

FIRST ANDEAN NETWORK OF ENTREPRENEURS IN ASTROTOURISM

G. Pinzón¹, N. Vásquez² and Beatriz García³

It is inspiring to see how astronomy is being used to foster development and improve local conditions in various regions, including those with challenging weather conditions such as the Andean Region in Latin America. In this contribution we describe the main goals of the first andean network of entrepreneurs in astrotourism and possible roles that professional and amateur astronomers could play in it.

Despite being one of the most cloudy regions around world and thus not very suitable for conducting optical astronomical observations, in countries as Ecuador, Colombia, Perú, Venezuela and Bolivia the interest on Astronomy has been growing during last two decades. This interest is not only to a professional level of formation but also it is related to some rural communities searching for improvement of their own local conditions through sustainable projects that make use of astronomy. Pioneer OAD projects such as “Astronomy for Himalayan Livelihood Creation” have shown how digital education, energy access to remote unelectrified communities and in general, an improvement of local conditions can be reached through astronomy⁴.

With the aim to promote responsible and innovative tourism of stars in the Andean region, especially in rural areas in which it could become a real driving force for local economies, the OAD and EPN (Ecuador) organised the IV Workshop Astronomía en los Andes : “Engaged communities in development through Astrotourism” held in Quito in October 2023. Almost seventy entrepreneurs from 4 andean countries were sharing experiences with experts. An important outcome of this meeting was the creation of the **First Andean Network of Entrepreneurs in Astrotourism**, a platform



Fig. 1. First Andean Regional meeting on astrotourism in Quito during October 2023

for dialogue between entrepreneurs and experts aimed to avoid misconceptions in astronomy and to reaches communities with a clear explanation about how science and particularly astronomy works.

One important task of the first andean network is to enrich the experiences and practices through meetings with astronomy students, amateur and professional astronomers. As well as collaborations, the network requires support from initiatives such as the Network for Astronomy School Education - NASE⁵. It's truly fascinating how astronomy can be used as a tool for development, education, and economic growth. These initiatives are demonstrations of the power of science in transforming communities and improving livelihoods.

¹Observatorio Astronómico Nacional, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia (gapinzone@unal.edu.co)

²Escuela Politécnica Nacional, Quito, Ecuador (nicolas.vasquez@epn.edu.ec)

³ITeDA (CNEA-CONICET-UNSAM), Mendoza, Argentina (beatrizgarciautn@gmail.com)

⁴<https://www.astro4dev.org/category/astronomy-for-himalayan-livelihood-creation/>

⁵<https://www.naseprogram.org/es/>