

PACHAMAMA RAYMI: An innovative way to assure the participation of rural households and communities in the management of natural resources¹

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Abstract

PACHAMAMA RAYMI - respect (cult) to mother earth - is the name of the productive strategy of the NRM project in the southern sierra of Peru (MARENASS). The project empowers communal leadership to prioritize, train the families, and implement agreed changes in the management of the natural resources and the landscape. The participation is voluntary and only the excellence – judged by teams formed by farmers but using technical criteria - is awarded. The process initiates with a contest among groups of 5 communities where each one presents sketches of their land highlighting the condition of the natural resources. The presentation of the past, present and the foreseen future must be explained to the judging team and a winner is selected and recognized. Loans are given to the communities to train their own trainers in a similar setting. Innovative farmers are selected and trained in specific topics such as irrigation, forestation, controlling soil erosion, etc. Specific contests are launched first within the community and then among communities. There are contests for specific target groups such as women organizations and schools. The awards are given in checks to give them the exposure to the formal banking system. After four years MARENASS is working with close to 400 communities and around 53000 households of the poorest part of Peru. A description of the process and achievements together with lessons learned will be presented.

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