

Institucional Profile





Who we are?

The **Asociación de Mujeres Rurales del Uruguay, AMRU (Uruguayan Rural Women Association)**, is a NGO which was founded the **23rd of September of 1994** with 64 rural women groups, and up to August 2002 is integrated with **1.700 women** grouped in **178 groups** around the whole country. Taking into consideration that they have families, we can say that direct beneficiaries are approximately 10.000 people.

Despite the fact that the greatest majority of women grouped in AMRU are different because they live in diverse parts of the country and are related to specific productions - such as sheep farms, dairy farms, fruit farms - they share three conditions as a common denominator: they are women, they are rural women, and they also are small growers or rural workers.

In a country that is highly urbanized and where only the 8% of its 3:200.000 citizens live in rural areas, the Association becomes a reference of national importance.

Some of the groups that belong to AMRU develop social activities, working in their rural areas to improve aspects related to education, health and rural buildings, among others. The majority of the groups have developed productive activities – pickles, cheese, honey, arts and crafts, knitting – with the aim of increase their families low incomes.

In a country that lives under an economical crisis because there is no profitability and the rural sector has a great debt, a challenge was born in order to face, under a collective way, the production and commercialization of produces in 2001 when the common brand of AMRU: **“Delicias Criollas”** was created. In 2004 the commercial structure was created under the same name. The cooperative looks for the consolidation of an image that associates quality and warmth, giving guarantee of groups’ products and contributing to the country culture.



What do we want TO BE?

VISION: “To be a leader and self supporting organization, and to become a reference of regional rural women”



What do we want TO DO?

MISION: “To promote changing agents form the developing capacities under an individual and collective integral process of training in order to affect public policies”

Which are our objectives?

TO IMPROVE LIFE QUALITY OF RURAL FAMILY; SPECIALLY THAT OF RURAL WOMEN

- To defend rural family rooting and to attend its social and cultural problems, in order to find more space for the participation and appraisal of rural women roll.
- To promote and consolidate productive micro companies
- To consolidate a "Commercialization Net"
- To foment the interchange of information, experiences and good practices and the collaboration and coordination for programming collective activities of cooperation with similar Latin America and Caribbean organizations.

AMRU coordinates different public and private supports, both national and international, in order to optimize the results and not to overlap efforts and resources. We look for, in both the middle and the long term, an institutional self-supporting. For this, it is fundamental that the productive groups that belong to AMRU, can be consolidated as true micro companies that will both: help with the incomes of the small rural family and to afford the finances of the institution.

Why was AMRU created?










Because we need to:

- Build a valid tool that allow Rural Women, considering unity and solidarity, to increase the potency of their efforts, ensure their active and permanent role and to solve the strong restrictions that exist nowadays to obtain their complete development in harmony with their family and community.
- Integrate a process of integral development, in which gender, rural family, poverty, social and production aspects are so connected that would be indivisible. The strategy is to make an integral work. It is so important for women to be appraised, to have the social legitimacy when earning money, as to work for long hours just to make possible that they and their children can live in the countryside. The necessity of generating complementary incomes in order to overcome poverty is as strong as the necessity of socialization, which is a consequence of the isolation they live.

The strategy is to permanently look for the **creation and consolidation of an institutional space that belongs to rural women**, as a "tool" to promote individual and group capacities, and to reach the self-esteem and the latent and potential development.

Principles

A serial of **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**, approved by each woman in AMRU and its working staff last September 2006, rules the thinking and conduct to function properly and contribute to the achievement of institutional vision and mission.

-  To promote **equity** specially gender one, as basis to social inclusion.
-  To be coherent amongst what I think, say and do.
-  **Respect and open minded** to accept us just how we are, in agreement or disagreement, without discriminating or discrediting others.
-  To contribute to form independent, creative and critic sense people generating an active leadership in the development process.
-  To authentically express opinions where and when is more suitable.
-  To prioritize the **commitment for the collective interests and solidarity** as a frame for the individual development, deepen the identity and the sense of belonging: "Women associated in AMRU".
-  To assure the compliment of **control** mechanisms established to guarantee total **transparency** when managing economical sources.
-  The **articulation** with others in order to optimize and sum results.
-  The **environment defense** as a way to contribute to a sustainable future.

Origins and Foundation

The first groups, located in the northeast of Canelones, were formed in 1985.

After that, other groups were founded in the south part of the country, with the support of different NGO and Institutions, among which we can name Comisión Nacional de Fomento Rural (C.N.F.R.) and the Junta Nacional de la Granja (JU.NA.GRA - MGA y P) in the frame of reference with GTZ (German Cooperation Organism).

Because we want to live in the Countryside...

