

TO DO!97
Contest for Socially Responsible Tourism

Award Winner

AMAZON HEADWATERS WITH THE HUAORANI

represented by

Andy Drumm
Director of TROPIC Ecological Adventures, Quito, Ecuador

Moi Enomenga
Eco-Tourism Coordinator of the Quehueri'ono-Huaorani, Ecuador

Rationale for the Award

by

Hermann Warth

1. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Study Group for Tourism and Development the tourism expert and author of this paper has been travelling in Ecuador from January 27th to February 5th, 1998, or rather from January 28th to February 3rd since some days were spent on travelling to Ecuador and back to Germany. The purpose of this visit was to appraise the project AMAZON HEADWATERS WITH THE HUAORANI, a programme which at this time is exclusively offered by the Travel Agency TROPIC ECOLOGICAL ADVENTURES (TROPIC) and which was entered for the contest TO DO!97.

Thanks to the excellent cooperation of the TROPIC staff and the Huaorani (pronounce: Waorani) the task could be accomplished without any complications whatsoever. The author was granted insight in the field work as well as in the organisational structure and working style of TROPIC. The most important findings of the study tour were discussed with the Director of TROPIC, Andy Drumm, before returning to Germany.

The expert proposes to award a prize to the project AMAZON HEADWATERS WITH THE HUAORANI in Ecuador, at the ITB 1998, in appreciation of its goals, working principles, activities and achievements.

2. BACKGROUND

The Huaorani in the Ecuadorian headwaters of the Amazon comprise about 1,500 people who are living in up to 24 temporary settlements in an area of almost 20,000 sq. km, completely covered by rain forest. They are surrounded by related and alien tribes/ethnic groups with a total population of an estimated 150,000. For centuries the Huaorani have had to defend themselves against these groups and against gold and rubber prospectors (which provided the missionaries the justification for "pacification").

The identity of the Huaorani is characterised by their self-sufficient life off and in the forest whose biodiversity is one of the abundant in the world. The Huaorani are practising a sustainable economy, i.e. the natural resources are not over-exerted. As hunters and gatherers they are semi-nomads. They normally live in their small settlements - surrounded by vegetable gardens in which they grow manioc, maize, peanuts, sweet potatoes, chilli, and fruit. After ten years normally they move on.

Their respective living quarters consist of decentralised subsettlements which are situated at a distance of a two days walk from each other. To the Huaorani this is a kind of refuge which they use in case of danger or when their resource basis is diminishing. The egalitarian social system is both a prerequisite for and a consequence of this type of economy. It does not know a permanent "above" and "below" nor does it know discrimination against women. What it does know are the duties/obligations of the individual for the livelihood and survival of the whole community. Leadership is assumed only in certain situations and for a short period. Once the prevailing problem is solved, leadership is relinquished. In order to secure the survival of the community there is, apart from monogamy, also polygyny and polyandry - in case the gender-ratio is not well-balanced.

From the early sixties this micro-cosmos seems to be threatened. Since then rich oil reserves in this area have been exploited through foreign oil companies and through the national company Petroecuador. Under the protection of law and order forces employed by the oil companies and by the "jungle tigers", special and heavily armed Ecuadorian troops trained by the USA, this exploitation takes place with the assistance of lawyers, anthropologists, sociologists and missionaries (above all of the Protestant churches of the USA, primarily the "Summer Institute of Linguistics", which translates the Bible into

indigenous languages and which evangelises in an aggressive way). It also happens through “gifts”, such alleged development projects and promises, but also through threats: the Protestant missionaries succeeded for instance to persuade a part of the Huaorani to concentrate on the western part (only about 6 100 sq. km) of their traditional territory.

This for instance facilitated the construction of almost 90 km of road by Texaco from Coca deep into the territory of the Huaorani. Another road leading towards the eastern part of the Huaorani territory which was constructed in order to tap the resources of Block 16 (the future oil fields or prospect areas are numbered in this way) has only recently been finished. A number of minor roads to the oilfields branch off from the main road. Through pipes running along these roads the oil is transported to the western coast of Ecuador. Sometimes these pipes are damaged (by knocked over trees) and this causes serious pollution.

