



Good Practice Story Title: Rural Municipalities, Allies To Revalue The Environment And Sustainable Tourism

Destination: Kuelap Gocta

Country: Perú

Submitting Organization: Regional Directorate of Foreign Trade and Tourism of the Amazonas Regional Government

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Destination description:

Kuelap and Gocta, are imposing scenarios of cultural and natural landscape, located between the 100 kilometers of length of the Upper Utcubamba Valley, on the eastern flank of the Andes of Peru, with a civilization that dominates the steep mountain and proudly displays the archaeological remains of its glorious past. Where Kuelap is the largest cultural landscape exponent of its enigmatic culture and the Gocta waterfall with 771 meters of total fall is the natural wonder that opens the way to the discovery of an exuberant biodiversity that gave life to the Chachapoya.

Summary of Good Practice Story:

In the Upper Utcubamba River Valley, the Kuelap Monumental Archaeological Zone and the Gocta waterfall are the main tourist icons of the Amazon region and northeastern Peru because of their cultural and natural value. In these areas, tourism service providers, the population of the surrounding communities and rural municipalities used inadequate solid waste management practices, throwing it in open dumps, along roadsides, near water sources, on cliffs and burning it, generating soil, air, water and visual contamination, because they were unaware of the damage it could cause to health, the environment, the image of the destination and influence the tourist's experience.



In response to this situation, in 2000 the Amazonas regional government began meetings and agreements with the municipalities, local people, and tourism service providers to conduct preliminary studies to identify problems, solution strategies, and allies for implementation.

According to studies conducted, it was found that **17,456.93 m³** of solid waste was generated at Kuelap Gocta and dumped in **83** open dumps.

The solution to the problem was included in a comprehensive investment program with international financing, which included multisectoral interventions (tourism, culture, environment, transportation and communications) with the objective of preparing the destination for sustainable tourism development and improving the quality of life of the local population. **The Program includes 3 Subprograms: Subprogram 1.** Infrastructure (**Component 1. Solid Waste** and Component 2. Road Transport), **Subprogram 2.** Tourism (Component 3. Tourism Conditioning, Component 4. Capacity Building in the State and Component 5. Community Development) and **Subprogram 3.** Transversal Support Activities (Updating of the Regional Strategic Plan for Tourism and Tourism Promotion) with an updated total investment of **S/.327,149,087.09**

As a result, between 2018 - 2019, 4 sanitary landfills were built for the integrated management of solid waste, benefiting 28 districts (83 dispersed localities) within the scope of the Kuelap Gocta destination in the Upper Utcubamba Valley.

To date, sanitary landfills are in operation in four municipal commonwealths: Tilacancha, Chillaos, Valle de las Cataratas and Alto Utcubamba, where in 2023, 9775.11 m³ were collected and treated, equivalent to 100% of the solid waste generated by the local population and tourism activities in the 28 districts (83 localities).

Issues faced:

Until 2019, in the Kuelap Gocta destination, there was inadequate management and treatment of solid waste, causing the tourist experience to be unsatisfactory and giving them a bad image of the destination, because they found the routes, roads, viewpoints, resting places, streets and parks of the support centers contaminated with organic and plastic waste (bags, diapers, bottles, polystyrene containers), paper, cardboard, cans, batteries, etc.

The local population and tourist service providers were not in the habit of sorting or using their waste; those who, due to lack of knowledge and lack of attention from the municipality for the collection and final disposal of their waste, chose to throw it in the forests, roadsides and cliffs, generating visual pollution, affecting the soil (flora and fauna ecosystem), air (bad odors) and contamination of water sources, putting public health at risk.





The few containers in town parks and access routes to tourist sites collapsed, and the streets and public spaces had waste on the ground, generating visual contamination and discomfort among neighbors and visitors.

Some municipalities sporadically collected mixed solid waste (organic and inorganic), but in the end they were taken and dumped in open dumps and often burned without any kind of treatment.

Solution:

The communities, aware of the impacts on the environment and tourism; also, aware of the importance of caring for the environment and preparing the territory for the sustainable development of tourism, donated the land for the construction of sanitary landfills. Where, between 2018 and 2019, 4 sanitary landfills were built for the integral management of solid waste, strategically distributed among the 100 kilometers of the Upper Utcubamba Valley, where the Kuelap Gocta destination is located, benefiting 83 localities in 28 districts.

Before and after the operation of the landfills, capacity-building campaigns were carried out for solid waste management operations to raise awareness among the beneficiary population (tourism service providers, schoolchildren, and the local population) about integrated solid waste management, such as segregation at the source, care for the environment, and people's health. In addition, of sanitary landfills Start-up Plan was prepared and socialized.

To guarantee the operation and maintenance of the landfills, neighboring municipalities were grouped together and four municipal associations were formed: Tilacancha (7 districts), Chillaos (8 districts), Valle de las Cataratas (6 districts) and Alto Utcubamba (7 districts), which, through their Solid Waste Management Units, collect and dispose of solid waste according to an annual operating plan.

The local population and tourism service providers committed to classify and use organic waste to generate compost, and to minimize and reuse inorganic waste.

This improved the satisfaction rate of the tourist experience to 88.6% and thus improved the perception of the destination's image.

Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

The Amazonas Regional Government, seeking to achieve sustainable tourism development, began a management process in 2000 with an openness to international financing, a long road that today is yielding results and is considered one of the model programs of integral investment at the national level, where four sanitary landfill projects stand out.