The **23rd of September of 1994, in Paso de los Toros, in the department of Tacuarembó**, it is founded the Asociación de Mujeres Rurales del Uruguay - A.M.R.U. -, as a Civil Association with no lucrative aims, with 64 groups from 11 of the 19 departments that exist in Uruguay.

In the frame of reference of the "Small Producer Support Program" (Agriculture Ministry- FIDA), it was possible to realize an important enforcement work for the groups and the institution.

Up to now AMRU continues growing as a consequence of the deepen coordination with diverse actors.

Which are the requisites to integrate AMRU?

- Be part of a group.
- That the majority of the people in the group live or work in the countryside
- If groups are mixed, as it happens with family groups, woman must be the reference in AMRU
- Follow the principles, procedures and requirements established in the regulation.
- Contribute with the social share

Developmental Axes and Strategies

The Association was created in order to have a collective tool, that allows rural women, potentate their capabilities, assure their active and permanent leadership and solve the strong restrictions to obtain maximum development in harmony with family and community.

Since its origins, a participative, dynamic and integral process was generated, in which gender, rural family, poverty, social and production aspects are so connected that would be indivisible. It is so important for women to be appraised, to have the social legitimacy when "earning money", as to work for long hours just to make possible that they and their children can live in the countryside. The necessity of generating complementary incomes in order to overcome poverty is as strong as the necessity of socialization, which is a consequence of the isolation they live

A progressive spiral up process has been built; it is principally sustained over four main axes, different in development, linked and feed back among them, supported in a serial of strategies that are formally stated or not.

Because we want to live in the Countryside...

STRATEGIES

Integral training
in response to
demands.

The group as an
action and
identification
space.

Permanent
promotion of
participation.

Alliances
construction and
mobilization of
sources from
others.

Strengthening of
local leaderships.

Articulation of a
training process
considering the
collective project.

AXES

From the association
to individual and
collective power

From the
construction of
women autonomy to
a gender sight

From the family
position to the public
position

From the traditional
knowledge to a
collective project of
integral quality

Because we want to live in the Countryside...

How do we organize?

AMRU is integrated by 6 regions, formed by departments:

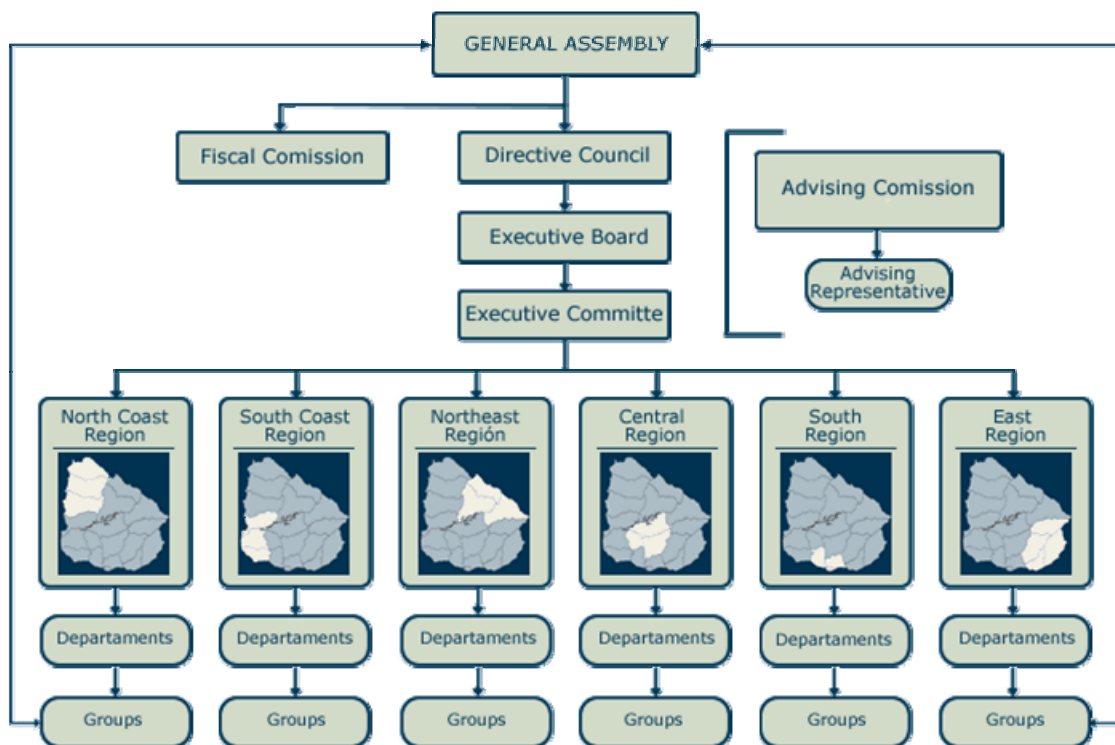
- **North Coast Region** (departments: Artigas, Salto y Paysandú)
- **Northeast Region** (departments: Rivera, Tacuarembó y Cerro Largo)
- **Central Region** (departments: Durazno, Flores y Florida)
- **South Coast Region** (departments: Río Negro, Soriano y Colonia)
- **South Region** (departments: Canelones, San José y Montevideo Rural)
- **East Region** (departments: Rocha, Maldonado, Treinta y Tres y Lavalleja)