Even worse is the habit to deposit polluted oil in 600 to 1,000 open basins which are not insulated. The water pollution is disastrous. People living near the lower parts of the rivers are suffering from skin diseases, loss of hair, soar throats, diarrhoea and illnesses that were unknown to them before. And all this in addition to the diseases which were brought into the area by missionaries, oil workers, colonialists and the first tourists, and against which the indigenous people are not immune and for which they have no natural remedies. They can either afford the long way to the hospital in Puyo, Coca and Quito where they have to pay for their treatment or else they suffer and die from these diseases. Only very few people can afford outside treatment, and therefore about half of the population of the Huaorani died in the sixties. Now and again there are accidents caused by the dynamite left behind, which is normally used for seismic research in prospecting for oil reserves.

Encouraged by the government up to the early nineties, people have settled along these roads. The area occupied, i.e. 4 km right and left of the road, was given to them free of cost. To cultivate coffee or do cattle breeding - both of which is totally unsuitable for the thin layer of humus in the tropical rain forest - they clear the land and sell the timber. Once the soil is exhausted they move on and clear other areas. There are no government controls.

The indigenous people who are thus alienated from their traditional way of life are confronted with a destruction of resources, cut-throat capitalism, alcohol and prostitution. Western curricula, teaching “with a carrot and a stick” (whereas corporal punishment among the Huaorani culture is unheard of), hierarchical thinking and acting, deriding of their forest life through the state and the missionaries - all this increasingly leads to some kind of deculturation. Their way of living is defamed as communism and barbarism inspired by the devil. Resistance in the form of associations and umbrella organisations is broken up by infiltrating their organisations and by weakening the membership and communities supporting these organisations according to the principle *divide et impera*.

The Huaorani do not get any compensation for the loss of their land, for the damage to their health and they get no share of the income from oil and timber production. A Huaorani once said: “We are confronted with problems from all sides... We have to protect ourselves until we reach the forest where we are safe.” But a majority of the Huaorani is prepared - literally and figuratively - “to attack with spears from all sides”, exactly the way they have always done when their way of life was threatened.

Since 1990 the Huaorani territory (i.e. the 6,100 sq. km) has the legal status of a “homeland”, a “reserva”, which gives the Huaorani a guarantee to maintain their way of life. But since the use of the subsurface is reserved to the state, the Huaorani have no say with regard to the exploitation of oil. In fact, the law also stipulates that any opposition towards oil exploitation is sanctioned with the loss of the homeland status. With the assistance of local lawyers, local and international non-government organisations the Huaorani are trying

to pinpoint the contradiction - oil exploitation is just not possible without massive surface interventions - and to force the oil companies to repair the damage as well as to obstruct new prospecting and drilling of boreholes.

Some of the pending charges have not yet been dealt with, others were no longer pursued. One of these is the Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund (USA) whose charge was for genocide, and was later changed for ethnocide (destruction of culture and ethnicity of a people) and which was submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights. Even if they have been the losers so far from the legal point of view, they are increasingly on the winning side from the perspective of morality. This can be seen from the large circle of friends in Quito and abroad (mainly in the USA, a country which holds in the same time the largest share in oil exploitation). This circle of friends has been trying to attract the attention on the situation of the Huaorani through innumerable actions, press reports and radio and TV features.

Let us hope that the situation does not escalate as it did in the case of the Jahuncos in north-eastern Brazil towards the end of last century. Euclides da Cunha, author of "War in the Sertao" remarked on that situation: "Given his situation on an island, both in terms of time and space, the Jagunco could not help doing what he did - beating, fighting the nation which had been treating him as an outcast for almost three centuries, and which now wanted to bring him into the magic world of our age, in the midst of a square of bayonets, to show him the glamour of civilisation in the muzzle flash of gun volleys."

3. THE PROJECT AMAZON HEADWATERS WITH THE HUAORANI

3.1. Origins, organisational structure and objectives

TROPIC ECOLOGICAL ADVENTURES (TROPIC) was founded in 1993 by the British Andy Drumm. The ecologist is a resident in Ecuador, he is the director and partner of the travel agency. From 1987 to 1992 he has been working as a scientist, travel guide and diving instructor on the Galapagos Islands.

TROPIC is registered with the Ministry of Tourism in Ecuador as a company with its headquarters in Quito. It has a staff of three full-time and two part-time employees. Should it be necessary TROPIC recruits experienced tour guides on a honorarium basis. The agency is a member of the "Comisión Amazonia de la Asociacion Ecuatoriana de Ecoturismo", an umbrella organisation comprising 45 travel agencies and non-government organisations, with Andy Drumm as its chairman.

