

## Introduction

The purpose of our Project Informative Newsletters (PINs) is to provide regular information on the projects implemented in the Peru, as well as details of their implementation process. The idea is to improve communication with our members and counterparts as well as with other institutions and people interested in the projects, whose contributions are essential for achieving a greater impact.

On this occasion, we have the pleasure in presenting the latest bulletin of the Chinchipe Forests project, implemented between 2005 and 2009 by Practical Action in Ecuador (Palanda and Chinchipe cantons) and Peru (San Ignacio and Jaén provinces), in partnership with Cáritas Jaen, Oikos and Faces and with financial aid amounting to nearly two million Euros from the European Commission.

The project's strategy was to promote and facilitate a participatory process to design a sustainable forest management project for the Chinchipe river basin. One of the most important achievements during the project's four years was to obtain the agreement and participation of the local community with actions that helped improve productive activities, preserve forest ecosystems and promote reforestation, among others.

This experience gave rise to a process of political discussions with national and regional authorities, NGOs, members of the Peruvian environmental network and other institutions, so as to agree on proposals to help overcome the limitations of small-scale coffee farmers who have been encouraged by market incentives to take on environmental commitments and establish new production schemes.

With this bulletin, we hope to share the main results of the Chinchipe Forests experience, providing criteria for designing local management models applicable to other regions with similar characteristics. We are already applying these criteria in new projects in order to respond to future challenges, which we hope to achieve with your support and participation.

Best regards,  
Alfonso Carrasco  
Director of Practical Action's Regional Office for Latin America



## The Chinchipe Forests Project

The Mayo-Chinchipe river basin is one of the main watersheds in the Amazon border area between Peru and Ecuador, housing two important conservation areas in South America: the Podocarpus National Park (Ecuador) and the Tabaconas Namballe Sanctuary (Peru), which also form part of the Abiseo-Cóndor-Kutuku Trans-border Conservation Corridor. Given the wealth and diversity of the biological species in this watershed, its forests are a significant source of information and important for present and future development. The water, beautiful landscape and the local population's knowledge of productive practices are also invaluable resources in this area. Nevertheless, despite this great potential, the 162 thousand poverty-stricken people in Ecuador and Peru who live in this watershed are faced with new challenges every day, due to illegal felling in the cloud forest and other unsustainable activities that take place in this fragile ecosystem.

In view of the above, between 2005 and August 2009, **Practical Action**, with the cooperation of Cáritas-Jaén, Oikos and Faces, implemented the *Peru-Ecuador Binational Programme for the Conservation and Participatory Management of the Tropical Forests in the Chinchipe Watershed (Chinchipe Forests)*. The purpose of this project was to create a participatory sustainable management model for the conservation of the tropical forests in the bi-national Chinchipe river basin. Within the framework of this project, forestry producers, local governments, rural schools, researchers and policy-makers in Peru and Ecuador held constant discussions in an effort to make the Chinchipe watershed area a better place to live in.

# Conservation and participatory management of tropical forests in the Chinchipe river basin Project

## Main Results

With the participation of grassroots organisations, local governments and the population of the bi-national watershed in activities aimed at achieving a sustainable economic development, the project obtained the following results:

- Preparation, design and inter-institutional implementation of one bi-national and two national forest resource management plans.
- Local conservation areas: two conservation units were created in Ecuador and two protected areas were approved in Peru (and the establishment of another five is underway).
- Sustainable farming: In Peru; there are technical agro-forestry teams in every district of the San Ignacio province and 50 extension farmers have been trained, whose role proved to be a key factor for the technical management of the forests. It was confirmed that the groups that received technical assistance have improved the productivity of their coffee and incorporated different forms of shade.
- Forestry development: this has been regulated in San Ignacio, where permits and authorizations for the development of protected forests are no longer issued, given the advanced state of degradation of these areas.
- Peasants involved in reforestation work were identified and given advice on the registration and development of their plantations. By the time the project ended, they had sold their first lot of timber. A timber gathering centre was established in the Palanda canton, where producers work with timber from the forests, with management plans authorised by the Environment Ministry.
- Forest control: legal and illegal logging has decreased significantly in the San Ignacio province (100 and 80%, respectively), with the implementation of the strategic plan for the province. In Ecuador, a control post was set up, equipped with radios so that the communities can report any illegal logging and control incoming vehicles.
- Reforestation: In total, more than 3,000 hectares have been reforested by means of a participatory selection of local initiatives. In Peru, the experience



was adopted by local governments (for example, the municipality of Chirinos allocated US\$100,000 last year to promoting and financing more initiatives).

- Creation of economic alternatives: the biological and market potential of different species were evaluated, including the market for reforestation timber and bamboo. Value added coffee and bee-keeping activities were also promoted.
- Participatory forest inventories were carried out with very important results, as the communities identified timber species and other products and species that they were unfamiliar with, such as *cascarilla* or *sangre de grado* (*Dragon's blood*). Based on these findings, discussions were held regarding ways to place a new value on the forest products that formed part of the tradition of the native communities. As far as timber species are concerned, the value added factor of standing trees was verified, based on the improved knowledge of the species and of timber assessment techniques.

## Lessons and conclusions

The Chinchipe experience is proposed as a successful reference implemented under the following fundamental guidelines:

- Development of local environmental governance. Work was carried out with and through local governments, reaching agreements for an orderly resource

management with citizen participation and the incorporation of participatory methodologies, forest control, extension systems, the promotion of a territorial system and protected areas.

- Development of human capital: awareness-raising through the media, environmental education, peasant-to-peasant training and a transparent dissemination of achievements and identified problems.
- Development and technological adjustment: with the participation of the Cajamarca National University in subjects like forest management, research, team formation (forestry-resource management qualification), new nursery and agro-forestry technologies, peasant experimentation.
- Development of grassroots organizations: participation of producers' organizations and other local agents seeking economies of scale, direct impacts, rural leadership and the sustainability of the system.

## Practical Action

Soluciones Prácticas-ITDG in Latin America

Practical Action is an international technical cooperation organization that contributes to the sustainable development of poor populations through research and the application and dissemination of appropriate technologies.

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