

# ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY TOURISM MODEL FROM THE APPROACH OF RURAL CAPITAL ASSETS IN THREE REGIONS OF PERU

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to identify the interrelations between the Rural Community Tourism Model (RCT) of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce and Tourism of Peru, and the framework of rural capital assets, based on the capacity of communities to generate strategies of territorial development. Nine rural communities were studied which have developed the RCT model with success in three touristic regions of the south of Peru: Cusco, Puno and Arequipa. A total of 45 interviews were applied to people devoted to farming tasks, handicrafts, lodging, tourism guides, gastronomy, and communication promoters; also, to business owners and municipal authorities. The results indicate that four communities have succeeded in generating the tourism strategies of the model, two communities have lost the view of social fabric and the RCT value chain, two more communities have difficulty with the accessibility to the place and the lack of tourism promotion; and one last community is starting to develop the RCT. The conclusion is that the socioeconomic activity of the rural capital of the RCT model allows the local development and welfare of rural families in Peru.

**Keywords:** capital, rural capital, community, territory, Andean tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the forms of sustainable tourism of greatest interest nowadays is Rural Community Tourism (RCT), understood as a form of self-managed entrepreneurial organization conducted by the communities (whether peasant family units by inhabitants of a region, cooperatives or indigenous peoples), integrating this type of activity in a complementary way to the traditional ones carried out in rural spaces (Mbaiwa and Stronza, 2010; Gascón J., 2011; Ruiz-Ballesteros, 2011), in a participatory (Kieffer, 2014), planned (Moraes, Ribeiro, and Emmendoerfer, 2013), and sustainable way (Sariago, 2014). Democratic and solidary practices are developed through this model, both in the work and in the distribution of benefits (Gascón and Cañada, 2008), searching for a greater connection of poor communities with the tourism market to increase their benefits (Ruiz-Ballesteros and Brondizio, 2013), and strengthening the sense of community (Flores *et al.*, 2014), in order to eradicate poverty and marginalization (Organización Mundial del Turismo-OMT, 2013).

The development of the RCT occupies and represents an activity of territorial nature, based on environmental, social, cultural and economic principles, where the natural

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resources and the local communities as a whole create productive and economic dynamics that contribute to the integration of a tourism activity (Pérez, 2010; Cabanilla *et al.*, 2017; Cabanilla, 2018).

The space where the tourism activity develops is linked to the characteristics of the territory and their synergies, something tangible and external to the subject, although associated to it through the inevitable crystallization of social relationships in the material space, represented by “resources contained in the territory where the individual lives”, which allows improving the living conditions (Levy, 2011; Orgaz, 2013). When identifying that the territory and the subjects are part of a space in its entirety, these resources should be re-conceptualized as “capital assets” that are susceptible of gaining value through tourism activities.

Management based on the capital assets for community development with a potentially integrating approach helps to define, evaluate and build the capacity of a community to become involved in tourism development. Initially, these assets are identified as gifts, abilities and capacities that are inherent to individuals, citizens’ associations, local institutions and the physical environment. The “rural capital goods” include: natural capital, cultural capital, social capital, human capital, physical capital, and financial capital, which are fundamental to support the efforts of local development (Bennett *et al.*, 2012). The accumulation and utilization of an unspecified combination of the various capitals provide the communities with the capacity and freedom to develop tourism with success. As such, the various elements of rural capital are essential components of the base of assets of rural tourism businesses. Other factors, such as accessible facilities, essential tourism information, high service standards and excellent customer service, are also considered. This implies that the quality of the experience of the RCT depends on the quality of the rural capital that sustains it (Garrod *et al.*, 2006).

One of the countries in Latin America that has stood out in the field of Rural Tourism is Peru, developing a model of its own that has been set out in the National Strategy of Rural Community Tourism implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (PN-TRC, 2013). This model has been created with the purpose of contributing to eradicate poverty and creating public policies for the sustainable development of the RCT with economic and social benefit. To achieve this purpose, rural capital goods are considered for the integration of competitive products, which in some cases has allowed the economic development of territories and the wellbeing of families in rural communities, and therefore the interest and importance of its analysis. The objective of this study was centered in identifying the interrelations between the RCT Model and the framework of rural capital goods to drive the capacity of communities and to generate strategies of local development.

