Project No. 1-3

Region: Americas
Countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru

Project:
REDTURS: Sustainable Indigenous and Rural Community-based Tourism Network in Latin America

Donors:
Up to now, REDTURS has functioned with support from the ILO’s regular budget (the Regional Office for the Americas, the Subregional Office in Lima, and ILO headquarters units SEED and SECTOR).

Project Description:
Context
As a result of new trends in tourism in a globalized market, many rural and indigenous communities in Latin America confront serious difficulties in preserving their cultural and natural patrimony and their social cohesion. These communities confront new economic and labour challenges with severe limitations, since they continue to be excluded from institutions and political decision-making processes that facilitate access to productive resources, public services and opportunities for development.

Objective
REDTURS aims at improving the conditions of life and work in such communities, creating greater access to services for enterprise development, organization and opportunities for dialogue with public and private institutions with a view to adopting policies favourable to community tourism.

Principal results
In its first phase (2000-2001), REDTURS accomplished the following:
- Development of a methodology for evaluating the level of economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of community experiences
- 24 studies of community experiences in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru
- Leveraging of experience through three national workshops and an international seminar, with participation of all actors in the tourism field
- Proposal for an agreed strategy with those actors to promote community tourism and is competitive and preserves cultural identity (Quito Declaration).

In its second phase (2002-2003), REDTURS designed a support strategy and validated a set of tools to provide entrepreneurial services to the communities involved:
- A website to offer information, promotional efforts and marketing of community tourist destinations was set up (www.redturs.org)
- Two manuals were drafted for use in human resources training in the management of tourist firms and in municipal planning for tourism
- Commercial agreements between community networks and tour operators in Europe began to be implemented
- Initiatives that led to the creation of national community tourism networks, such as the FEPTCE in Ecuador, the FENATUCGUA in Guatemala, the Brazilian Network of Solidaristic and Community Tourism and ACTUAR in Costa Rica, were encouraged, with a view to promoting participatory processes and negotiation of policies favourable to the communities.

The representatives of the communities in Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru concentrated on a regional strategy to develop rural community tourism. The San José Declaration renewed REDTURS’ mission of strengthening and developing local, national and regional networks...
of rural community tourism, through provision of services for the sustainable development of small businesses.

In the third phase (2004-2005), REDTURS has been encouraging the potential and competitive advantage that communities have for tourism so that they can be agents of change for quality jobs and profitable enterprises. Efforts concentrate on three goals:

- Consolidate and improve what tourism offers, raising quality of what is on offer and in the management of firms, making the most out of social capital and training the community's labour force.
- Winning new market share in the European market, applying a 5-point marketing strategy: expansion and development of the website of Culturas Vivas (Living Culture); launching a corporate trademark to sell community destinations (quality standards and authenticity of products); elaboration of a tourist guide; participation in tourism fairs and forums; intensifying alliances and commercial agreements with tour operators, consumers’ organizations and NGOs.
- Establishing strategic cooperative alliances and support involving other networks and international agencies such as CONPEHT, the World Tourism Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the International Food and Agricultural Development organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the IICA.

**Gender and Ethnic Components:**
The ultimate beneficiaries are the indigenous communities, and women’s equal participation is promoted

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