

AMAZONIA INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

SUPPORTING THE FAR-REACHING
ROLES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



©Emilio Aparicio

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PROGRAM	3
A NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS	4
PARTNERSHIP MAKES IT POSSIBLE	6
IMPACT BY 2023.....	6
CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVATION.....	7
MINIMIZING BARRIERS.....	10
BUILDING CAPACITIES.....	13
CREATING AN AMAZON-WIDE NETWORK	15
INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING.....	16
LESSONS LEARNED	19
LOOKING AHEAD.....	20
ANNEX.....	21



THE PROGRAM

Across the Amazon Indigenous women are dedicated to defending their territories and transforming their communities. They play a fundamental role in protecting biodiversity, managing natural resources, communal representation, and disseminating Indigenous knowledge. Despite persistent barriers such as fewer economic opportunities, limited participation, and access to formal education, Indigenous women continue standing as the main caretakers of their environment and communities.

Based on the demands of communities and Indigenous peoples, Conservation International is committed to tackling existing representation and gender gaps for environmental and social protection in the Amazon.

The [Amazonia Indigenous Women's Fellowship is a program](#) dedicated to enhancing Indigenous women's leadership in conservation, land management, innovations in the use of natural resources, and applied traditional knowledge. We seek to collaborate with them through funding, advisory, and networking opportunities. By promoting the role of Indigenous women in implementing sustainable practices we are supporting those at the vanguard of the biodiversity protection.

The program is part of the [CI Amazonia strategy](#) to promote economic opportunities to support those who depend on forest resources. Together, with committed donors, we are providing quality funding for innovative projects led by Indigenous women to promote their effective participation in conservation.

"I believe the whole world should include women. Include them, make them part of the policy-making. Ask for their opinion because they know. They know their environment, they have the knowledge, and they can help save this planet".

Martha Ntoipo, 2015 CI Fellow



Image 1. Second meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon. ©Emilio Aparicio

A NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS

This year the program provided flexible funding to [34 amazing leaders](#) supporting their efforts to protect biodiversity. We saw the program grow from 61 to 95 fellows¹ from seven countries in the Amazon – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname. We were committed to equipping them with the resources and support they demand. Working with local mentors, the women developed skills, created consensus-building, and promoted networks that advanced conservation and community well-being.

In April we were thrilled to launch our annual call for applications. As part of our commitment to reach a greater diversity of Indigenous women leaders, we included two models in the selection process: an open call for applications and direct invitations to remarkable Indigenous leaders. We were pleased to continue working with Indigenous organizations in the selection committees to ensure we were guided by their experience and knowledge. These included the Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), in Colombia, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONAIE), in Ecuador, and the Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSEP).

