

Limpia Tu Selva

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

Limpia Tu Selva (Clean up your Amazon) is the community program of the social enterprise *Life Out Of Plastic* (L.O.O.P.), based in Lima, Peru.

L.O.O.P. is a social enterprise whose objective is to combat plastic pollution by creating a local market for post-consumer plastic goods. L.O.O.P. plans to manufacture and sell durable re-usable shopping bags made from 100% RPET (recycled plastic). L.O.O.P. utilizes existing networks of Peruvian plastic recyclers and textile manufactures in its line of production. Local production reduces the products carbon footprint and invests in the local economy. L.O.O.P. bags not only combat plastic pollution by reducing single-use bag usage, but also tackle pollution by using recycled plastics in production, hence creating a “full loop.”

The aim of *Limpia Tu Selva* is to promote local awareness of the negative impacts of solid waste on indigenous communities’ health and livelihoods. *Limpia Tu Selva* thus seeks to educate communities on the importance of solid waste management (SWM) for conservation of the environment and improvement of people’s health. The project will work with Indigenous communities reachable from the cities of Pucallpa and Yurimaguas in Peru. Due to their remote nature, these communities are isolated from municipal SWM. In addition, a rise in public infrastructure development and the resultant access to market-goods have made communities experience an influx of manufactured products and therefore waste. Lacking SWM education and government SWM programs, litter is a pressing issue. The project looks to generate environmental stewardship through introduction of a locally appropriate and locally designed SWM system.

The problem

Solid waste is defined as any material not in liquid form, which is no longer of value to its original owner. It includes neither human nor animal excreta. Solid waste is also understood as “garbage”, “trash”, “refuse”, and “rubbish” (Zurbrugg 2003). In rural communities lacking municipal solid waste disposal infrastructure waste accumulates and becomes an environmental health hazard (Ali 2005). When waste reaches critical levels, it is either incinerated or disposed of in waterways, posing a threat to natural ecosystems.

Traditionally, remote Indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon have only dealt with organic solid waste, which would readily decompose in the environment. In the last decade, these communities have experienced an influx of manufactured goods, which are inorganic and non-biodegradable. Results from participatory-based research in two communities, Panaillo (pop. 250) and Nuevo Progreso (pop. 350), have shown an accumulation of solid waste and concern for the consequent health effects as a major community worry (Hofmeijer 2010). Increased road development under the Peruvian Ministry of Transport’s “Proyecto Peru” (Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones 2010), along with the impending inauguration of the inter-oceanic highway, will



I. Hofmeijer

Plastic pollution on the Ucayali River banks

facilitate access of remote Amazonian communities to urban centers. Both Panaillo and Nuevo Progreso have experienced rapid changes since the arrival of a road in 2008 and May 2010 respectively. In Panaillo, facilitated access to Yarinacocha, the closest urban center, has meant an increase in road traffic and entry of manufactured goods. Three small community stores selling soft-drinks, canned food, and candy amongst other products, have opened this year.

Currently, there are no SWM efforts in any of these communities. Garbage is collected within the household and then thrown out at the back the house, creating a heap of waste expected to decompose. When the amount becomes a nuisance, individuals burn their waste or dump it in the river. There is no community waste management effort. The need for a solution to manage waste is urgent considering that the current disposal practices are demonstrably unhealthy, unsustainable, and there will soon be too much waste to manage at the individual level.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of *Limpia Tu Selva* is to promote environmental protection and conservation through improved SWM in four Indigenous Peruvian Amazonian communities. The project goes beyond local waste management and looks towards educating communities about the deteriorating effects of pollution and the need to “cleanup your Amazon.” By linking communities with recyclers and implementing responsible SWM techniques, the project hopes to engage communities in environmental conservation by preventing pollution and by cleaning up already polluted areas, such as waterways. In order to achieve its goal, *Limpia Tu Selva* has three objectives:

- 1) To promote environmental stewardship i.e. actions which aid in the restoration of healthy environments and in the preservation of resilient ecosystems.
- 2) To introduce the community to SWM.
- 3) To generate local income (sale of recyclable materials and compost in cities).

Duration: four years

Cost: 5690€

Activities: research, education, and community SWM.

Expected result: Implementation of a successful community-designed SWM system.

Timeline

Year 1: Research.

Year 2: SWM coordinator training; integrated SWM system implementation; organization of the sale of compost and recyclable materials in cities; and the establishment of community education program.

Year 3: Monitoring and Evaluation; community education program.

Year 4: Adjustment of project according to the result of the SWM implementation, monitoring and evaluation.



Collecting plastic waste for recycling in Panaillo, July 2010

Organization

The project is to be led by Raphaelle Peinado and aided by L.O.O.P. staff in Lima. It will be managed locally in Peru.

Project team

The project team is made up of Raphaelle Peinado (L.O.O.P. COO) and Irene Hofmeijer (L.O.O.P. founder & CEO).

Raphaelle Peinado has recently completed a Master's of Science (MSc) in Development Management in DESTIN (now the Department of International Development). Prior to her MSc at LSE, she attended McGill University for a Bachelor's of Arts, majoring in Political Science and Hispanic Studies. These experiences both sparked her interest in Latin American development and helped sharpen her Spanish language skills (she wrote her Bachelor's Thesis in Spanish). At LSE, Raphaelle centered her studies on private sector development and urban matters. As part of her MSc, she acted as a consultant for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—she worked on creating a strategy for job creation in African cities for the Foundation. After having spoken to the head of a key electronic waste management NGO in India, she strongly recommended that the Foundation make electronic waste management a key sector in which to invest. These types of initiatives both help to promote environmental stewardship and private sector development. As L.O.O.P. COO, Raphaelle will draw on these experiences and on her knowledge of bottom-up development to assist in job creation and building environmental awareness within the Limpia Tu Selva project.

Irene Hofmeijer graduated from the McGill School of Environment with a Bachelor's of Science in Environment – Ecological determinants of health. A Peruvian native, she has taken part in a number of research activities on environmental health in the country. During her time in Peru, she noticed a growing awareness on environmental issues but a lack of tools for people to adopt sustainable lifestyles. This led Irene to found L.O.O.P. in September 2010. Since April 2010, Irene has been working on the "Indigenous Health Adaptation to Climate Change" research program in the Peruvian Amazon (see www.ihacc.ca). Through IHACC she has established links in Shipibo and Shawi communities. To begin, Limpia Tu Selva will work in these four communities. Irene's previous experience in waste management involves an environmental assessment consultation on the disposal of municipal sewage sludge for the town of Huntingdon, Québec. Limpia Tu Selva will draw on this experience and Irene's connections in this field to draw a plan of action for the community waste management system of Limpia Tu Selva.

Partners

Environment NGOs:

- Ciudad Saludables
- San Francisco Saludable

Indigenous Organizations:

- Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon (AIDSESP)
- Regional Organization AIDSESP Ucayli (ORAU)
- Regional Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples of San Lorenzo (CORPI-SL)

Academic groups:

- Indigenous Health and Adaptation to Climate Change (IHACC)
- Environmental Sustainability Center at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia