



This report provides an overview of findings from a research project carried out from June-December, 2013. Funded by Intrepid Travel, the project explored tourism impacts among four indigenous communities visited by Intrepid groups en route to Machu Picchu. Local views and specific concerns are expressed in recommendations for Intrepid and communities, supporting sustainability through unlocked opportunities for local people.

Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism?

*Community Perceptions Of Intrepid
Travel In Peru's Sacred Valley*

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I. Tourism in Peru's Sacred Valley

Travelers of all kinds are drawn to Peru for its remarkable biodiversity, its extraordinary landscapes, and its rich cultural heritage. Recovering from a decade of political and economic instability in the 1980s, the Peruvian government created the Commission of Promotion of Peru (PROMPERU) in 1993 to promote the nation's image as a global tourism destination. Branding and advertising efforts appear to have worked, with the country seeing a 380% increase in international tourist arrivals between 1995 and 2010. In 2013, Peru's tourism industry generated an estimated 3.8 billion USD and brought in over three million visitors.

With rising interests in cultural and adventure tourism, many of the international visitors to Peru are drawn to the Incan ruins at Machu Picchu. Once part of a vast civilization spanning from Chile to Ecuador, these ruins are located 50 miles northwest of the city of Cuzco in the south-central highlands and represent the most frequently visited destination in Peru. Many aspects of ancient Inca culture live on in this 50 mile stretch of land between Cuzco and Machu Picchu – an area known as the Sacred Valley. Among the many rural communities of the region, the Inca language of Quechua is still spoken, colorful textiles are woven and worn, and gastronomic delights such as native potato, quinoa, and Guinea pig are commonly consumed. Not every tourist augments their trip to Machu Picchu with a visit to one of these communities, but tourism trends (including the current construction of an international airport outside Cuzco) suggest that the Sacred Valley will be seeing more visitors in the future.

II. What is Poverty?

Internationally, individuals living on less than \$1.25 USD per day are often said to be suffering from extreme poverty. However, there is increasing recognition that poverty cannot be described in economic terms alone. A lack of money may hinder one's ability to live the life he/she desires, but other factors may also be at work. On a personal level, ill health, malnutrition, lack of education, and other deprivations may hinder our ability to live the kind of life we would like to live. On a broader scale, things like political unrest or cultural norms leading to gender or racial inequality can also restrict people's ability to lead flourishing lives. Poverty has thus been described more recently in terms of *unfreedom* – as being deprived of the opportunity to do or be that which we value. In this way, governments and businesses interested in fighting poverty should place their focus not on economic growth alone, but on unlocking opportunities for people based on site-specific interests and needs.

In the Sacred Valley and surrounding highlands, tourism revenues have been used to address deprivations experienced by many Quechua communities. For the four communities receiving Intrepid Travel groups (Chichubamba, Amaru, Sacaca, and Qorqor), government projects funded through tourism taxes and visitor fees have been implemented to improve infrastructure and to support local development. These projects have included the construction of clinics focused on infant and maternal health, small libraries with books and computers (internet still to come), soccer fields, drainage systems, and bathrooms with showers/sinks/flushing toilets. Due to the high volume of tourist traffic in the region, government has also encouraged people in many communities to form home-stay or rural tourism associations and to begin receiving visitors in their homes. The tourism associations working directly with Intrepid Travel in each of the four communities were the primary focus of this study.

III. Intrepid Travel Community Visits

While visiting a Sacred Valley community (Chichubamba, Amaru, Sacaca, and Qorqor are all within a 1.5 hour drive from Cuzco), Intrepid Travel groups interact with members of the tourism association working with Intrepid in that community. Intrepid groups are small (no more than 16 passengers) and are led by a Peruvian guide who provides translation from Quechua or Spanish into English for the

visitors. Before Intrepid groups arrive, members of the local tourism association may spend up to several hours preparing lunch and setting out their crafts or textiles for visitors to purchase. Upon arrival, groups usually begin by eating lunch in an association member's home or in a communal meeting space. Lunches often include soup and a main dish (e.g., chicken or Guinea pig), though vegetarian and gluten-free options are available. While some ingredients are purchased at nearby markets, meals usually contain fresh vegetables (potatoes, green onions, carrots, or quinoa) that association members grow themselves. After lunch, visitors may participate in activities and have an opportunity to purchase goods or crafts from association members. In Chichubamba, visitors may attend one or more of six different *talleres* (workshops). Workshop topics include chocolate/coffee, ceramics, floriculture, agriculture, honeybees, and chicha (corn beer). In Amaru, Sacaca, and Qorqor, visitors learn about traditional weaving practices and have an opportunity to purchase textiles from association members, including blankets, hats, belts, bracelets, and more. After spending several hours in a community, Intrepid visitors and their guide bid tourism association members farewell and continue on their way to Machu Picchu.



