

MOUNTAIN PROTECTION AWARD 2015 – APPLICATION

INITIATIVE 48 – MUJER MONTANA CHILE

Initiative Form

Title

"Mujer Montaña", , promoviendo sustentablemente la práctica del montañismo y deportes de aventura en mujeres Latinoamericanas.

Created on

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Category

Culture and Education

We are a

NGO

Name

Griselda Moreno / Denys Sanjinés

Location

Latinoamérica

Date Duration

Largo Plazo (10 años)

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1. Please describe the goal and objectives of this project

Mujer Montaña is a non-profit, inclusive and unifying project. It aims to promote and facilitate good practices in trekking, rock climbing, mountaineering and adventure sports for women at different ages, beginners and professionals, focusing especially on environmental education, the appreciation of our natural resources and highlighting the effects of climate change in Latin America. Thus, the project creates spaces for the exchange and training in not only mountaineering and sports, but it also facilitates important social and cultural exchanges. In order to realise this aim, we established International Mountaineering and Climbing Encounters in different Latin American countries, looking for local hostesses with whom to share experiences and ascents in various cordilleras on the continent. The Encounters unite activities at various levels of difficulty, in addition to the realisation of educational exchange across the regions, as well as the sharing of different views on the environment, its preservation and care and generating proposals of immediate action for its protection.

We aim for:

- Declare the project a special interest for the Latin American states as a proposal that unites the nations in terms of sports and recreation, the environment and culture, and in favour of gender equality.
- Raise awareness and promote in an engaged and active manner through mountaineering as a sport, the environmental conscience and its effective education, promoting female rights and their access to natural resources in their surroundings.
- Achieve sports, environmental, and cultural exchanges with countries on other continents, facilitate the union of a group of women from at least four countries who constitute the staff and the expeditions that are developed on a yearly basis.
- Write history in feminine mountaineering in Latin America through the concretisation of feminine expeditions which objectives are not yet realised by women – be that the opening of new climbing routes, mountain traverses or new expeditions.
- Publish the experiences through photographic registers, literary accounts, audio and film footage, which all contribute to show a sports, environmental and cultural angle in the practice of mountaineering.

Realised results: - 1st International Mountaineering and Climbing Encounter Bolivia: June/July 2013. Participation from 3 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Peru. - 2nd International Mountaineering and Climbing Encounter Argentina: April/May 2014. Participation from 6 countries: Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Canada, Belgium, and Norway. - 3rd International Mountaineering and Climbing Encounter Peru: June/July 2015. Participation from 13 countries: Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, El Salvador, México, Norway, France, Spain and Poland.

2. What is the contribution your project brings to mountain protection? How does it fit the category (see above) you have chosen?

Mujer Montaña coordinates and executes cultural and educational activities at an international, local and rural level, generating information and active awareness of the various mountain environments and the management of water resources in reference to climate change. This is facilitated through capacitation-building, informational talks, film festivals, cultural activities etc. with the aim to promote the practice of mountaineering and outdoor activities and the conservation of the environment where it takes place, as well as clean air and water for the generations to come. Mujer Montaña was invited to renowned international film festivals like BANFF (Banff Mountain Film Festival World) in Argentina, and INKAFEST in Bolivia, to present the project and speak about its contribution to and support of environmental causes. The project was declared of special interest by the Argentine and Bolivian states as a contribution to a bi-national sports, environmental and cultural initiative, receiving open support from their respective representatives. The support from various private businesses and institutions were and are also fundamental in the starting and continuous organisation of the project.