Institutional Organs

- **Assembly**, integrated by representatives from the groups associated
- **National Directive Council**, integrated by 19 representatives, one from each department, and their substitutes all of them elected by the groups.
- **Executive Board**, integrated by 6 regional representatives, from this organ are elected: Association President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer.
- **Executive Committee**, formed by the President, Secretary and Treasurer
- **Advising Commission**, formed by national leaders with a large experience in the Association it is an advisory organ. This Commission names a representative that works in the institution and shares the daily routine.

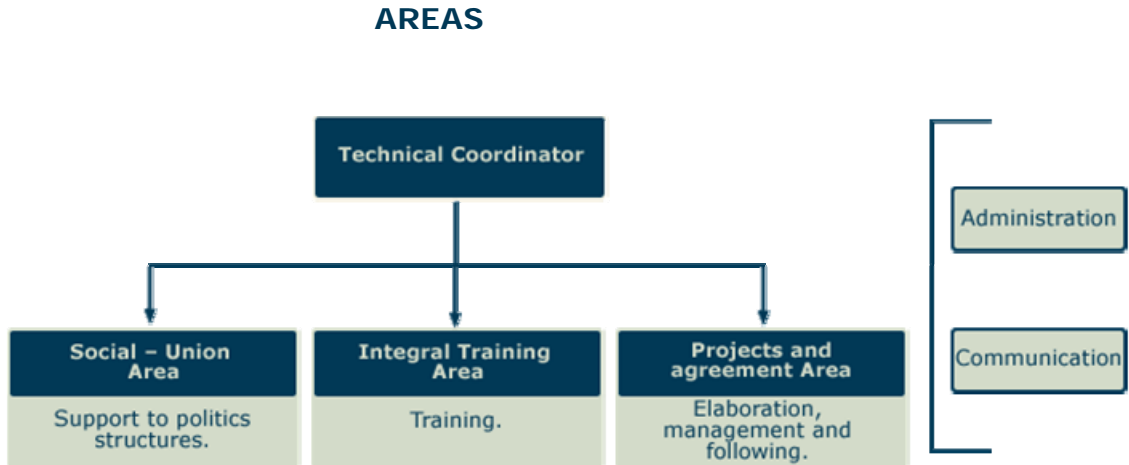
ORGANIZATION CHART





Working areas

We have 3 main working areas and 2 sub areas:



Social – Union Area

- **Politics organs work:** Assembly, meetings of the National Directive Council, Executive Board meetings, Advising Commission meetings and seminars, visits along the country, national and international representation
- **Recovery of rural life:** proposals' generation and developmental alternatives
- **Visualization of Rural Women Role in the countryside**
- **Spaces for socialization and interchange between associates:** interchange's meetings, seminars, recreation activities, dynamic group.
- **Policy Incidence** Elaboration and following to policies proposals presented by AMRU "Public Policies for Rural Women: an ethical commitment and a political need"
- **Decentralization Process:** Pilot experiences ofr decentralization in the north and south of the country
- Credit Rotation Funds:** directed to invest in little enterprises and operation. It offers an account and administration support for the loans management and following.
- Coordination with similar organizations in Latin America:** seminars, interchange meetings, working activities

Integral Training Area

- **Integral training:** AMRU gives diverse seminars: admission workshops, identity and belonging workshops, leaders strengthening, policy incidence, gender, production, computing, etc.
- **Give training a professional status** : With CINTERFOR support we are working in a process of the integral training as an answer to the certification relevance of non formal education.

Projects and Agreements Area

- **Resources administration and management:** elaboration, management and following of projects, proposals and working agreements
- **Work cooperation with national, international, private or public organisms and institutions:** Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria – INIA (National Agricultural Research Center), Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay, LATU (Uruguayan Technological Laboratory), Universidad de la República (Republic University, specially Agronomy, Chemistry and Engineering Faculties) Junta Nacional de Empleo, JUNAE (National Employment Organism), DINAPYME (National Organism for Medium and Small Enterprises), “Todos por Uruguay”, (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, MTSS (Social Security and Work Ministry), Oficina de Planeamiento y Presupuesto, OPP (Planning and Budget Office), Uruguay Rural- MGAP- FIDA (Agriculture Ministry), Comisión de Género y Equidad bicameral (Gender and Equity Commission), MEVIR, Instituto de las Mujeres del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (Women Institute from the Developing and Social Ministry), Corporación Nacional para el Desarrollo (National Development Corporation), Banco de Previsión Social (Welfare and Social Bank), Cities Council and Local Meetings, Comisión de Seguimiento de los Acuerdos de Beijing, Fundación Friedich Ebert (FESUR), OEA, CINTERFOR-BID/OIT, AGRITERRA, Ashoka, the Netherland, British, Australian, Canadian and American Embassies, Canadian Found, Producers Organizations of Latin America and all over the world, Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Agricultores Familiares del MERCOSUR (MERCOSUR Organization of Family Producers), Reunión Especializada de Agricultura Familiar del MERCOSUR (Specialized Meeting of Family Agriculture), Federación Internacional de Productores Agrícolas (International Federation of Agricultural Producers), etc.

