in Alto Cayma are needed to address how views of wellness have changed or not changed as a result of the COVID pandemic, in which Peru has been one of the hardest-hit nations in the world. As of December 2020, Peru had a COVID case-fatality of 3.7%, one of the highest global rates, and had lost over 37,000 people to the virus (114 per 100K population).<sup>12</sup>

### Conclusions *(2-3 summary sentences)*

Wellness for Alto Caymans is the individual's perception of their lived experience, with emphasis on their current state, in the context of their existence as a unique self, the physical environment they occupy, the community in which they live and engage, the fulfillment of their basic needs, the condition of their body health, their opportunities for education, and the togetherness of their family.

To improve the wellness of the people of Alto Cayma, community stakeholders such as governmental and non-governmental organizations are advised to invest in educational advancement opportunities for all age groups, more accessible and affordable health and mental health services, spaces for adult gatherings, organized community recreation, gardening programs, and spaces meant for young people to gather, share, and learn.

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The people of Alto Cayma demonstrate both collectivist and individualist leanings- their instinctual thoughts of wellness tend to focus on the experience of the larger community, while they overall speak more effusively of individual priorities in their interviews.

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