

# RETAMA FACT SHEET

Water Security for 7 High Mountain Communities in Peru



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Instituto de Montaña is the Legacy institution of [The Mountain Institute](#). Our team works in Peru since 1995. Our projects integrate conservation, community and culture, our 3 Cs. Over the last years the mountain communities where we work have consistently raised the problem of glaciers' rapid recession and the resulting drying-up of water springs, wetlands and highland pastures. In 2013, two of the communities where we work decided to bring back to life a technique used by their forefathers to promote the storage of water underground. It was fascinating to document that these pre-Columbian technologies were an effective, low-cost, nature-based solution to climate change that brought multiple other co-benefits.

We are now supporting [RETAMA](#) a larger network of communities exchanging traditional knowledge, expertise, and solutions. This project contributes to scaling-up indigenous solutions to climate change impacts in the Andes.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Seven wetlands, silt dams and/or infiltration ditches restored using indigenous knowledge to secure water supply and offset loss of glaciers
2. Ancestral indigenous knowledge of water management is recognized as a nature-based, cost-effective mountain adaptation to climate change.
3. The RETAMA network of communities has incorporated new members and scales up the solutions to 7 new places.

## ABOUT THE PHOTO...

Only six months after the community of Canchayllo in central Peru restored an old system of infiltration ditches, small lagoons, wetlands and green pastures reappeared in the landscape. Having fresh grass in the dry season is essential because this is also the lamb birth season when ewes need to produce milk. Thus, by rescuing local knowledge, restoring ecosystems and securing water once again in the high plateau, families, and women in particular, also rebuilt their means of livelihood.

## EXPECTED BENEFITS

- **Conservation:** by building small dams, infiltration ditches and silt dams with indigenous techniques, communities help bring back to life peatland, wetland and grassland ecosystems that retain and infiltrate rainwater. Restoring ecosystems also benefit migratory birds making their way south from as far as the USA or Canada.
- **Community:** households and the community as a whole benefit by increasing dry-season water flow for human consumption, crop irrigation and animal production, thus buffering the loss of their glaciers. By focusing on solutions that require collective action, community institutions are reinvigorated.
- **Culture:** pride in local knowledge and wider recognition of the effectiveness of indigenous solutions fosters innovation, the sense of community and commitment to place.

## CONTACT US

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