



# 2020 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** The Añangu dream of the Sumak Kawsay

**Destination Name:** *(include any state, province or region)*

Añangu Kichwa Community, Yasuní National Park, Orellana Province, Amazon Rainforest

**Country:** Ecuador

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**Position:** Marketing & Alliances

**Nomination Category:** *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Islands & Seaside
- Immediate responses in dealing with the COVID -19
- Post COVID -19 recovery
- One of the 17 SDGs\* *(if yes, which one)* GOAL 1: No Poverty

\*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are integrated—that is, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. What are the Sustainable Development Goals? <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

For further information on Tourism for SDGs: <http://tourism4sdgs.org/>

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices [here](#)



## DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

### Issues faced

The Amazon Rainforest is a magical land, considered as the Lungs of the World, for the quantity of forest there. This unique environment has been threatened on different zones, in Ecuador and other surrounding countries. As there is petroleum under its soil, this industry, along with logging and the expansion of the agricultural frontier, are extractive activities, which are destroying this fragile wonder. Therefore, Indigenous Communities have been pushed away, violently on some cases, as they are the natural guarantors of the conservation of the Jungle, as their way of life lays with the actual existence of the Rainforest.

Añangu people were not distant from the reality of extractive activities in the Amazon. Their way of life was on path to be lost, as their land had no jobs options, so no income opportunities, no near schools for their children and no doctors around to cure their diseases or to prevent them. The only way to develop themselves seemed to be leaving the Añangu Community, and moving to the nearest city of El Coca, some hours on boat from their town, or just joining one of the extractive companies, leaving their families for several weeks or months in some cases.

### Methods, steps and tools applied

More than 20 years ago, having seen these issues, and the impact of the destruction of land on the Indigenous way of life, the Añangu people held a series of democratic meetings. During this assemblies they decided to act, to ensure their sustainability in their land, and therefore the survival and continuity of the nature around them. They voted to work all together with tourism as the way to obtain the resources they need for their families, and to oppose to any kind of extractive activity on their territory. Additionally, they banned hunting, fishing and cutting down of trees on their land, looking to become a model of sustainable conservation of the Amazon Rainforest.

The Añangu developed two small ecolodges, one is more focused on nature and is 1 hour and 30 minutes away from the Community center, going by paddle canoe, and its name is the Napo Wildlife Center. The second one is near the Community center and is more focused in culture, its name is the Napo Cultural Center. Visitors to both lodges learn about the importance of protecting this natural environment and the local culture. These tourists will experience, first-hand, the wonders of the Amazon, as they are guided by the skilled eye of a local Indigenous. The Añangu have prepared some activities for the visitors of their land, based on their own experience, like visiting the Clay Licks, where every morning parrots, parakeets and macaws come down to eat clay. These birds come to this place every day, as this



clay helps them to their digestion, as some of the seeds they eat, might be poisonous. Boat rides, along the different creeks going to the Añangu lagoon, to spot the richness in flora and fauna around, like the endangered Giant Otter, which has a sanctuary among the Añangu, are some of the events tourists can experience while in Añangu.

The Napo Wildlife Center has 20 cabins only and the Napo Cultural Center has 16. All cabins on both ecolodges have electricity, private bathroom with hot water and were all constructed following the Añangu architecture. The way the Añangu have electricity in the middle of the Amazon are solar panels and some high performance and low impact generators. The idea is to actually offer to the visitors all the security and comfort, while they share with the Añangu.

#### Key success factors

- The relation the Añangu people have with their land and the cultural need of protecting and conserving it. This factors where a natural boost to develop the touristic projects successfully.
- The Community work and commitment. The fact that all decisions are taken into Community Assemblies, where every person has a say, is important to have all members of the Añangu Community committed with everyone's effort, in order to reach the joint objective.
- The knowledge of the Añangu people of their land and the characteristics of the surrounding flora and fauna. That way, incredible experiences were created, so visitors can have a special liasson with the Amazon Rainforest when they come.
- The Añangu chose to stop hunting, fishing and cutting down trees on their territory. This decision has allowed the local flora and fauna to flourish and to find a sanctuary among the Añangu.
- The sustainable factor on the lodges. As it is important to the Añangu to preserve the nature around them, having respected the traditional Kichwa architecture, with as low impact as possible during the operation, has attracted visitors.