An Intrepid group poses for a photo after harvesting barley with members of the tourism association in Qorqor.



The honeybee workshop in Chichubamba is a popular activity for Intrepid visitors.

IV. Community Overviews

Table 1. *Overview Of Tourism Associations By Community.*

Characteristic	Community			
	Chichubamba	Amaru	Sacaca	Qorqor
Approx. population	684	1,010	655	200
Elevation (meters)	2,870	3,800	3,450	3,900
Name of tourism association ¹ working with Intrepid (year formed)	<i>Asociación de Agroturismo – Agrotourism Association (2005)</i>	<i>Comité de Mujeres, Amaru – Committee of Women, Amaru (2008)</i>	<i>Asociación Sumaq Warmi – Rich Women Association (2012)</i>	<i>Asociación Munay Ttica – Beautiful Flower Association (2013)</i>
Year association began receiving Intrepid groups	2008	2010	2010	2013
# of members (2013)	14	12	12	24
Percent female members	79%	83%	75%	92%
Estimated number of Intrepid visitors (2013)	800	350	227	515
Tourism season	Year round	April – December	April – December	Year round
Source of equally distributed income	None	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Source of individual income	Lunch and workshop revenues (e.g., selling ceramics or chocolate)	Hand-woven textiles	Hand-woven textiles	Hand-woven textiles
Price of lunch for visitors ²	15 soles (6 USD)	15 soles (6 USD)	15 soles (6 USD)	25 soles (9 USD)
Average monthly tourism income (per associate)	190 soles (70 USD)	54 soles (20 USD)	63 soles (23 USD)	40 soles (15 USD)
Average monthly income from Intrepid (per associate)	114 soles (42 USD)	54 soles (20 USD)	63 soles (23 USD)	36 soles (13 USD)
Tourism income as % of total monthly income (per household)	17%	29%	17%	23%

1. Chichubamba and Sacaca had only one tourism association operating in their respective communities as of 2013, while Amaru had a total of four and Qorqor had a total of two.
2. Exchange rate of 1 USD = 2.7 nuevo soles; all lunch prices cost 5 soles extra (~1.85 USD) if visitors wished to eat *cuy* (Guinea pig); the association in Qorqor charged more than other communities, preparing an Andean Buffet that offered an array of local foods rather than just soup and a main dish.

V. Local Views Of Tourism Impacts

Table 2. Comparison Of Positive And Negative Change Generated By Intrepid Visits For Tourism Association Members.

Reported Change ¹	Chichubamba	Significant Change Observed		
		Amaru	Sacaca	Qorqor
Positive				
Home improvement	X	X	X	
Increased quality of life	X			
Happiness with tourism		X	X	X
Providing for family	X	X	X	
Sharing culture/ideas	X			X
Overcoming, persevering			X	
Learning (e.g., business skills)	X	X	X	X
Women empowered	X	X	X	X
Social diversion with other associates				X
Negative				
Feeling pushed around	X			
Less time for other activities		X		X
Conflict/inequality in association	X			X
Conflict/inequality in community	X		X	X
Impeded communication	X	X	X	
Feeling demotivated from cancelled visits		X		

1. Themes identified via interviews, Intrepid/community/government records, and field notes. Changes were considered significant if reported by more than one individual in the same community, or by individuals in more than one community. Intrepid Travel may not have been solely responsible for a given change, but company-community interactions did influence observed or reported changes to varying degrees.

