

Ukuku Community Lodge

Ecuador



Jascivan Carvalho

Organization type:

for profit

Budget:

< \$1,000

Website:

<http://www.waponi.com.ec>



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- [Green business](#)
- [Income generation](#)
- [Green consumerism](#)
- [Poverty alleviation](#)
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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

The Ukuku Ecolodge will generate a sustainable alternative for the community of Oyacachi (of 120 families), provide alternative employment opportunities that will reduce agriculture-related environmental damage, help preserve and celebrate local culture and architecture, provide visitors with authentic, life-enriching travel experiences, and help build cultural understanding.

About You

Organization:

Waponi Sustainable Tourism

[Visit website](#)

Section 1: About You

First Name

Jascivan

Last Name

Carvalho

Website

<http://www.waponi.com.ec>

Country

, XX

Section 2: About Your Organization

Is your initiative connected to an established organization?

Yes

Organization Name

Waponi Sustainable Tourism

Organization Phone

593 9 3 484186

Organization Address

Vicente Solano 101 y Charles Darwin, Quito

Organization Country

, XX

How long has this organization been operating?

Less than a year

Your idea

Country your work focuses on

, XX

Innovation

What makes your innovation unique?

The most innovative aspects of the project are the community ownership model and the combination of sustainable tourism best practices that will create synergies between project components that multiply the benefits to the community and this important protected area.

Investors interested in promoting indigenous community development and a market-based approach to economic development will provide equity investment in the lodge. The objective is to provide a hand up, not a hand out. The investors' ownership stake will be sold back to the community, over time, on very favorable terms. The community will secure a significant initial ownership stake through their contributions of land, labor, materials, and grants.

The lodge will be professionally managed and marketed, by an award winning, professional team that has developed other lodges and sustainable tourism enterprises, to ensure financial sustainability. Electricity will be generated from a micro-hydro plant. Composting toilets natural wastewater recycling, composting of organic wastes, recycling of inorganic wastes, natural landscaping, and low impact construction techniques will also be used.

The mapping of the Andean Bear's habitat will employ the latest web-based mapping technology and create interactive, online tools and maps that can be used by visitors, researchers, and the community.

Do you have a patent for this idea?

Impact

Tell us about the social impact of your innovation. Please include both numbers and stories as evidence of this impact

The Ukuku Ecolodge will generate a sustainable alternative for the community of Oyacachi (of 120 families), provide alternative employment opportunities that will reduce agriculture-related environmental damage, help preserve and celebrate local culture and architecture, provide visitors with authentic, life-enriching travel experiences, and help build cultural understanding. This new model of community enterprise development will bring benefits to the local economy through the community's ownership stake, which will grow over time and eventually reach 100%. It will also create an estimated 30 direct jobs and create or support 50 indirect jobs in the local community, and in total, generate more than \$370,000 in income per year for the community and protected area.

The Andean Bear habitat-mapping project, being designed in cooperation with the Foundation EcoCiencia, will provide environmental education to local residents and help protect the bear's habitat.

The lodge will be built using sustainably managed local materials, honor indigenous architecture, and employ 100% renewable energy, natural waste recycling and low impact design and construction. A tree planting, sustainable forestry and environment education program would also be funded. The lodge will also support, in collaboration with the Global Alliance, tourism- related microenterprise development in the community.

Problem: Describe the primary problem(s) that your innovation is addressing

The community's economy is organized into four producer groups, tourism, handicrafts, dairy, and trout farming. The tourism group operates a hot spring but is only able to generate about \$20,000 per year in income (from entrance fees), because there are currently minimal overnight accommodations, so visitors only come for the day, don't spend much time, and only spend an average of \$3.50 per visit.

Oyacachi has tremendous tourism resources, but because of its relatively remote location (about 2.5 hours from Quito) day visits are difficult to organize and market. The development of high quality accommodations would permit the development of an overnight market, and catalyze the development of a variety of related businesses, including restaurants, guided nature hikes, bird watching tours, horseback riding, mountain biking, and tours of the town, including the trout farms, dairies, and artisan's workshops.

The development of the lodge would also enhance income opportunities for the other three producer groups. The dairy and trout farming groups would have a large new customer base (hotel guests and the hotel itself) for its products. The handicrafts group, which is producing quality woodwork that is too expensive for current visitors to Oyacachi, would be able to sell to both higher spending tourists and the hotel.

Actions: Describe the steps that you are taking to make your innovation a success. Include a description of the business model. What might prevent that success?

The design process is already well underway.