#### Lessons learned

When the Añangu people first started the project, they eventually received the assistance of an international NGO, they helped finding funds to improve the project and provided the technical knowledge to work with tourism, so the Añangu were deeply benefited from this partnership. Unfortunately, disagreements regarding salaries and the split of gains complicated the relation. Eventually, the Añangu decided to search local justice to be implied, in order to obtain the improvements they were looking for, like a fair remuneration. They won and they operate and manage directly all touristic projects on their land now, investing gains on social needs of the Community and on preservation of the area.

With time and as the projects were working, the Añangu learned they could manage the projects by themselves, taking care of their needs, and according to what the Community itself decided on the General Assemblies, where every person has a say. They discovered they can take care of their land and their culture, on a sustainable way, by working all together in finding a solution.



### Results, achievements and recognitions

The core of the Añangu Community projects to ensure their presence on their land, is the reinvestment, as 100% of the net profits of the touristic business income fund Community needs. That's how the local School was created, for example. It is open to children and youngsters from the Añangu Community and from Communities nearby. There is even a boarding program, for the individuals of Communities far away, so they can come and study without having to care about paying for food or accommodation. Additionally, as National Government pays the teachers' salaries, the Añangu take care of accommodation and food of the educators, for free. The school has a total of 120 students and offers 12 years of complete studies.

Another project is the local Health Care center, allowing the Añangu to have prevention and medical checking for free. It is open to nearby Communities too, last census gave a number of more than 1800 beneficiaries on preventive and curative medicine. On the same way, the Añangu take care of the food and the accommodation of the medical team.

Solar panels, water filtering for the Community usage, and cleaning it again when returning to the wetlands, a waste separation program and housing projects, are just some of the developments the Añangu could get, working all together with tourism.

Additionally, as families remain together, children can grow with both parents close, following their traditions, allowing to secure the survival of Añangu culture too.

Awards Received in the last 5 years:

- 2016:

Trip Advisor: Travelers's Choice

- 2017:

Boutique Hotel Awards: The Americas' most sustainable Hotel

Trip Advisor: Travelers's Choice

- 2018:

World Travel Awards: Ecuador's leading green hotel

Condé Nast Johansens: Best Green Hotel

Trip Advisor: Travelers's Choice

- 2019:

World Travel Awards: Ecuador's leading green hotel

Hotel & Spa Awards (Luxlife Magazine): Best Amazonian Sustainable Boutique Hotel

Latinamerica Business Awards: Most Luxurious Amazon Ecolodge- Ecuador

Trip Advisor: Travelers's Choice

- 2020:

Premios Excelencias: Premio Espíritu de Excelencia

Latinoamérica Verde: Recognized as one Top 10 Best Projects in Latin America on the Forests and Fauna category.

Latinoamérica Verde: Finalist on the Human Development category.

Trip Advisor: Traveler's Choice.



#### Additional references

Añangu Kichwa Community:  
[www.comunidadanangu.org](http://www.comunidadanangu.org)

Health Care Center information:  
<https://geosalud.msp.gob.ec/geovisualizador/index.php> [www.ubica.ec/info/CENTRO-DE-SALUD-ANANGU](http://www.ubica.ec/info/CENTRO-DE-SALUD-ANANGU)

School:  
[www.infoescuelas.com/ecuador/orellana/vicente-mamallacta-en-orellana/](http://www.infoescuelas.com/ecuador/orellana/vicente-mamallacta-en-orellana/)  
[www.ubica.ec/info/fa62c0f4ad489cc460520605f96d981c](http://www.ubica.ec/info/fa62c0f4ad489cc460520605f96d981c)  
[www.elcomercio.com/tendencias/turismo-colegio-educacion-yasuni-intercultural.html](http://www.elcomercio.com/tendencias/turismo-colegio-educacion-yasuni-intercultural.html)

Solar Panels:  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/british-embassy-brings-sustainable-energy-to-the-anangu-kichwa-community.es-419](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-embassy-brings-sustainable-energy-to-the-anangu-kichwa-community.es-419)

Napo Wildlife Center Youtube Profile:  
[www.youtube.com/user/Napowildlifecenter/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/Napowildlifecenter/videos)

Napo Cultural Center Youtube Profile:  
[www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_6s4shfiyFzReprH3li5Wg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6s4shfiyFzReprH3li5Wg)