The research was structured into five parts: the background of the study was presented through a global view of the initiatives in rural community tourism developed in Peru, observed from the perspective of rural capital goods, followed by the methodology of the multiple case study developed. The research results are interpreted through the analysis of

rural community tourism businesses, the characteristics of social actors, the characteristics of rural capital goods in territories as assets used by the communities, and the perception of social actors. The study closes with a reflection about the implications of the analysis of rural community tourism, from the perspective of rural capital goods and research horizons.

### **Rural Community Tourism initiative in Peru**

The Andean region has a broad diversity of tourism attractions and potentials, factors that are quite positive which contrast with the presence of population groups with high indices of poverty and important limitations such as the lack of access to basic services, scarce opportunities for training, low level of literacy, and loss of cultural identity, among others (Programa Rutas, 2013).

RCT begins in the decade of the 1970s as a spontaneous, isolated initiative without technical accompaniment. In its majority due to the initiative of entrepreneurs who identified business opportunities. At the end of the 1990s, after a public policy could not be generated and the necessary conditions to completely understand the new paradigms of tourism in the world were not present, it remained as a project, resulting in a limiting concept.

Starting in 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism developed a situational analysis of the tourism activity in rural areas of Peru. In 2006, the elaboration of the guidelines to define a path to sustainable development of tourism began. The scenario found denoted a disarticulation of territorial and institutional actors, in addition to problems of the tourism activity itself and the private sector, which meant a series of difficulties and problems from public management precisely because it is developed without a methodological standard and because it responds spontaneously to the market. From this moment on, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism serves as a governing body of Rural Community Tourism in Peru.

Since 2007, through the National Program of Rural Community Tourism, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism drives the strengthening and consolidation of their undertakings, through processes that have allowed diversifying the national tourism offer, with the development of competitive tourism products in the rural sphere, as well as guaranteeing participation, generating employment, improving the level of income in the populations involved, and promoting the conservation of existing resources; in addition, it is an activity that provides entrepreneurs with a business opportunity that allows improving their quality of life, ensuring the sustainable development of their community and making them into the manager of their territory (Programa Rutas, 2013).

During the years 2010 and 2011, the process of transference of concept, approach and work methodology of local tourism development began. These actions included 42 businesses developed in the southern zone of the 11 regions in the country. The results are reflected in the attendance of tourists or travelers, in the continuous improvement of quality in services, in the development of better attitudes by some of the inhabitants

when receiving travelers, in the conservation of the environment and in the welfare of the families. To achieve the adequate functioning of the model, the management of rural capital goods allows establishing a correct relationship between the actors, forming a value chain between them, which allows performing tourism management in the communities.

### Rural capital goods in Peruvian communities

The RCT program considers the adequate use of rural capital goods for territorial management, based on local participation as a fundamental element that allows the sustainability of the tourism activity (as complementary economic activity), and the social and economic inclusion of rural populations through the development of diverse products and services, using the capital assets adequately, which are: natural, cultural, human, social, physical and financial assets for the development of the capacity of the communities to offer tourism services (PN-TRC, 2013), with the following functions (Table 1).