The organisation meets once a month and tries to bring its influence to bear on the Ecuadorian legislation with respect to an ecologically-oriented and socially responsible tourism. This is not an easy task since there are strong ties between firms involved in traditional tourism on the one hand (whose profit almost exclusively remains in Quito and Guayaquil), and the Government on the other hand. In addition, TROPIC is also a member of the „International Oil Watch“ situated in Quito, and it is associated with a number of national and international organisations committed to the preservation of the *Lebensraum* of the indigenous peoples in the highland and lowland of Ecuador.

So far TROPIC offers nine programmes in Ecuador, including one on the Galapagos Islands. Its overall objective is to show that under certain circumstances tourism can be profitable for the indigenous communities visited, for the ecology and for the operator.

One of the programmes is AMAZON HEADWATERS WITH THE HUAORANI. Seen against the backdrop of the parameters described above, this programme is obviously one of the

most exacting ones. The special emphasis in this programme is to support the Huaorani in their struggle for survival through socially responsible tourism.

The objectives are:

- To win friends and ambassadors for the Huaorani, via tourists from different countries;
- to make profit from tourism in order to pay for the treatment of diseases brought in from outside, in far away hospitals;
- to make it possible for the Huaorani, through tourism income, to renounce employment in the oil industry where wages are far too low and working conditions miserable;
- to enable the Huaorani, through tourism income, to remain in their *Lebensraum*;
- to prepare the Huaorani for the inevitable challenge with the “outside world“, through contacts with sensitive, small groups of tourists (a Huaorani said: “old people say, we did not want to get involved in the outside world; the young ones say, we had to see how we can cope with the outside world“);
- to offer the Huaorani assistance through which they can orientate themselves towards the outside world, through legal advice and support for self-organisation.

3.2. Working principles of TROPIC and the self-help group Quehueri'ono

TROPIC pursues a concept which integrates tourism in ecological, economic, socio-cultural and political objectives. As a consequence tourism is not sponsored as an economic end in itself and as a substitute for the subsistence agriculture of the Huaorani, but as a complementary element. Tourism is one element of a holistic development concept.

The self-help group of the scattered settlement Quehueri'ono (a total of 100 persons) has the ownership of the programme. It grants tourists the permission to visit, it invests, controls, guides and profits in co-operation with TROPIC.

TROPIC pursues a decentralised tourism approach by geographically spreading the programme over a large region, according to the ecological and socio-cultural capacities in that region. Care is also taken that the income is distributed to different families and service providers through a rotating system. To keep this balance the tourist groups that are taken to the area are kept small. A maximum of one small group per month is accepted. In order not to encourage the Huaorani to more hunting or to enlarge their gardens at the expense of the forest, almost all foodstuffs for the tourists are brought from Quito.

TROPIC is an intermediary institution. Apart from the accommodation near Quehueri'ono which is maintained by the Huaorani, there is no other infrastructure available for the tourists. They use public transport, local boats in the Huaorani area and local jungle and boat guides. This is done in an attempt to generate local income and to support, or to maintain and enhance, local know-how.

3.3. Activities of TROPIC and the self-help group Quehueri´ono

On the basis of objectives and working principles laid down the following activities are carried out:

In view of the threats the Huaorani and the inhabitants of other territories are faced with, TROPIC and above all the Huaorani Moi Enomenga and Juan Huamoni Coba are trying, through networking, to win over as many friends and sympathisers as possible. They want to assist the Huaorani in their efforts to enhance self-organisation and to achieve a structural and legal improvement of their situation.

TROPIC therefore cooperates with the aforementioned Comisión Amazonia de la Asociacion Ecuatoriana de Ecoturismo, with the Sociedad Mundial de Ecoturismo, with different environment organisations, with the International Oil Watch, with BBC World Service, CBS News, Dateline NBC, RTBF (Belgium), TNC (Japan), ABC, Channel Nine Network (Australia), with the magazine Stern and with various independent producers. Andy Drumm is also a member of the (British) Royal Geographic Society. Through its lobby activities in innumerable discussions and workshops with the Ecuadorian Government, TROPIC has taken the role of an advocate for the indigenous people.

