

Milagros Santaria: professional Kamayoq

Today, she brings technical support as an expert of the sector alpaquero

By the European Union Delegation to Peru



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"The kamayoqs are experts trained and specialised with theory and practice merging ancient knowledge with modern science. The training process is open and aims to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities in handling technologies."

Roberto Montero, Manager of Soluciones Prácticas

The community of Negro Mayo is located at an altitude of 4500 metres in one of the poorest regions of Peru: Ayacucho.

Historically, the community of Negro Mayo was dedicated to raising Alpacas. Milagros Santaria is a heiress of this tradition. Since she was a child she has understood that the present and future of her family and village reside in the care of animals, and at seven years old she was already involved in animals' raising. "I understood that alpaca was everything for me, this is what my mother taught me", she told us with wisdom. She added that then "we didn't know how to improve our work, how to technically attend alpacas, how to increase be more productive". Milagros will learn it several years after, with the arrival of Soluciones Prácticas and the Paqocha's project to her community.

Before, Milagros seriously considered leaving Negro Mayo and looking for a future in the city. "We raised alpacas in a disorderly manner, with a short-term vision, and I felt discouraged", she told us. But destiny wanted her to stay with her people and to become an agent of change and progress for her village. When Milagros met the project's team, she paid a lot of attention to what they said. "They convoked us for an assembly and told us that it was possible to raise better quality alpacas in order to improve our incomes, and that we shouldn't get discouraged because alpacas are of great value".

This is how started the new story of Milagros and the alpacas. She participated to the Paqocha project's training and some time after she became an expert, part of the school of kamayoq. Thanks to her participation in the school, Milagros was certified in alpacas' productive breeding by the National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of Educative Quality (*Sineace* in Spanish). Kamayoqs, as Milagros, preserve ancient traditions and valorize them nowadays, while improving their technological skills and abilities.



Before, Milagros was frustrated by seeing some of her new-born alpacas (eight were born every year) die promptly or getting sick. Now, thanks to reproductive knowledge and technics she learnt during the training, she is able to anticipate and manage her own birth-rate rhythm.

Milagros' objective is to raise 25 alpacas every year, and she is on the right track. Besides, her status of Kamayoq enables her to collaborate with people from her village. "People come to me so I can give them advices about breeding, and I can take care of their animals when they are sick by observing their symptoms. This is a good work and it benefits to my family's income".

Before, Milagros and her mother worked in a disordered manner with alpacas. She even considered leaving her village but now, nothing could make her abandon Negro Mayo.

Source: Video <http://www.solucionespracticas.org.pe/que-es-ser-kamayoq-video>
The project: kamayoqs's training



The project aims to improve food safety of rural families dependent on alpacas' rearing in the regions of Apurímac and Ayacucho through the organization of a sustainable and innovative extension system, based on the dynamism of local producers supported by regional and municipal governments.

In both regions 68 Kamayoq (23 women and 45 men) have been trained on breeding, shearing and management of alpaca's fibre. 58 kamayoq (86% of the total of people trained) brought training services and technical assistance to more than 1000 families in communities of Apurímac and Ayacucho.

22 technological innovations have been practiced in communities with the participation and leadership of kamayoq improving productivity and food safety, notably through production and natural resources management and the diversification of alpaca's exploitation.

As part of strengthening local and regional governments and producers' organisations, 26 local projects and one regional projects were implemented and ordinances were release in eight municipalities in order to promote the *alpaquero* sector and to recognise the role of peasants as technical assistance providers.

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- Targeted zones: high mountains districts of Cotaruse and Caraybamba (Aymaraes), Antabamba, Juan Espinoza Medrano and Huaquirca (Antabamba) in Apurímac; and Puquio (Lucanas) and Cora Cora (Parinacochas) in Ayacucho.

- Beneficiaries: 4 000 rural families dedicated to raising livestock and other social actors committed in production chains linked to this activity.

- Total amount:
€ 1,012, 521.52.
EU contribution (85%):
€ 860,643.2

- There are more than 800 knowledge products available on Infoalpacas www.infoalpacas.com.pe, portal created during the execution of the Paqocha project. It includes publications, videos, news and key contacts. During the first year the website received more than 56.226 visits and now, it receives 5.500 visits and 2000 downloads every month.

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