Thus, the various elements of the rural capital can be considered essential components of the base of assets of rural tourism businesses, which implies that the quality of the

**Table 1.** Rural capital assets considered in the Rural Community Tourism (RCT) Model of Peru.

Assets	Purpose
1. Natural Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To spread information and raise awareness about tourism and the environment.</li> <li>– To provide training on environmental issues, provided by the project sponsors, for the proper management of solid waste and the identification of tourism potential in accordance with the natural environment of the community.</li> </ul>
2. Cultural Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To display the customs, myths, knowledge, and ancestral techniques, as part of the cultural expression of each community.</li> <li>– To sensitize the population about the value of reviving, developing, conserving, and promoting local culture.</li> <li>– To encourage the participation of cultural institutions.</li> </ul>
3. Human Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To develop skills and abilities.</li> <li>– To create tourist businesses.</li> <li>– To carry out exchange of experiences and transfer of practical knowledge.</li> <li>– To develop instruments for continuous improvement.</li> </ul>
4. Social Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To strengthen organization and management.</li> <li>– To develop links with other organizations.</li> <li>– To establish regulatory and management instruments.</li> <li>– To spread the promotion of better relations between tourism and the community (social environment).</li> </ul>
5. Physical Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To build tourist infrastructure and installations.</li> <li>– To contribute to the improvement of communication channels.</li> <li>– To implement the management of telecommunications services and basic sanitation.</li> </ul>
6. Financial Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To provide training in accounting and finance.</li> <li>– To develop the promotion of savings and credit culture.</li> <li>– To promote the coordination of tourism with other local economic activities.</li> <li>– To learn about marketing issues, market positioning, and competitiveness analysis.</li> </ul>

Source: Tourism and Culture Partnership in Peru (2016).

experience in rural community tourism depends on the quality of the rural quality that sustains it, taking into account the valuation of the territory (Figure 1).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

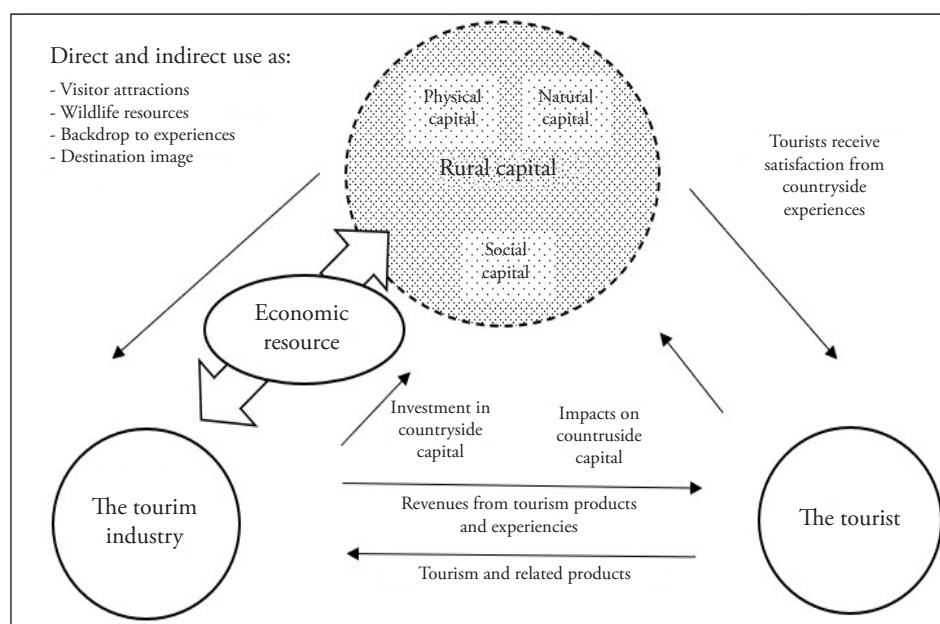
The regions of Cusco, Puno and Arequipa are located in the southern zone of Peru. These regions have rural communities that have wagered on tourism to strengthen their economies and to make known their culture and natural resources.

With the help of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru, under the direction of the Coordination of the National Strategy of Rural Community Tourism, the following were visited: in the region of Cusco, the communities of Huilloc and Raqchi; in the region of Puno on the banks of Lake Titicaca, the communities of Llachón, Luquina, Ccotos, and the island of Amantaní; finally, in the region of Arequipa in the Colca Valley, the communities of Sibayo, Coporaque and Yanque (Figure 2). These communities were chosen because they had experiential tourism businesses with greater success, participating in the RCT program with the management of rural capital goods or capital assets.

This study adopted the methodology of multiple case study (Stake, 2000), from the approach of rural capital in rural community tourism (Garrod *et al.*, 2006).

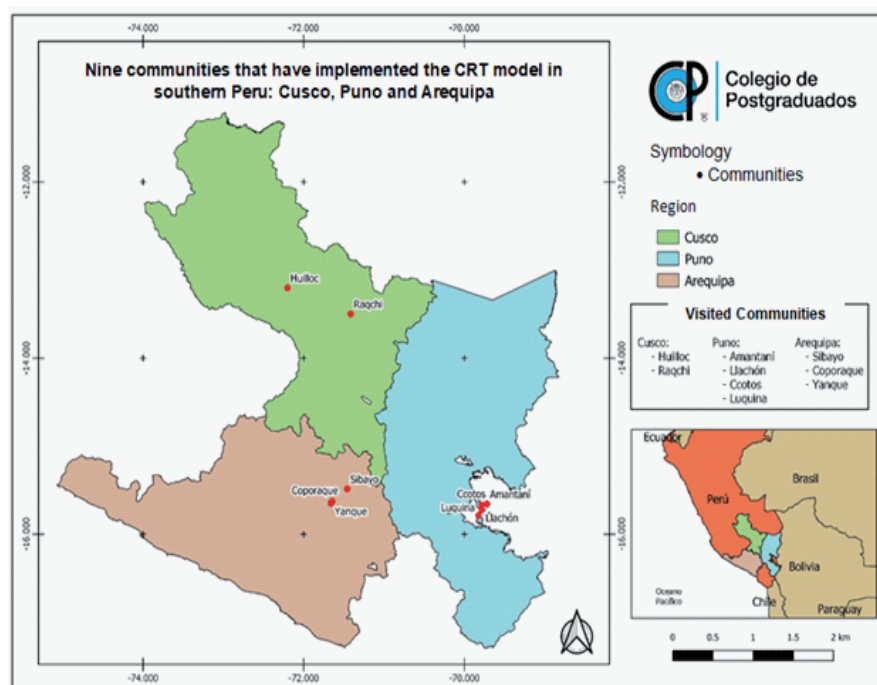
The field work was carried out between August and November, 2018, period when 45 interviews were conducted with different actors from the communities (Table 2).

The selection of respondents was determined based on the snowball non-probabilistic



Source: prepared by the authors based on Garrod *et al.* (2006).

**Figure 1.** Model of interactions between rural community tourism and rural capital assets.



Source: prepared by the authors. Q.Gis 3.4, 2019.

**Figure 2.** Regions and communities visited for data collection in the farmland of southern Peru.

technique (Baltar and Gorjup, 2012) and the recommendations of other local actors from each community, considering: gender equality, the elderly, and leaders in tourism transformation of the territory.

The technique of direct observation was applied and a semi-structured interview made up of 25 questions distributed into five blocks: i) nature of the businesses; ii) characteristics of the social actors; iii) characteristics of the territory; iv) capital assets used in rural tourism; and v) perception of social actors regarding tourism. The interviews were carried out by the saturation criterion (Ardila *et al.*, 2013); that is, when the increase in knowledge regarding the theme addressed was null, the participation of new informants was stopped. A database was designed in the Microsoft Office Excel software, where the correlation and data analysis of all the information gathered was conducted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A form of community organization was observed in the nature of the undertakings, where reciprocity and equity prevail. This favors the generation of work and economic income for families, improving the quality of life and fulfilling the purpose of the RCT model (Table 3). It is important to mention that this is not a constant in all the rural communities studied, but rather that it differs based on the accumulation of capital assets that identify each community.

**Table 2.** Informants in the communities visited for field data gathering in three regions of southern.

Informants				
Community	Number of interviewees	Gender		Tourist sub-sector
		Women	Men	
1. Huilloc	8	6	2	- Experiential house owner (lodging) - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Community textile store manager - Textile artisans
2. Raqchi	5	3	2	- Pottery artisans - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Experiential house owner (lodging) and pottery artisan
3. Amantaní	4	3	1	- Experiential house owner (lodging) and textile artisan - RCT entrepreneur - Textile artisan of alpaca products
4. Llachón	4	1	3	- RCT entrepreneurs (President of the Santa Maria Tourist Association) - Experiential house owner (lodging)
5. Ccotos	1	1		- Experiential house owner (lodging) and textile artisan - Community dining-room manager
6. Luquina	7	4	3	- Agricultural activities (Chakra) - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Tourism promotor of the municipality
7. Sibayo	8	4	4	- Alpaca textile artisan - Project consultant of textile artisans in Peru - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Community dining-room manager
8. Coporaque	2	1	1	- Experiential house owner (lodging) - Experiential house owner (lodging) - Tourist guide - Experiential house owner (lodging)
9. Yanque	6	3	3	- Mask artisan - Experiential house owner (lodging) - CRT entrepreneur - Manager of the community museum
Total	45	26	19	

Source: prepared by the authors based on information from interviews conducted in the communities visited in October, 2018.

The productive transformations associated to tourism in the rural space must be accompanied by social transformations that help to reach a greater social awareness regarding the forms, dynamics and contradictions in which social actors are positioned within the context of changes in productive structures of the farmland (Tucker and Boonabaana, 2012).

In this study, the women from the Raqchi community were organized, and they coordinated the tourism planning to offer and to operate all of the services for the visitor.



**Table 3.** Number of families with businesses of Rural Community Tourism (RCT).

Tourist destination	Community	Number of families involved
Cusco	Huilloc	30 families
	Raqchi	14 families
Puno	Amantani	18 families
	Llachón	16 families
	Ccotos	9 families
	Luquina	35 families
	Sibayo	Experiential committee 9 houses
Arequipa	Coporaque	5 families
	Yanque	5 families

The participation of older people stands out, who have been the pioneers of RCT and a fundamental part for the National Strategy of Rural Community Tourism (PN-TRC, 2013). It was identified that, for more than 30 years, elderly people continued to share their experience and leadership to develop the work of rural community tourism in their communities.

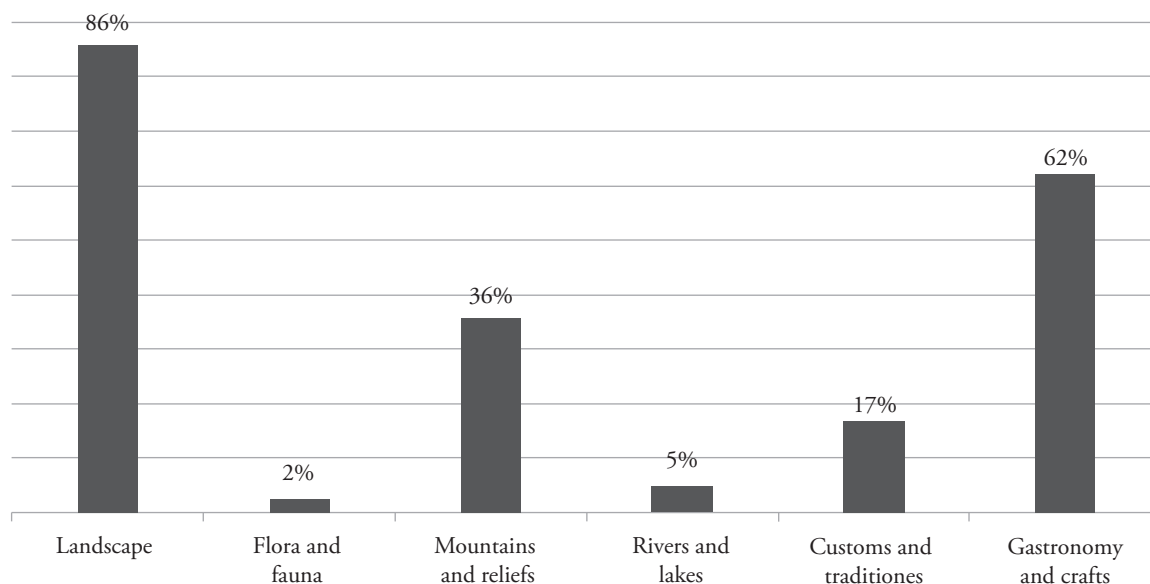
Socioeconomic development in a territory, based on RCT, is generated through the synergy of the various resources available which complement each other, where cultural identity accompanied by the wealth of natural resources of the communities are fundamental (Cabanilla *et al.*, 2017; Cabanilla, 2018). Figure 3 shows that in all the communities studied, the two resources of highest interest for travelers are represented by the landscape and the gastronomy of local territories.

