



CLIMATE PROGRAMME:

reducing our vulnerability

Model Experience

Tabaconas Namballe: montane forests facing Climate Change

The less existing flora and forests, the less water is available throughout the year. It is as clear as this in Tabaconas in Northern Peru, where the very inhabitants who deforested their hillsides now work alongside WWF Peru to recover their forests and consequently their sources of water.

Between the Andes of Colombia, Ecuador and Northern Peru lay the montane forests and *paramos* of the Northern Andes, a very particular ecoregion that begins at an altitude of 800 m.a.s.l. and continues further than 3500 m.a.s.l., where the forest gives way to the paramo. The latter is an ecosystem of constant humidity – dominated by lichens, moss and elfin trees – whose soft soil works as a great sponge that absorbs water, creating countless small streams and consequently important Amazon tributaries.



The unusual conditions and isolation in this region also allow the presence of diverse species, such as the rare mountain tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*), dwarf brocket deer, mountain shrews and other species protected in the Tabaconas Namballe National Sanctuary in Cajamarca, whose conservation today is promoted by local inhabitants and WWF.

Recovering the sources of water

The Northern Andes of Peru are one of the regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as water scarcity. Even around protected areas such as the Tabaconas Namballe National Sanctuary, deforestation produced by agriculture and extensive ranching has diminished water availability in rivers and streams year round.

For this reason, in 2004, the rural community of San Miguel de Tabaconas - who had already lost nearly 25% of their community forests - began, alongside WWF Peru and the

Ecosystem restoration

Conserving landscapes and ecosystems has ceased to be merely a scientist and expert related endeavor. Climate change and its closely linked effects – for example, erratic rainfall – prompt nations in vulnerable areas to take direct actions and acknowledge the urgent need for the conservation of their resources more than ever. WWF Peru works with populations in regions such as the Northern Peruvian Andes, supporting them during the process of recovery and conservation of their natural resources to benefit them and the most endangered ecosystems.

authorities of the neighbouring sanctuary, the recovery of their forests. After successfully restoring an initial 100 hectares, over 750 San Miguel families organized their productive activities through an economic and ecological land zoning that prioritized the recovery of their forests and the conservation of the sanctuary.

By creating nurseries, plantations and agroforestry systems with native species, the community has quickly began recovering their headwaters, which will later provide more access to energy, as the river flows recover as well as the optimum capacity of their local hydroelectric plant.

Restoration: conservation and business

Reforestation was only the beginning. The loss of forests was produced by precarious and invasive agriculture and ranching fostered by reduced opportunities for local development. Therefore, the next step was identifying and generating sustainable productive activities that far from degrading the local ecosystems would help recover and conserve them.

WWF Peru helped promote the cultivation of organic shade-grown coffee, contributing towards the development of a business plan that allowed the establishment of the Association of San Miguel de Tabaconas Rural Community Ecological Producers.



Slowly, local villagers are going from having only a few old and unmanaged coffee plants to developing productive agroforestry systems with native trees and coffee. Moreover, barely a year after it was formed, the association increased their coffee sale-generated incomes by eliminating intermediaries for the first time.

Today, the 120 associated producers are taking their first steps towards coffee certification, after aiding in the consolidation of a healthy landscape made up of forests and coffee crops that will simultaneously improve productivity - and the local standard of living - and help conserve the neighbouring Tabaconas Namballe National Sanctuary.

We work with: Communal Directive Board, Communal Roundtable, Municipalidad y población de San Miguel de Tabaconas, Mesa de concertación de lucha contra la pobreza en la provincia de San Ignacio, Asociación Provincial de Cafetaleros Solidarios de San Ignacio (APROCASSI), Amazónicos por la Amazonía (AMPA), Jefatura del Santuario Nacional Tabaconas Namballe and the Ministry of the environment.

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Key facts:

- The Tabaconas Namballe National Sanctuary was established in 1988 in order to protect the biodiversity and the role of the *paramo* in the regulation of the sources of water and is the only protected area in Peru that conserves this ecosystem.
- Today, the local population has recovered the forests and rivers adjacent to the sanctuary which is considered a Ramsar Site (wetland of international importance) and is also an Important Bird Area (IBA).
- This experience is part of a trinational initiative implemented with Fundación Natura in Ecuador and with WWF Colombia.



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