VI. Recommendations

Table 3. *Actionable Findings.*

Concern ¹ Raised By Tourism Associations	How Intrepid Travel Agreed To Address Concern
<i>Confirmation of a group visit just one day prior gives little time to purchase ingredients, prepare lunch, and communicate with associates.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip leaders must contact community tourism associations three days instead of one day prior to a group's scheduled visit, informing the association of the number of lunches that will be purchased (communities will receive this amount, even if the number of lunches actually eaten changes).
<i>In some months, as high as 50% of group visits are being cancelled in communities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While lunches are optional for visitors, the community visits are required as paid portions of passenger itineraries; that is, trip leaders (except for in extreme cases of a strike, severe weather, etc.) must visit the communities with their groups. If passengers are sick, they can decide to stay behind, meeting up with the rest of the group at a later time.
<i>Intrepid group arrival times are inconsistent.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrepid groups will arrive in the communities between 11 and 11:30am on the day of the scheduled visit.
<i>Passengers purchase textiles elsewhere before having a chance to buy from partner communities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip leaders will not be permitted to make any stops with their groups at artisanal markets prior to a community visit.
<i>Lunch prices have not kept up with rising food costs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch prices in the communities will be raised from 15 to 20 soles (from 5.50 to 7.30 USD) per passenger.
<i>At times, trip leader contact info is not provided in the programs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEAK/Intrepid will provide each community with the contact info (telephone numbers) of all trip leaders.
<i>Trip leaders often demand that their group eats lunch or does an activity/workshop in a 'favorite' associate's home. While this may be done to help a friend or to provide passengers with the best possible experience, it ignores local norms that seek to distribute benefits equally among association members.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip leaders and chauffeurs will respect community decisions as to where lunch will be served, who will be providing a given workshop (e.g., 'talleres' in Chichubamba), and the activities provided. Passenger interests will still determine which workshop(s) the group will attend, but tourism associations will decide which associate will be providing that workshop (i.e., guides cannot choose favorites, as this increases conflict among associates).
<i>Associates have had difficulty knowing exactly when to visit the office in Cuzco to pick up programs. They sometimes make several visits because they are unable to reach the office, and programs aren't ready upon arrival.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs with the schedule of community visits for the upcoming month will be ready for pick-up by tourism associations on the 29th of each month. This means the Cuzco office should have programs prepared by the 28th. If the 29th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the program should be ready by the Friday before the weekend on which the 29th falls.

1. Concerns were communicated in a gathering in Chichubamba on November 30, 2013. Participants included five Intrepid Travel staff, three representatives from each of the four communities, and the researcher and his assistant.

Table 4. *Remaining Recommendations For Intrepid Travel.*

Item	Recommendation
<i>Local involvement in trip leader training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite tourism association leaders from partner communities to interact and share with Intrepid staff during trip leader trainings, providing greater context of community histories/interests for trip leaders to share with passengers.
<i>Community summaries for trip leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve community tourism associations in creating handouts for Intrepid trip leaders, emphasizing local voices in descriptions of community and association backgrounds/challenges/demographics/etc. These handouts may augment the summaries compiled as a result of this research.
<i>Responsible Travel Coordinator position</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstate a full-time position at the Cuzco office to report on local interests, progress, concerns, etc., to guide interactions with tourism associations and to support long-term company-community partnerships. The individual hired should be familiar with community-based tourism development, with participatory methods, with local culture, etc. Job responsibilities might include providing workshops (in partnership with non-governmental organizations or government) on technology, gastronomy, accounting, and English language acquisition.
<i>Community partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue and communicate a course of committed involvement in those communities currently visited. This may entail creating a list of ‘expectations’ together with respective tourism associations so that all parties are aware of ‘game-ending’ behaviors (e.g., internal community conflict jeopardizing the safety of passengers, extreme focus on money-making while taking advantage of visitors, high numbers of Intrepid group cancellations, etc.). Desirable behaviors may also be outlined. Above all, this is about strengthening sustainable partnerships through trust as communities seek the assurance that Intrepid won’t just ‘move on’ to other communities when issues arise.

VII. Conclusion

Intrepid Travel visits have led to unlocked opportunities for tourism association members in Chichubamba, Amaru, Sacaca, and Qorqor. The visits have also created or amplified some negative changes in these communities. Negative tourism impacts were most apparent in the community of Chichubamba, where conflict was influenced by a lack of leadership, unequal distribution of benefits, and increased individualization among members. Poverty alleviation in each community was observed as association members reported unlocked opportunities through an increased command over economic resources. Unlocked opportunities included an enhanced ability to improve homes, to educate kids, to provide for families, and to improve overall quality of life. In all four tourism associations, Intrepid visits also enhanced opportunities for women to work, to earn an income, and to be respected by their husbands. On November 30, 2013, space was given to share and address specific association concerns in a four-community gathering with Intrepid Staff. One of the primary concerns Intrepid agreed to address related to impeded communication stemming from schedule inconsistencies, unclear expectations, bad cell phone reception, or ongoing conflict with an Intrepid staff member in Cuzco.

This report provides a snapshot of local perceptions of Intrepid visits and tourism-based poverty alleviation. Individual community reports provide further information on research methods and community views, including specific comments made by local people on tourism impacts. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations presented in this study, based on the interests and views of Sacred Valley communities working with Intrepid, may unlock opportunities and enhance sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships over time for Intrepid and local people.