

IPSI Case Study Summary Sheet

Basic Information

Title of case study			
Framing cultural ecosystem services in the Andes: <i>Utawallu</i> as sentinels of values for biocultural heritage conservation			
Submitting IPSI member organization(s)			
University of Georgia, Geography Department, Neotropical Montology Collaboratory			
Other contributing organization(s) (<i>IPSI members and/or non-members</i>)			
Ethnostek			
Author(s) and affiliation(s)			
Fausto O. Sarmiento (University of Georgia, Geography Department, Neotropical Montology Collaboratory), César Cotacachi (Ethnostek)			
Format of case study (manuscript or audiovisual)	Manuscript	Language	English
Keywords			
Reification; syncretic landscape; <i>Imbakucha</i> ; Otavalo; Andes; Ecuador			
Date of submission (or update, if this is an update of an existing case study)	13 December 2019		
Web link (of the case study or lead organization if available for more information)	https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7506/SITR_vol5_fullset_web.pdf#page=41		

Geographical Information

Country (where site(s) or activities described in the case study are located – can be multiple, or even “global”)									
Ecuador									
Location(s) (within the country or countries – leave blank if specific location(s) cannot be identified)									
Otavalo and Cotacachi, Imbabura Province									
Longitude/latitude or Google Maps link (if location is identified)									
https://www.google.com/maps/place/0%C2%B0012'35.0%22N+78%C2%B0018'35.0%22W/@0.2097222,-78.3119109,9z/									
Ecosystem(s)									
Forest		Grassland		Agricultural	x	In-land water	x	Coastal	
Dryland		Mountain	x	Urban/peri-urban		Other (Please specify)			
Socioeconomic and environmental characteristics of the area									
The <i>Imbakucha</i> Basin contains the largest Andean lake in Ecuador and is located in the province of Imbabura in northern Ecuador. Here, the <i>Kichwa</i> ethnicity is the more prevalent of the two <i>Utawallu</i> groups, which are separated by the administrative county boundaries: The <i>Kayampi</i> to the southeastern reaches of the lake towards the ‘Cayambe’ volcano, and the <i>Utawallu</i> , referred to as ‘Cotacacheños’ (<i>Kutakachikuna</i>), living westward and the ‘Otavaleños’ (<i>Utawallukuna</i>) living northward of the lake.									
Description of human-nature interactions in the area									
Within this vibrant influence of local culture and the pressure of globalization, nature conservation has been challenged by the need for production of staple foods as well as other labour options, and policies have favoured wilderness preservation instead of cultural landscape values. Curiously, the Otavalo have no translation for “wilderness”, and their cosmological vision includes a nature-culture hybrid of respect and reciprocity, typical of Andean communities and a conundrum for mountain research literature. However, in Ecuador, the commodification of nature has allowed for ecosystem services to become the new guiding principle of new payment for environmental services (PES) policies; yet, emphasis goes to provisioning, and regulating functions.									

Contents

Status ("ongoing" or "completed")	Completed	Period (MM/YY to MM/YY)	
Rationale (<i>why activities or policies described, or information shared in the case study are needed</i>)			
Our study aims to highlight the contribution of the original people's cultural values in prioritizing biodiversity conservation amidst the pressures of modernity, in what is known as 'syncretic' landscapes with hybrid cultural manifestations of the indigenous and the greater Western tradition. Our main objective is to support the narrative of biocultural heritage conservation as an option of sustainable development in socio-ecological production mountainscapes. We consider this shift of conservation paradigm (from nature pristine to nature-culture manufacture) of significance if we were to curve the tendency of biodiversity loss due to both deforestation as well as acculturation.			
Objectives (<i>goals of activities or policies described, or of producing the case study</i>)			
We describe the qualities of a cultural landscape kept within modernity by the local people of the <i>Utawallu</i> valley in Imbabura province of Northern Ecuador. Conservation efforts to incorporate cultural diversity alongside the biological diversity of the significant protected area in Western Ecuador are needed in order to improve protection of the traditional ancestral farmscape of the <i>Imbakucha</i> Basin. The different characteristics of the socio-ecological production landscape present in the site should lead to a successful initiation of a new wave of conservation in which Andean cultures are prioritized and cultural ecosystem services (re)valued.			
Activities and/or practices employed			
We developed ethnographic research around the most important sacred sites identified by the community members and made a photographic survey of the biocultural elements that are part of the heritage of the <i>Utawallu runakuna</i> . For the first time, a map of the historic sites of religious significance was produced and an inventory of the major biodiversity components was prepared. Along with forest-páramo dynamics, we identified boundary layers for cultural ecosystem services and rectified criteria to consider the Benefits from Nature to People offered with cultural values in this biocultural heritage area.			
Results			
Incorporating the sacred dimension is only one of many ways to achieve integration of CES into biocultural heritage preservation. By presenting the uniqueness of the <i>Utawallu</i> and their mountainscape, we seek to sensitize international audiences in helping break the trend for protecting nature only because of its utilitarian value, commoditizing the services of nature (such as providing, regulating or supporting the physical content of the landscape or phenosystem), but also for protecting the nature/culture hybrid of the present—mainly because of the contributions from nature to people (such as intangibles, social and landscape values for the psychosocial mindscape or cryptosystem), including the Andean identity.			
Lessons learned (<i>factors in success or failure, challenges and opportunities</i>)			
By continuing to consider Andean forests and 'páramo' grasslands as 'natural' ecosystems, instead of syncretic, manufactured SEPLs, conservationists and government agencies are hindering the (re)affirmation of the cultural identity of the 'Otavaleños'; instead, they are bolstering the hegemony of a foreign concept of conservation based on consumption-linked, species-oriented conservation and a forced "pristine" conceptual framework that separates the human dimension from everything else, rather than observing the ancestral cosmological vision of the <i>Utawallukuna</i> , integrating the Andean trilemma for a comprehensive CES valuation.			
Key messages			
More research must be conducted into sacred site conservation and its relation to spirituality, as well as into the objectification of landscape features, ecological knowledge, ecotourism, environmental education and environmental ethics. Additionally, future studies in <i>Imbakucha</i> should include investigations of the adaptations of <i>Utawallu</i> communities to the ever-changing cultural environment surrounding them. These studies should index the reification of landscape attributes, and formal protected area status should be given to the main features of the landscape with appropriate designations.			
Relationship to other IPSI activities (<i>if the case study is related to any other IPSI collaborative activities, case studies, etc.</i>)			
This case study originally appeared in the Satoyama Initiative Thematic Review v. 5.			
Funding (<i>any relevant information about funding of activities or projects described in the case study</i>)			

Contributions to Global Agendas

CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the CBD’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

Strategic Goal A				Strategic Goal B					
■			■				■		
									
Strategic Goal C				Strategic Goal D			Strategic Goal E		
■							●	●	
									

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the SDGs respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

1 NO POVERTY 	2 ZERO HUNGER 	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 
		■			■			
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	13 CLIMATE ACTION 	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	