Training is another activity carried out. In meetings with the Huaorani the basic needs of the visitors in view of accommodation, kitchen and toilets are discussed. At the moment a girl from Quehueri´ono is trained in the art of cooking. A dentist seconded by TROPIC deals with the preventive and curative sector in Quehueri´ono at different times of the year.

Tourists are given an orientation session when they come to the TROPIC office and also some information material. Andy Drumm seems to have developed a sense which tells him which tourists really "fit" into the area and which do not. He advises the latter not to participate in the tour. The others gain deep insights in the culture and nature of the Huaorani territory, both through Andy Drumm and above all through the local guides when they visit schools and villages, when they are in the jungle and on the boat.

The focus is on the implementation of the programme: Seeking visitors passes from the chairperson of the Organisation of the Huaorani Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon (ONHAE) and from the military in Shell (one of the oil cities was actually given this name), organising the trip, administration and maintenance of the guest house and the kitchen through the community in Quehueri´ono (since 1994 there have been 45 overnight stays), taking care and accompanying tourists in the jungle and on the boat through local guides and TROPIC, equitable distribution of profits and administration/investment.

Income generating measures such as the sale of bags from palm leaves, ceramic pots, spears, and blowpipes are encouraged, and a research is going on with regard to possible other activities such as the sale of medicinal plants and cultivated butterfly cocoons. The elaboration of a management plan for a sustainable development of the Huaorani territory is being planned. An analysis of the potential in this area will be carried out in cooperation with ONHAE, and on the basis of this analysis a more elaborate tourism and income generating concept will be developed. It is planned to submit this concept to the National Council for the Planning and Development of Indigenous and Black People (under the jurisdiction of the State President).

It is not expected that this will lead to an improvement in the status of the Huaorani. But still, the official recognition of the management plan might be of some help to get a guarantee for the right of the Huaorani to stay on their land.

3.4. Appraisal of the Project

Contest Criterion:

Involvement of the different interests and requirements of the local people through participation

In 1993 when the American company Maxus bought the oil prospecting rights from the Ecuadorian Government for blocks 16 and 22 in the Huaorani territory, Andy Drumm intended to assist the Huaorani in their fight against the impact of the oil industry on their homeland. Together with a television team of NBC he went to Shiripuna Bridge on the Auca Road in the Huaorani territory where he met Moi Enomenga, the then deputy chairman of ONHAE, in order to discuss the action they wanted to take. They soon agreed that alternative income generating possibilities had to be created which would guarantee the livelihood of the Huaorani on their territory.

Tourism was seen as one of the possibilities. Provided that it was not the kind of tourism where most of the profit remains with the travel agencies outside the Huaorani territory and that had a negative socio-cultural and ecological impact. During the following months and at the request of the Quehueri'ono inhabitants a workshop has been organised with delegations from 16 communities, as well as a number of meetings with Moi Enomenga and people of his community Quehueri'ono. They wanted to start with a pilot project in the Quehueri'ono area on the understanding that the Huaorani, and not outsiders, would determine the number of visits, fix the prices, be in charge and maintain the infrastructure, work as cooks, guides for jungle and boat tours. If the project succeeds it is planned that ONHAE implements the programme in another five communities.

The participation of the local people is also achieved through the following measures:

- the chairperson of ONHAE issues the permit which enables the tourist to visit the area;
- kitchen, guest house and toilets are built and maintained by the families;
- cooks, and guides for the jungle and boat tours come from Quehueri'ono (the trained ecologist Andy Drumm acts, in a complementary way, as an excellent scientific guide and interpreter);
- all village people get an equitable share of the income. This income is derived from a fee of 15 US \$ per tourist per night as a compensation for the fact that no hunting takes place in areas visited by tourists (part of the money is put into a risk-fund);
- an additional 5 US \$ per tourist is paid to the organisation ONHAE for capacity building;
- the Huaorani, together with TROPIC, will regularly investigate the impact of tourism in their area.

A documentation of the results achieved is in preparation.

“Different interests and requirements“ cannot be made out. The communities of the Huaorani in the Quehueri'ono area which are based on equality and harmony have a clear and common goal: To live and to survive in their territory and according to their own conception. Tourism, the way it is conceived and practised here, is able to make a contribution to reach this goal.

Contest criterion:

Strengthening the awareness among the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their daily economic, social and cultural life.

