

Preserving forests, providing income

Against the backdrop of increasing deforestation in Natural Protected Areas due to illegal logging and shifting agriculture, the Peruvian association DRIS has implemented a programme in three districts of the country. The goal is to involve the families in forest protection activities while simultaneously providing them with income opportunities.

After Brazil, Peru is the second largest country in terms of surface covered by tropical forest in Latin America, and the fourth in the world (following Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia). With over 70 million hectares of forest, it contains 13 percent of the planet's Amazon rainforest, and is the home of ecosystems with high biological diversity, cultural diversity, natural resources and environmental services. Every year 150,000 hectares of forest are lost in the Amazon.

■ Preservation and development

DRIS/Sustainable Development is a civil society organisation that promotes socio-economic and productive development in the Andean-Amazon area by strengthening social and productive organisations and promoting market-

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oriented ecological production projects. It is currently developing projects on the preservation and development in Natural Protected Areas, such as the buffer zone of the Manu National Park, and has been awarded a 20-year administration concession of the Yanachaga Chemillén National Park – both of which have been declared Biosphere Reserves by UNESCO.

■ Basic principles

Our basic principle over these past years has been that the best conservationists are the people and local entities who live in tropical forests,

especially the buffer zone, and rely on their resources. We therefore employ a participatory approach to sustainable human development actions aimed at raising the standard of living of the families so that they can make sustainable use of their natural resources. To this effect, our institutional strategy is to consult local authorities and leaders and then work with their communities, informing them about our proposal and sharing and exchanging knowledge with them about the area, agriculture and ecological agroforestry. These activities are associated with food sustainability and nutritional processes by promoting organic vegetable gardens and mini-farms which have been proven successful by DRIS in other regions of the country.

■ Problems with the conservation of our environment

The conservation of our forests is faced with the following problems:

- a) **Exclusive management policies** that do not assign priority to preservation and development in the management of tropical forests and Natural Protected Areas.

To advance afforestation, family and community tree nurseries have been set up, mainly with native species.



Photo: DRIS

b) Insufficient articulation and participation of civil society in preservation and development actions.

c) High deforestation rates, both by illegal logging and by expanding the agricultural boundaries, which accelerate erosion processes and the loss of biodiversity as a result of intensive rainfall. This also poses a permanent threat to the preservation and sustainable development of the tropical forests in the National Protected Areas and their buffer zones.

d) Migratory agriculture and extensive animal husbandry. The extensive agricultural and animal husbandry models used locally are unsustainable. The practices they use are inappropriate for the ecosystem of the upper Amazon and the land used for farming has only limited or even totally lacks suitability for agriculture, leading to severe ecological and socio-economic consequences.

e) Absence of technical support to the communities of the buffer areas that have received no training or culturally appropriate technical inputs from State institutions or development bodies.

■ Preservation and development actions

In February 2006 DRIS began implementing the “Integrated Programme to Strengthen the Local Capacity of Small Farmers’ Families in the Manu Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone” (DRIS/ZAMANU), with funding from the European Commission, Welthungerhilfe and Cesvi (an NGO based in Italy), which ended in April 2010. The programme supported 560 families from 36 communities, in a zone of great importance to Peru given its biological and cultural diversity. Work was carried out in three districts: Manu/ Madre de Dios Region, Kosñipata and the Challa-bamba/Cusco Region.

Rural families weeding the community tree nursery in Huacaria.



Photo: DRIS

The programme encouraged participation in various sustainable rural development activities aimed at preventing deforestation in the Manu National Park buffer zone, and worked with five indigenous communities of different ethnic groups – Huachipaire, Machiguenga, Harakmbut and Amarakaeri –, 16 sectors or settlers’ territorial associations, mainly from the high Andean area and ten Quechua peasant communities. The strategy consisted in offering the participating families a package of sustainable economic activities to encourage forest preservation both in the buffer zone as well as in the Manu National Park itself. The package included:

1. Technical assistance in sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry, with training activities and logistical support with seeds, biological input, tools, etc.
2. Support in the reforestation of forests that have been subject to human intervention through the establishment of family and community tree nurseries, mostly with native species.
3. Furthering the food sustainability of the participating families, students and women who are beneficiaries of health programmes, through the establishment of organic vegetable gardens and mini-farms with small farm animals, including relevant technical assistance, and other contributions.

4. Technical and logistical assistance for marketing and post-harvest management of the produce obtained by the participating families, as well as for local government marketing initiatives.

5. Strengthening the capacities of the Quechua and indigenous communities and the municipalities in drafting strategic plans for the zones and project profiles for drawing up Participatory Budgets.