A detailed, professionally conducted market and financial analysis has been completed. Debt/equity and debt service coverage ratios are well within acceptable limits, access to the area is very reasonable, the quality of the product and attractions are world class, and there are several well defined markets that can be penetrated. Organizationally, the lodge will be professionally managed and marketed, by one of Ecuador's leading ecotourism and community tourism experts.

The major barriers to implementation, for this project and others being planned to replicate it are access to credit and maximizing community ownership, a core objective of the model.

This is the next step we are taking, finance a person who can focus on othe required work with the community and putting together the next steps to figure: Debt financing access without 100 percent collateral (or more). There is very little non-recourse project financing available for projects of this size. There are a number of micro-financing programs available for very small loans, and commercial financing available for very large (multi-million dollar) projects. This type of project is too large for microfinance and too small for commercial banks (costs more to process and administer than the value of the loan). Getting a grant would fill a critical gap.

The only reasonable way to significantly raise the ownership stakes of poor rural communities (above what they can contribute in-kind), is grants.

This grant program can create a model to support rural wealth creation through sustainable tourism that can ideally be replicated by other donors and international financial institutions.

Results: Describe the expected results of these actions over the next three years. Please address each year separately, if possible

Positive impacts from the Lodge will be measured quantitatively by the number of direct and indirect jobs and microenterprises created or supported, the income received by the community from lodge profits and visitor donations (a five percent voluntary contribution added onto hotel bills to fund community health, education and environment projects), sales to the lodge by producer groups, and sales to visitors (restaurants, guides, activities, handicrafts, etc.)

Impacts will be measured qualitatively by satisfaction of visitors with the tourism experience and the attitudes of local residents toward the project and to tourism in general. Surveys of both populations will be conducted by the lodge on a regular basis.

Power of Place will be demonstrated and supported by keeping the lodge and the experience as natural and authentic as possible. Local materials and architecture will be used for construction.

The lodge will be built and operated on a carbon neutral, zero impact basis. Tree planting, the purchase of carbon offsets, natural waste recycling, and renewable energy will be employed to minimize the impacts of the project on the community, the protected area, and the planet.

How many people will your project serve annually?

101 1000

What is the average monthly household income in your target community, in US Dollars?

Less than \$50

Does your innovation seek to have an impact on public policy?

No

If your innovation seeks to impact public policy, how?

We are discovering the path to create public private enterprises to operate ecotourism in Ecuador protected area system. We hope that the route enables other initiatives to start supporting the protected area system of Ecuador financially sustainable using ecotourism as a tool.

Sustainability

What stage is your Social Enterprise in?

Idea phase

Does your organization have a board of directors or an advisory board?

Yes

Does your organization have a non monetary partnerships with NGOs?

Yes

Does your organization have a non monetary partnerships with businesses?

Yes

Does your organization have a non monetary partnerships with government?

No

Please tell us more about how partnerships could be critical to the success of your Social Enterprise

This is one of the primary objectives of the project, to demonstrate the synergies and benefits of combining a wide range of best practices in sustainable development with community ownership to catalyze rural development, conservation, and helps generate wealth through tourism (not create another form of subsistence). In replicating this model we will also partner with a wide range of other organizations and social investors.

We would like to learn more about how your initiative is financially supported. Please explain your business plan/revenue model

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The Story

What was the defining moment that led you to this innovation?

The project was selected through a competition sponsored by the Ecuadorian Sustainable Tourism Alliance:

http://www.gstalliance.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&...

After an initial site analysis was completed by the ESTA, the community prepared a detailed proposal and won the competition.

The community is deeply involved in every aspect of the project, including its ownership. Involvement to date has included preparation of the initial project proposal, site selection, review of the feasibility study, review of and inputs into the initial site plan and architectural concept, and more than a dozen planning meetings.

Future involvement includes provision of materials and some labor for lodge construction, both of which will count toward its equity stake, final review and approval of lodge design, construction of lodge furnishings, provision art wand final review of the interior design concept.

Tell us about the person—the social innovator—behind this idea.

This project is not the work of a single individual: our community of Oyacachi consists of approximately 500 indigenous people and is located in the Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserve, in Northeastern Ecuador.

While the whole community supports and would benefit from the project, the primary sponsor is the Tourism Association, which currently operates a hot spring in the village and earn income from admissions to the hot springs.

How did you first hear about Changemakers?

Email from Changemakers

If through another source, please provide the information

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/socialbusiness/entries/ukuku-community-lodge#comment-0>