The workshop mentioned above as well as further meetings and the regular impact analyses are precisely meant to comply with this criterion. In the near future TROPIC intends to employ an expert who will develop indicators to this effect. Despite some bad experiences with the traditional kind of tourism the Huaorani are not yet quite aware of the socio-cultural effects of tourism. TROPIC is of the opinion that through the high price of the programme and the enlightening brochures as well as the website in the internet a pre-selection of sensitive tourists is possible. In the case of bad behaviour of participants, Andy Drumm, so he says, would not shy away from an intervention.

In order to minimise tourist intervention in the socio-cultural sphere, accommodation facilities were built at a distance of about one hour's hike from Quehueri'ono. It was also agreed that at the moment not more than eight persons per month are granted access to the Quehueri'ono region. TROPIC has an orally negotiated exclusive contract with the Quehueri'ono people according to which they only grant access to their territory for people recommended by TROPIC.

The economic advantages which come about through tourism are much appreciated. The income realised by the Huaorani allows them to go to hospitals to get their diseases treated. Compared to what they get from the oil companies they now get double the amount for the services rendered. With regular income from tourism they are able to stay on their territory.

Contest criteria:

Participation of a broad local population strata regarding the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism.

Apart from the "recruitment" of tourists which is done through TROPIC, the Quehueri'ono people have the ownership of the programme because they are the ones granting entrance permission, they are responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme. All the villagers are invited to take part in this process, and most of them come, also if a tourist group needs to be met at the village school.

It was unanimously agreed that Moi Enomenga should play the role of tourism coordinator. The income (15 US \$ p.p.) are equally distributed among the families in the village. Care is taken through a rotation system that income for services do not always go to the same cooks, jungle or boat guides, boat hirers etc.

The time the expert was able to spend with the programme was too short to evaluate in some detail how much the local people are involved in the positive social and cultural impact of tourism. At any rate, well-behaved tourists enjoy great respect. Since the indigenous people no longer live in total isolation, these tourists might serve as a bridge for them to gradually cross over into the "outside world". A number of former visitors keep in touch with the Huaorani through correspondence, some of them encouraged school classes in their home countries to exchange letters, drawings, dried flowers etc. with pupils in Quehueri'ono, and to tell each other about their dreams - which is what the Huaorani do every morning.

Contest criterion:

Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improvement of working conditions in relation to payment, social security, working hours, education and training.

All jobs mentioned above are held by local people apart from that of Any Drumm who accompanies the tourists from and to Quito. These jobs are no full-time jobs, since the programme is designed to have a complementary character, and since the tourists only come to this area at certain times of the year. The local people are foremost hunters, gatherers and gardeners, and through tourism they are able to earn an additional income. This is partly what makes the job so attractive, because the people really do for the tourists what they are used to do anyway: they cultivate their hospitality, they walk through the jungle, they sail up and down the rivers.

The remuneration for the services rendered is fair. The daily rate, as mentioned above, is double the amount the oil companies pay. And this contributes to the fact that the Huaorani remain and work on their hereditary *Lebensraum*. The programme does not provide social security which is still within the domain of the extended family and village community, and to which tourism now contributes financially: The risk fund which is fed from tourism income can be tapped in unforeseen emergency situations.

Through the rotation system and the limitation to a maximum of eight tourists per day/night per visit, the work-load of the people is not too heavy. TROPIC supports training in the tourism sector and promotes the revival of village handicrafts. Further training takes place through a regular monitoring system of the programme.

Contest criterion:

Reinforcement of the local culture as well as the cultural identity of those living in tourism destination areas.

The programme contributes to the fact that the indigenous people take pride and reinforce their sustainable way of life because the tourists through their integration into village life, however short, appreciate and recognise the idealist values of a subsistence lifestyle which is practised on a cooperative basis and largely in agreement with the natural environment of the villagers. This feedback, which is not really measurable, leads to self-reflection, self-assurance and self-esteem on the part of the local people. From this position they are better able to assess the advantages and disadvantages of their involvement in the "outside world" which is getting more intense over the years (and decide what they want to accept and what not). Thus, they do not have to experience a total rejection of their lifestyle with the aim of having it replaced by a new and "civilised" one. Unfortunately this is what missionaries, oil companies and the Ecuadorian state are doing. The government is reproaching the indigenous people that, through their subsistence agriculture, they do not contribute to the national prosperity as they do not produce for external consumption.