3. How does your project benefit the local communities where it is implemented and how do you collaborate with them?

There is a tight link between the project, the protection of the mountain and the local communities. We understand the importance of working together with the inhabitants and their natural environment and take their concepts and worldviews into consideration. In the course of the project's lifetime, we have organised free capacity-building courses in the rural village of Peñas, La Paz, Bolivia. In addition, we have held presentations at the International Mountain and Environment Film Festival INKAFEST in Bolivia, in collaboration with The Bolivian Mountain Institute, where it was discussed topics such as climate change and its management in relation to the community, the mountaineer, and the urban Bolivian citizen. During the 2nd Encounter in Argentina there were held informative workshop to the children and community in general in the rural village of San Antonio de los Cobres. The basecamp was also an important setting to teach about respect for Mother Earth and her protection. In the latest (3rd) Encounter in Cusco, Peru, we hosted an open conference where various speakers presented

topics such as glaciology and the current situation of the glaciers in the Peruvian Andes, their retreat and the future prospects for the next 50 years. It was also spoken about the Andean biodiversity, local beneficial food from the region like the quinoa, and the awareness and gratefulness we should keep in mind at the moment of consuming our food. In all of the project's activities there is a strict policy of not leaving any footprint, thus there is a focus on the recollection of waste, the use of toilet paper and the responsible management of such in order to leave the basecamp and our path without any trace, but that of the boots. We do responsible printing and conscious distribution of material for all of our events, limiting the amount of posters and information flyers in order not to generate waste material. (Examples: 200 posters per event, 200 folded information flyers and 100 certificates). In addition, we laminate old posters for their reutilisation in future events. Lastly, the project supports adventure races and its waste management in Bolivia and Argentina. We have, for example, taken part in the organisation of the La Paz Marathon and the La Calchaqui Ultra Trail, Cafayate Argentina.

4. For the implementation of your project, do you collaborate with local, regional, or national authorities? If so, how?

Mujer Montaña was initiated and is driven by the mountaineer and entrepreneur Denys Sanjinés (Bolivia) and the journalist, photographer and mountaineer Griselda Moreno (Argentina). The project is supported by the Provincial Ministry of Human Rights in Salta, The Republic of Argentina, and the Vice Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. However, in the International Encounters and all of our other activities we collaborate with the local authorities such as municipalities, associations, and private initiatives, in order to reach a larger public and enhance the positive impact we aim to generate, which is intended as an act of earning legitimacy.

In the case of Bolivia, we work closely together with the community of Peñas in the capacity-building of young enthusiasts to promote responsible and eco-friendly tourism in the surrounding mountains, especially in regards to activities such as trekking and climbing. In relation, we have developed eco-friendly circuits and informative material to orient visitors accordingly.

Our reference is Antonio Topio: p.topio@gmail.com

In Argentina, we are as an example, working with the organisation KAS: Mountain Training and Responsible Competition. We have taken part in the reforestation post-competition together with volunteering participants as a manner to compensate the traces left by the runners. Our reference Natalia Suppa: suppanatalia@gmail.com Another example from Argentina is the work we do with the Mountaineering School of San Antonio de los Cobres, situated in the Argentinian Puna at almost 4000masl belonging to the municipality of San Antonio de los Cobres. Our work connects various activities spanning from the organisation of mountain treks with children between 4 and 12 years old who while receiving more or less academic information about the environment, teach us about local medicinal plants and their uses. Matías Rangeón: piedrasheladas@hotmail.com

In Peru, one example is the work that the project does together with the Association of Indigenous Populations in Action – APU, in order to foment sustainable development in areas in extreme poverty in the rural and urban environments in and around Cusco and Valle Sagrado. This we do through the collaboration in environmental education, transmission of technical knowledge (technical irrigation systems, water management, reforestation techniques, and in eco-construction) and capacitation-building of Andean communities in responsible tourism. Katy Leonardo: kleonardo@outlook.es

5. Describe how your project goes "beyond business as usual" and is an example of (regional) best practice in the protection of mountain environment.

Mujer Montaña is the first project of its kind in Latin America. In this continent the practice of mountaineering and its tight relation with environmental protection is not yet formally established. In this part of the world social habits and traditions are different, explaining partly why women have not had access to or education in, outdoor recreational activities like mountaineering. Our project is an

example of best practice in the protection and conservation of the environment in the mountains because we concern ourselves that our actions are not causing any adverse effects on our surroundings.