The pilot and/or preliminary studies revealed the real situation of the 28 districts and 83 localities, where the population is dispersed but united by culture, tradition and common welfare, as proof of this, they donated the land for the construction of sanitary landfills and agreed to form municipal associations to make the projects feasible and then take charge of the operation and maintenance of the landfills.

After several preliminary studies, in 2009 the profile was approved and in 2012 the pre-feasibility study of the investment program ESTABLISHING THE BASES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM IN THE TOURIST CORRIDOR OF THE UTCUBAMBA VALLEY, PEDRO RUIZ- LEYMEBAMBA SECTOR, AMAZONAS REGION, which included 4 projects of EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT OF INTEGRAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT.

Once the preliminary studies were approved, the regional government negotiated an international loan agreement with the Japan International Cooperation Agency for the financing of the mentioned Program. Thus, through Supreme Decree 308-2012-EF, the external debt operation to be agreed between the Republic of Peru and the Japan International Cooperation Agency - JICA was approved and in 2013 the Loan Agreement PE-P43 was signed for the partial financing of the Program. And, for its implementation, the regional government creates the Executing Unit PROAMAZONAS as a decentralized agency of the Regional Government of Amazonas.

Thus, the ProAmazonas Executing Unit, after updating the technical studies outdated by time, in 2018 began the construction of the four landfills (Valle de Las Cataratas, Chillaos, Tilacancha and Alto Utcubamba), after environmental certification granted by the Ministry of Environment; These were built according to the semi-aerobic method - FUKUOKA, which allows the supply of air to the waste cells, thus generating aerobic conditions around the leachate drains, which significantly reduces methane generation and improves the quality of the leachate.

Once construction is completed, from October 2019 to March 2020, the ProAmazonas Executing Unit will be in charge of the start-up phase or test period of the sanitary landfills. **Then, from April 2020, the municipal commonwealths will assume the operation and maintenance;** prior to this, meetings and training workshops were held for the representatives and technical teams of the municipal commonwealths.

To date, each Mancomunidad, through its Solid Waste Management Units, prepares its annual operating plan, including activities, goals and budget for its execution; then they report quarterly to the ProAmazonas Executing Unit, which reports to the Ministry of Economy and Finance and JICA, and is supervised by the Environmental Evaluation and Oversight Agency.

For the current year 2024, the regional government approved the financial transfer in favor of the four mancomunidades to guarantee integrated solid waste management.

The population of the communities, tourism service providers (lodging, restaurants, travel agencies, and others) and school students have been receiving awareness campaigns and ongoing training on solid waste classification and the use of organic waste.





Achievements and Results:

Four sanitary landfills were built using the semi-aerobic (FUKUOKA) method, located at strategic points to facilitate proper management and handling of solid waste, benefiting 39026 inhabitants of 28 districts and generating employment for 80 people in the area. This allowed the total closure of 83 open dumps.

In 2023, 9775.11 m³ of solid waste were collected and transferred for final treatment in sanitary landfills; that is, 100% of the solid waste generated in the 28 districts (83 localities).

Tourist service providers, students from educational institutions and the population in general have been classifying and using organic waste to generate compost and nourish their bio-gardens for self-consumption and offer authentic and healthy culinary experiences to tourists. These actions led to a 40% reduction in waste by 2023 compared to 2017, helping to extend the useful life of landfills.

Ecosystems that had been damaged by the presence of waste were preserved, water quality was improved, degraded soil was recovered, bad odors were eliminated, the visual quality of the landscape and the environment of tourist sites was improved, public health was improved and neighbors and visitors have a better perception of the destination and tourist sites, adding up to a good tourist experience.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

The Amazonas Regional Government and the Municipalities learned that the articulation and alliance between the different entities of the public sector (culture, tourism, environment, communications, etc.) is vital to promote the integral and sustainable development of the territory, respecting and valuing the opinion of the community, tourists and the private sector (guilds and tourism operators).

The perseverance and continuity of investment policies with a territorial approach are very important to obtain results in the short, medium, and long term.

Municipal commonwealths are an effective model, with greater strength and capacity for common management and development in favor of the local population, visitors and the environment. This form of alliance between adjacent or neighboring municipalities facilitated the implementation and operation of the sanitary landfills, due to the fact that most of the towns are in rural areas and are small and very dispersed.

Knowledge and sensitization generate changes in attitude and good habits in the community, tourism service providers, students and visitors, who now show environmental awareness and responsibility in response to investments that provide facilities for the integrated management of solid waste and the promotion of sustainable tourism.



Recognitions and Additional References

Recognitions:

1. [El año 2000 Kuelap es reconocida como Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación](#)
2. [Chachapoyas fue reconocida como "Ciudad del Aprendizaje" de la UNESCO](#)
3. [Chachapoyas la mejor ciudad en el Perú para vivir después de tu jubilación](#)
4. [Kuelap, elegida como una de las 7 maravillas del Perú.](#)
5. [Sitios Chachapoya del Valle de Utcubamba, en la lista indicativa para adquirir la declaratoria de Patrimonio Mundial ante la UNESCO](#)
6. [Galardonada el 2017 como 'Mejor Atracción en el Extranjero' \(Far & Away- Overseas](#)
7. [Attraction\) por los lectores de National Geographic Traveller en el Reino Unido.](#)
8. [Gocta, una de las cataratas más altas del mundo \(771m.\)](#)
9. [Kuelap, considerado como uno de los destinos más "cool" por The Wall Street Journal y The New York Times, para visitar, conocer y disfrutar en el mundo.](#)

Additional References:

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2. <https://ofi5.mef.gob.pe/invierte/ejecucion/verFichaEjecucion/2183886>
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