Contest criterion:

Avoidance, minimization of social and cultural damage caused by tourism in destination areas.

The programme tries to meet this criterion through enlightenment, advice and the accompaniment of visitors, through information material, through taking care of small and smallest groups and individuals. All the visitors are taken to their accommodation which is one hour away from Quehueri'ono. During their stay the tourists are integrated in the local

infrastructure and way of life. The indigenous people are not asked to dance for the tourists nor to be naked in front of them. Gifts such as biros and pencils for pupils are given to the teachers for distribution. There should not be a feeling on the part of those on the receiving side that they are patronised and treated condescendingly - something which could create a sense of inferiority and poverty and which might in turn bring about a beggar mentality.

Contest criterion:

Application of new in qualifying partnership and cooperation between the external tourism industry and the local people.

The concept is innovative as far as the partners of external tourism, that is the local people, are not employees of this external tourism but are free to decide when and to how many tourists and at what price they are willing to offer their services. This state of affairs definitely enhances the self-determination and self-assurance of the local people. Furthermore, they are not completely dependent on external tourism since they continue to remain hunters and gatherers. Tourism is a complementary element to and not a substitute of their lifestyle and economy.

There are no external tourist guides employed, only local ones - apart from one person and that because of the long distance and the complicated travel to and from Quito and also because of language difficulties. Apart from foodstuffs - in order to protect local resources - tents, mosquito nets and camping mattresses, nothing else is imported to the Quehueri'ono area for the tourists. The tourist partners of the Huaorani are sensitised for their visit in Quito through thorough introduction and enlightenment.

Furthermore, the relatively high price of 1,000 \$ per person from Quito to Quito for five days and five nights in the Huaorani territory, all inclusive, the visit to the oilfields south of Coca and the "oil cities" of Shell and Coca as a fixed element of the trip, will make it clear to the tourists that this programme is not in the first place something that one can easily and leisurely be consumed. Ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects in this programme explicitly complement political ones in the national and international context.

The price is justified: 50 percent are direct consumer costs (travel Quito-Shell, flight Shell-Quehueri'ono, travel Shripuno Bridge - Coca, Hotel Coca, flight Coca-Quito, tents, mattresses, kitchen equipment, foodstuffs), TROPIC gets 20 percent as profit, 30 percent remain in Quehueri'ono, of these the biggest share remains with the families for reinvestment according to their own decision (especially health) - this, too, means „breaking new ground in qualifying partnership and cooperation“.

Contest criterion:

Creating of other favourable conditions for a socially responsible tourism development in destination areas.

The concept of this kind of eco-tourism is further developed in a number of decentralised workshops at the national level and with different travel agencies, government and non-government organisations (the last such workshop in Quito in 1996 with 50 representatives of different indigenous communities). This is done in order to bring ones influence to bear on the legislation of Ecuador and also in order to help improve the legal and social situation of the indigenous peoples.

Another way to promote this tourism concept and to improve the situation of the indigenous communities is the contact to and cooperation with a number of foreign organisations. Moi

Enomenga for instance has been to the USA twice with the assistance of the author Joe Kane („Savages“, New York 1995, Alfred A. Knopf) and once in Brazil, with the assistance of TROPIC.

Contest criterion:

Projects/measures entered for the contest must be in line with the principles of environmental compatibility.

Apart from the completely integrated guest house built in local style, toilet inclusive, no other technical infrastructure was put up. The project rather makes use of locally available potentials (boats, forest paths, river to go swimming, sand banks for the tents). The boat engine is only used in exceptional cases (if the boat is late because the river is blocked by tree trunks). No new paths are cut into the forest for tourists since this would disturb animals and flora. The number of tourists is limited to eight persons per tour and month. Apart from bananas and citrus fruit all other foodstuffs are bought from outside. All rubbish which does not decompose is taken back to Quito. Therefore, the programme does not significantly pollute the environment.

TROPIC encourages the kind of tourism which is compatible with the environment, by integrating it in the lifestyle of the population which is so close to nature, and also by propagating the culture of the Huaorani so deeply rooted in the nature (of the forest). The demand on the part of the tourists for this kind of experience brings about economic advantages to those who preserve nature and culture. Through this “tourist validation“, too, nature and culture become a precious good worthy of being preserved.