Communication sub area:

- Internal and external diffusion, through **"AMRU informa"**, institutional bulletin monthly published directed to AMRU groups, Organisms and Institutions; press conferences, active participation in the media.
- **0800** a free line in order that all the associates all over the country can phone to our office with no cost.
- **Web page:** The Association has a web page which is permanently up dated: www.amru.org and we also have a web page for our common brand "Delicias Criollas": www.deliciascriollas.org.
- Active participation in the media.

Administration sub area:

- Secretary and finances.

International links:

Integrating nets:










- ✓ In the **regional** ambit, AMRU is a membership of **COPROFAM**, the MERCOSUR family agriculture coordination, since 2004. And it also participates since its creation in **REAF**, the specialized meeting of family agriculture from MERCOSUR governments.
- ✓ At international level since 2005, AMRU is a membership of **IFAP**, International Federation of Agriculture Producers, and exercise nowadays the vice presidency of the Agriculture Women Committee

Exchanges

- ✓ In the frame of **AGRITERRA** cooperation, the Dutch agriagency that since 2002 is being supporting AMRU, it exists since last year a rich exchange of experiences and collaboration with **COMUVA**, Women Coordinator from Valle Alto, Cochabamba, Bolivia.
- ✓ In this sense and with **CNFR**, th National Comission of Rural Promotion (2nd grade union, representative of small and medium Uruguayan producers) AMRU has realized since 2005, an exchange with **LTO-Nord**, a Dutch organization of agriculture producers.

Achievements

All along its trajectory, AMRU has obtained important achievements in social and production aspects, allowing more than 2000 women all along the country, develop their capabilities, sustained over the unity, solidarity and association:

-  AMRU is an essential gender referent in rural areas, becoming the central institution in their members' lives.
-  The growing and integration of new groups is permanent.
-  In 2006, the principles and a new regulation were approved as a way to support the growing process.
-  There is a Procedure Handbook that rules the functions, roles, duties and rights of the technical staff.
-  There is a permanent and organized process for strengthening capabilities of leaders, as agents for change and politic incidence and a technical staff involved with AMRU objectives.
-  Since the creation of the Cooperative Delicias Criollas, that produces and commerce more than 70 food products integrating 150 women producers under a common brand, up to now the cooperative functions in an autonomous way, maintaining the links previous accorded between both structures.
-  In 2006 an important decentralization process was initiated as a pilot experience in two departments of Uruguay, one on the north and the other on the south, both betting to local development and autonomy.
-  An Integral Training Plan has being done in order to professionalize rural women knowledge, through the certification of training and the creation of a curriculum for rural women.
-  AMRU is a regional referent of rural organized women, with a recognized capability to contribute to other organizations' process.

Our main publications:

- **Our goals for the 1997.** 1996. Workshops systematizing made in the 6 regions along 1996. Dra. Rosario García y Santos. Publication made with PRONAPPA – FIDA- MGAP support.
- **Public Policies for Rural Women. Requirements and Proposals.** 1998. Lic. María Elena Lournaga.
- **The strengthening of Uruguayan Rural Women. Development with equity.** 2001. Systematization of workshops realized all along the country. Dra. Rosario García y Santos. Publication made in the frame work with Inter American Women Commission – OEA.

Because we want to live in the Countryside...

- **Building our story. AMRU's 10 years.** 2004. PhD, Ing. Agr. Martha Chiappe y Dra. Rosario García y Santos. Publication made with the support of AGRITERRA.
 - **"Analysis of an Associative Process from the Perception of its Protagonists".** 2005. Lic. Martín Pardo y José Arocena. Publication realized in the framework of BID Cultural Program : "Systematization of codes and models of artisans production and organization"
 - **"Public Policies for Rural Women: an ethical commitment and a political need".**2005. Lic. María Elena Lournaga. Publication made with AGRITERRA support.
- "Participation, productivity and formation – AMRU's trajectory".** 2005. PhD, Ing. Agr. Martha Chiappe. Publication made by CINTERFOR-OIT-BID s