The communities of Huilloc and Ccotos are organized communities that have important natural attractions, although the main weakness detected is the bad state of the roads to reach each community. This condition implies a high risk of accidents, which hinders the adequate management of the tourism offer.

Through the capital goods: human, social, physical and financial, the families develop their management capacity gradually; they design tourism experiences in their territories, create a destination image, and improve their services to integrate tourism products (Table 4). The RCT model allowed identifying that the communities of Sibayo, Raqchi, Luquina and Amantani stand out for their excellent capacity for organization of their rural capital goods. The business owners recognize the importance of planning activities and tourism services that integrate the product. The community of Sibayo stands out, in addition, for its organization through committees and joint work with the local government.

The communities of Llachón and Yanque lost the vision of joint work and equity in tourist rotation in family lodgings, and only a few businesses were positioned in the market, damaging the development of the community. In the period when the study was conducted, five families from the Coporaque community were integrated into RCT to





Source: prepared by the authors based on information from interviews conducted in October, 2018. The geographic situation of the territories was taken into account to determine the natural and cultural resources in the three regions of study.

**Figure 3.** Natural and cultural resources in the territories visited in southern Peru.

become trained and begin offering their tourism services. According to their words: “to be strong families, to see the benefits and improvements in the community” (interview respondent, October 2018).

**Table 4.** Results from the rural capital assets obtained from the communities that are study object in southern.

Capital Assets											
Natural C. *		Cultural C. *		Human C.		Social C. *		Physical C. *		Financial C.	
Perception of the importance of natural capital		Perception of the importance of cultural capital		Size of families participating in CRT		Type of link between enterprise and external entities		Investment items in infrastructure of enterprises		Financial support	
Landscape	79%*	Fairs and festivities	7%*	1 or 2 members	60%	Government	40%*	Lodging	95%*	No	98%
Rivers, lakes, and lagoons	33%*	History and traditions	0%*	3 or 4 members	11%	Private	64%*	Food	98%*	Yes	2%
Mountain or forest hiking	40%*	Gastronomy	69%*	Over four members	29%	NGO	12%*	Transport stops	26%*		
ANP reserves	7%*	Crafts and music	64%*			None	5%*	Bank stores	2%*		

\*In these columns the interview respondents selected more than one response option, which is why the percentage reflected in each capital good is in relation to 100% of the participants.

Source: prepared by the authors based on information from interviews carried out in October, 2018.

When it comes to local sustainable development, the study shows the perception of the dynamics of the activity of tourism service providers as social actors, where: 78% of the communities are inserted into tourism as a complementary activity without leaving aside the primary activities, which constitutes one of the requirements of the RCT model (Table 5). The work to receive travelers is shared between the family members, and also, the community is organized in 37% to integrate the tourism experience, 52% of the interview respondents are scarcely occupied in the conservation of their natural environment, which can be a contradiction to the purpose of the RCT program and it would be necessary to reinforce the theme of environmental care.

Of the respondents, 98% considered that the opportunity to participate in tourism activities has allowed them to improve their quality of life, driving the welfare of their families, in areas such as food and education for their children, as well as local development. Definitely, the training that the RCT model provides is the basis to guarantee the success of rural community tourism businesses, taking into account the rural capital goods or assets (Figure 4).

