

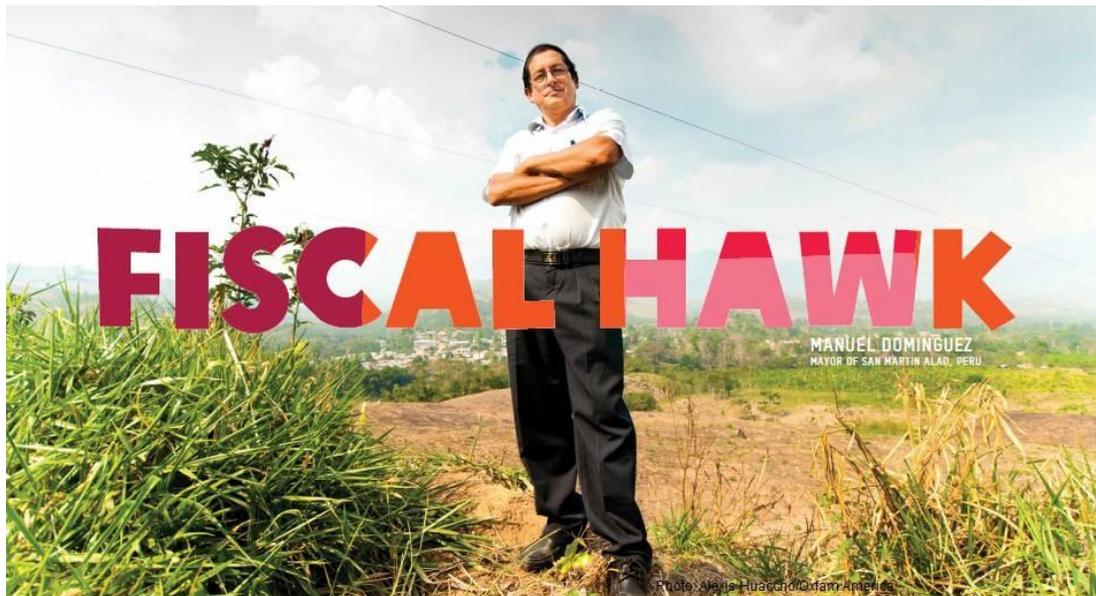
# Fiscal Hawk: Manuel Dominguez

Mayor Manuel Dominguez is leveraging a tiny investment of US foreign aid to budget for a sound future for his community.

US foreign aid works best as a tool in the hands of the right local leaders—those trying to solve their own problems in their own nations and neighborhoods.

What comes to mind when you picture the Amazon forest—dense, lush, green... garbage?

As mayor of San Martin Alao in northern Peru, Manuel Dominguez had been trying for years to access funds from the Peruvian government to deal with the increasing piles of trash. A mountain of waste was rising as his town grew, actually obstructing views of the forest.



While Dominguez was fully committed to using his limited city budget as best as he could to tackle the problem, it was not until USAID began providing technical assistance to the Peruvian Ministry of Environment, that Dominguez succeeded getting significant funds from his government, through the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

It had been difficult for the Ministry of Environment to ensure that municipalities had a comprehensive approach to waste management beyond garbage collection or that they had selected appropriate types of technology for population levels. The Ministry of Economy and Finance was reluctant to fund local projects that didn't meet their stiff financial and technical requirements, despite political pressure to place more public investments in provinces outside the capital city of Lima. Municipalities needed increased funding levels to make significant improvements in waste management, but required technical training on project development to access the funds.

“We jumped off our seats when the proposal had been approved!” Mayor Dominguez says. “For the first time, we were able to make [a] quality public investment of this size in San Martin Alao.”

With USAID support, the Ministry of Environment was able to address these core issues by delivering trainings for local officials. The Ministry of Economy and Finance was then comfortable releasing funds aimed at solving the problem of local waste management to San Martin Alao and other municipalities. Dominguez and his staff at San Martin Alao were only a few of the 1,500 local officials across four of the poorest regions of the country who benefited from a multi-month training series, mentoring, and hands-on tools. Dominguez is now able to lead his town to collect, treat and dispose of solid waste, according to sound environmental standards.

“What the USAID partnership allowed us to do was to bring together all these different needs, actors, and resources at national, regional and local levels, which already existed in Peru, to solve a shared problem,” says Rosa Salas, director of the project at the Peruvian Ministry of Environment. Salas joined forces with Magda Ushiñahua, a counterpart at the Peruvian Ministry of Economy and Finance, to bring about the changes. Peruvian taxpayer money has now been allocated for 127 municipalities to participate, benefitting an expected 5.65 million people. Previously these municipalities were neglected before the government started pushing more funds out to the provinces. But when the decentralization process began and deepened, Peruvian local civic leaders gained a greater opportunity to unlock domestic resources to protect the health and well-being of their citizens and the surrounding Amazon.



Manuel Dominguez,  
Mayor of San Martin Alao, Peru

“My people and I can stop pollution in our district. We just needed a partner. We know how to get it done,” Dominguez says.

“It’s up to us now. This investment will help us get there.”

In recent years, the US government launched policy reforms that make US foreign aid more accountable to you, US taxpayers, and local leaders like Manuel Dominguez.

Aid works best when it supports local actors to take action and change the circumstances. Supporting effective aid now reduces the need for more aid later.

That’s why Oxfam America is working to deepen the US government’s commitment to making aid more effective.

**Tell Congress: Don’t cut aid. Put more power in the hands of people like Manuel Dominguez.**

Read more stories at: [www.oxfamamerica.org/aidworks/](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/aidworks/)

### Foreign Aid Fact or Fiction?

**Myth:** Providing aid just lets recipient governments off the hook.

**Results:** Donors can provide aid in ways that hold country governments accountable for doing their share. For example, as donors gave more direct support the Rwandan government, it increased its domestic spending in health, while simultaneously decreasing defense spending.

After receiving direct support, the countries of Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Uganda, and Vietnam also have all scaled up social service delivery.

*From Oxfam publication, “Foreign Aid 101”*



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