■ Characteristics, outcomes and impacts of the programme

The promotion of ecological agriculture and agriculture-forestry-pasture systems incorporated continuous visits and training at community and family levels by the Programme’s technical experts. Thirty-six promoters chosen in each community were in charge of disseminating the use of ecological soil tillage techniques, associated crops, agro-forestry systems (bananas, pineapple, manioc, beans, maize, potatoes, forestry species, etc.), biological pest control, etc. These techniques have led to an increase in the production of pasture plots, crops for self-consumption and cash crops aimed at the markets. Additionally, the Programme has helped intensify the use of mini-irriga-



Photo: DRIS

One project goal was to strengthen the capacities of the indigenous communities.

ested areas. The associated crops are bananas, manioc and rice. The use of diatomite, natural fertilisers (manure) and leaf fertilisers, among others, is encouraged in order to raise productivity and enhance product quality. There is a strong demand for organic products obtained from agro-ecological farming techniques that have led to an increase in quantity and quality, as well as improved taste. This fact is greatly appreciated both by consumers and farmers, compared to conventionally grown produce such as pineapples, which are subjected to accelerated ripening with calcium-carbide, but have a short shelf life.

In the light of illegal logging and disorganised shifting agriculture, the Programme has promoted the establishment of tree nurseries and seedling trees for reforestation in Challabamba, and agro-forestry in Manu and Kosñipata. The planting techniques were learnt and reinforced by the promoters

tion systems, mostly for rice production, organic vegetable gardens and tree nurseries. The promoters cooperate with the meetings and planning of the work. In the forestry area, activities by the families differed, depending on the programme intervention zone. In Kosñipata and Manu, endangered native species such as copal trees, camphor trees, bay laurel trees, pashaco trees, cedars, mahogany trees, etc., are being gradually recovered, in association with legume tree species that enrich the soil with organic matter. In the Challabamba zone, reforestation is done with fruit trees, peach trees and maize. In the Amazon zone, agro-forestry systems are being implemented, diversifying the species in the refor-

ZAMANU participant: Lorenza Huamán, a mother in the community of Lucuibamba, Paucar-tambo, Cusco, Peru.

“We have learnt quite a lot about the production of seedling trees, and also about how to use organic fertilisers in the soil to preserve the environment. ”

themselves and have enabled the families to recover agricultural soils instead of abandoning them and clear-cutting new forest areas, a practice known as shifting cultivation.

■ Challenges and opportunities

We are starting a sustainable management programme for the preservation of two biosphere reserves in the Amazon Basin (Peru and Ecuador) by the reduction of CO₂ emission produced by deforestation and degradation of forests (REDD+), which is funded by the European Commission, Welthungerhilfe, HIVOS (Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation, the Netherlands), and CESVI. Implemented by DRIS (Peru) and FEPP (Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progreso, Ecuador), this programme fostered by REDD+ promotes sustainable forest management and encourages sustainable economic activities with the direct participation of local communities. It has become a conceptual, methodological and funding supplement to the activities we are implementing in the Manu National Park and the Yanachaga Chemillén National Park, both in their untouchable core areas and their buffer areas. To this effect we shall encourage consultations among the local communities and authorities, so as to achieve prior, informed and voluntary consent and to formulate and monitor the proposal, but above all to obtain carbon credit marketing, in order to achieve effective social inclusion in forest management and equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of its preservation.

Zusammenfassung

Angesichts der zunehmenden Entwaldung in Naturschutzgebieten durch illegalen Holzeinschlag und Wanderfeldbau mit Brandrodung hat die peruanische Organisation DRIS mit Hilfe der internationalen Zusammenarbeit ein Programm für die nachhaltige ländliche Entwicklung in den Distrikten Manu (Region Madre de Dios), Kosñipata und Challabamba (Region Cusco) aufgelegt, mit dem die ökologi-

sche Land- und Forstwirtschaft gefördert werden sollen; damit sollen die negativen Auswirkungen der Entwaldung verringert und die Nahrungssicherheit der lokalen Bevölkerung verbessert werden.

Resumen

Frente a la creciente deforestación originada por la extracción ilegal de madera, como por la agricultura migratoria en Areas Naturales Protegidas, la asociación

peruana DRIS (Desarrollo Rural Sostenible) ha implementado con ayuda de la cooperación internacional un Programa de desarrollo rural sostenible promoviendo en los distritos de Manu (Región Madre de Dios), Kosñipata y Challabamba (Región Cusco) la agricultura y agroforestería ecológica, a fin de reducir dichos impactos negativos y permitir una mayor seguridad alimentaria para las poblaciones locales.