Because of this, the results showed that the interrelation of rural capital goods and the rural community model favors the development of the capacity of communities to integrate a planned tourism offer, guaranteeing the welfare of families and at the same time shaping the destinations of rural community tourism. The path has been traced, and the enthusiasm of families and communities is reflected in the work that they have carried out, and day-to-day they continue learning to design better and unique tourism experiences for travelers.

## CONCLUSIONS

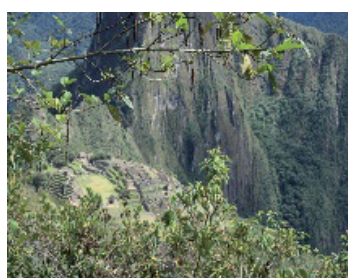
The analysis of the implementation of the Rural Community Tourism Model (RCT) by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), from the approach of rural

**Table 5.** Perception of service providers in the tourism activity of the communities visited in southern Peru.

Tourist activity %		Work performance %		Conservation of the natural environment %		Benefits from the tourist activity* %		Importance of training %	
Primary	22	Individual activities	10	Not at all	24	Source of work	98*	Yes	93
Complementary activity	78	Help from another person	5	A little	52	Conservation of natural resources	7*	No	7
The economy does not depend on tourist activity		Group work	37	Regularly	24	Conservation of cultural resources	5*		
		Work with all the member of the community	48	A lot		Coexistence with members of the community	5*		

\*In these columns the interview respondents selected more than one response option, which is why the percentage reflected in each capital good is in relation with 100% of the participants.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on information from interviews carried out in October, 2018.



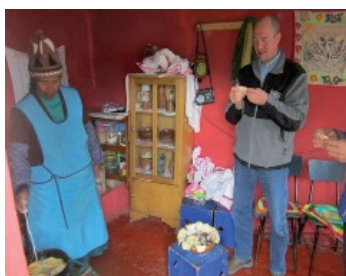
1. Natural Capital



2. Cultural Capital



3. Social Capital



4. Humano Capital



5. Physical Capital



6. Financial Capital

Source: prepared by the authors based on field work carried out in October, 2018.

**Figure 4.** Rural capital goods that integrate the Rural Community Model in Peru.

capital goods, shows that the guidelines to plan an integral tourism management of rural community tourism are established. The communities have learned that the RCT is a complementary activity to their primary productive activities, which is why they have developed capacities such as: speaking English, using polite manners with the visitors, improving their personal appearance, managing and manipulating foods, preparing rooms, and integrating tourism schedules for stays of two to three days for the visitors. Rural community tourism allows the inclusion of women in the work sphere, and without a doubt, is an important tool to promote gender equality. The communities have given value to the natural and cultural resources, ensuring their care and conservation, and recognizing that they are the main assets that motivate visits from travelers. However, the rural capital goods help local sustainable development to a large degree, showing the need to strengthen some of them, as is the case of the physical assets; the accessibility to reach the communities that have roads that are unsafe, and which generate a risk for travelers, cause tourist turnout to be lower in these places.

There is the need to incentivize the participation of local governments to strengthen the articulation of social actors, and this is how the work of the tourism activity can be reflected as collaborative work. The work by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism has been essential to lead and continue with the support to communities in their training and participation in conventions and seminars at the national and international level. A limitation of the research was the restricted information obtained regarding financial

assets. The informants preferred not to give concrete data from public and private agencies, which also helped with economic support in addition to the backing by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, for fear that the State would exclude them from the Rural Community Tourism Program. However, it was possible to observe that the families have had the opportunity of investing in their businesses and recovering the investments. It is suggested that the dynamics of the Rural Community Tourism Model shown with the use of rural capital goods, in the successful cases of rural communities in southern Peru, will serve as an example to implement the model in other countries of Latin America, using the RCT model as a guide to develop Rural Community Tourism within the framework of rural capital goods.

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