Some of our conscious actions are: avoiding the use of detergents; collecting and bringing back our waste, including toilet paper; using exclusively areas assigned for camping; understanding and respecting the bolting of new climbing routes and its impact on the surroundings; limiting the amount of participants to our Encounters; respecting local traditions and practices. Interestingly, we highlight that Mujer Montaña integrates people of various generations at the Encounters. This permits an exchange of knowledge, values and learning at various stages in life, and accordingly influence on the ways we relate to our environment and nature. In South America mountaineering is exercised relatively newly by local people, and even more recent by women. The inhabitants, although living in mountainous regions are not aware of the importance of the mountains on an environmental level. They are only naturally adored as part of the everyday life and there is no conscious management of the resources related, a motivation and knowledge this project aims to extend.

6. Describe the management of your project activity

Mujer Montaña has its original headquarters in Argentina and Bolivia, however, what is special about the project and what is ever forming the organizational chart along the project's reach and growth, is the generation of new active centres in other countries. These centres are driven by people who transmit the spirit of the project, the 1st new base being developed in Peru, Cusco, under the management of Lixayda Vázquez. The project has also other people that make up the staff which includes Karoline Kaasa Dahl (Norway) and Mercedes López (Argentina) in the roles of logistics and general administration, and Martin Avilés (Bolivia) a professional rescue worker as head of security and who works as vital support and holds courses in first aid techniques at the International Encounters.

The capacity building of each of the staff is on an independent basis, each of the directors are professionals in distinct sectors, with more than 10 years of experience in mountaineering and are national sports representatives in and around mountain events in their respective countries. The project aims to help produce certifications, capacitating primarily its staff according to her/his skills, especially with that in mind that in South America there does not exist official certifications except that of mountain guide. Among our objectives at a medium term basis is to create the Mujer Montaña School, focused on the environment and cultural awareness as a way of living in harmony with the nature. To exemplify the abovementioned, we aim for an international certificate to correctly bolt new rock climbing routes, a certification that does not yet exist in South America. It was organised courses for the bolting of routes in both Argentina and Bolivia, intending the collaboration of recognised instructors (though not certified) to encourage and show ways to open and bolt sport climbing routes respecting the surroundings. Financially, being a non-profit initiative, it is currently sustained thanks to the management of auto-generated resources and the voluntary work by the founders and staff.

For the realisation of the International Encounters (which is the way the project was launched to the world) and other activities in the respective countries, we search for sponsors that are interested in promoting responsible andinism, and in this manner making the events more accessible for the participants. In relation, we collaborate with NGOs, public organisms, private businesses, which support the project financially, in-kind services or with human resources.

7. Describe how your projects support stewardship in mountain regions; such as the promotion of volunteer participation opportunities.

Through the International Encounters organised by Mujer Montaña, people with various nationalities are gathered. There were 13 nationalities participating in the 3rd Encounter in Peru where we visited the little known mountain cordilleras of Urubamba and Vilcanota. Being able to provide to almost a hundred people a range of services and an infrastructure apt to develop the activities planned in the

mountains, linked the project both economically and personally to the local administrations in the different regions that we visited. The previous local management and coordination for the organisation of the event by the staff permitted confidence for the participants to interact with the communities, generating future bonds that could anticipate voluntary support to the region. For example, various participants in the 2nd Encounter in Argentina 2014 donated mountain equipment to the Mountaineering school of San Antonio de los Cobres so that the children would have more possibilities to climb and do outdoor activities, in addition to offer workshops about its uses on a voluntary basis. The capacity-building events in rural areas free of charge organised by Mujer Montaña in collaboration with Mountain clubs and public institutions, provide the local communities with alternatives and diversification of income generating activities. In the organisation of these proposed events we are supported by guides or skilled local people.