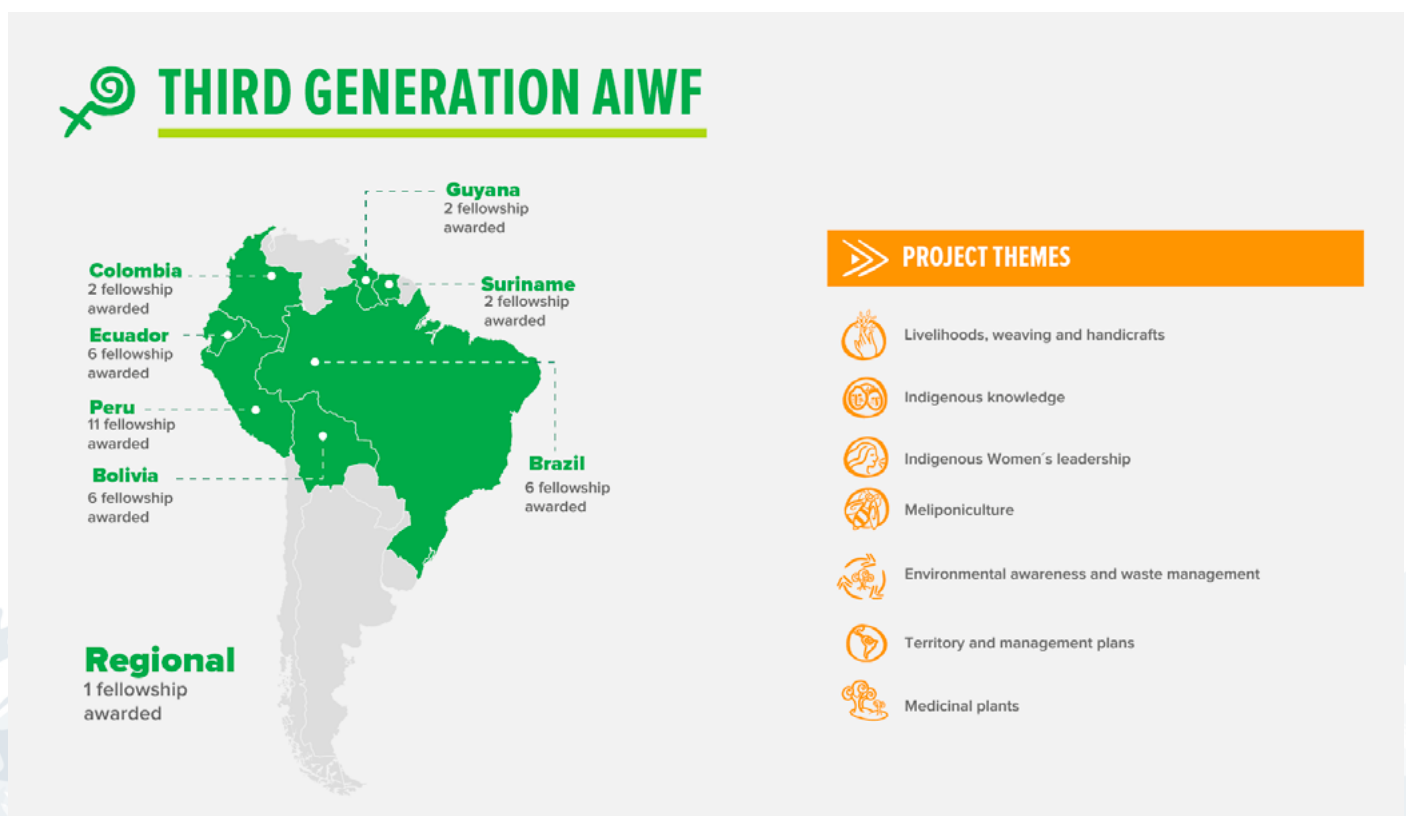


Image 2. Described above are the 34 fellows selected to be part of the 2023 cohort and project themes.

¹ The program was created in 2021. Since then we have supported 95 fellows in 3 cohorts.

The selected group made up our 2023 cohort of fellows. From this new generation of women, we learned a shared objective: to enhance the participation of Indigenous women in local economies, thereby creating opportunities for them to contribute to and sustain conservation actions. Twelve of the selected projects included sustainable production and income generating activities for environmental protection. Other priorities included: recovery of Indigenous knowledge (8), promoting Indigenous women's leadership (7) restoring biodiversity (2), protecting native bees (2), environmental awareness (1), knowledge transfer about medicinal plants (1) and territorial defense (1).

To connect the new fellows with the former cohort, we were delighted to organize the [II Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon](#) in Colombia, from October 9 - 14. The meeting was a space for fellows to celebrate their achievements and their roles in building a movement in conservation and natural resource protection. It was a space for them to share their struggles, their experiences in protecting Indigenous worldviews and the valuable solutions they bring to their communities. As they shared their vision for the future of their territories, they saw in themselves and in each other the leaders fighting today to protect the Amazon.

In 2023 we witnessed women challenging the concept of individual leadership as they emphasized the collective nature of their work. They articulated that the more they learn and connect within a network of leaders, the stronger they become, enabling them to make decisions aligned with their vision for collective change.

Promoting rightful recognition to Indigenous women's leadership is critical for strong conservation outcomes. This year, fellows received prestigious awards showcasing their outstanding leadership².

Although they continue facing many challenges such as discrimination, cultural barriers and the climate emergency that threatens their territories, these leaders continue to resist and find solutions to ensure the health of their land and people. Please see Annex 1 for the complete list of fellows we had the honor to work with in 2023.

*"This is a space for women's empowerment and marks their participation in conserving the Amazon. They are the true caretakers. They are the ones who have on their shoulders the enormous labor of caring for the lives of the Indigenous peoples and nature". **Fany Kuiru. COICA Coordinator***

This year we established regional fellowships. Together with our partners, we identified experienced international leaders dedicated to local and global actions and included regional fellows in our program. We invited Waorani leader, Nemo Andy Guiquita, from Ecuador, to participate. Her initiative focuses on driving action in the network of Indigenous women of the Amazon and implementing local activities with Waorani women. We hope to have two more regional fellows in the coming year and continue working with them to assess and improve our program.

The regional fellowships seek to:

- Recognize experience Indigenous women in the international forum and who wish to influence decision-making and policy at a global level.
- Contribute to the work of Indigenous organizations.
- Strengthen the network of Amazon Women leaders by motivating and mentoring fellows from the 7 countries.
- Promote emerging priorities and solutions to issues affecting Indigenous women in the global forum.

2 Please refer to the *Influencing decision-making section*.

PARTNERSHIP MAKES IT POSSIBLE

This year our donors strongly supported the movement of Indigenous women in conservation. With the Estee Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation (ELCCF) we expanded our fellowship program bringing in more women facing the climate crisis. Thanks to the Estee Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation (ELCCF), we had the pleasure of hosting the fellowship annual exchange. Through the projects of Our Future Forests – Amazonia Verde and Saving Irreplaceable Earth Begins with Protecting the Tropical Andes, we worked for stronger leadership and direct finance received by Indigenous women. We seek to continue supporting more incredible Indigenous women leaders, enhancing our communications efforts, and creating more partnerships for continued success.

We invite those who wish to join us on this journey to support our commitment to restore relationships between nature and people.

IMPACT BY 2023

The Fellowship program works to support the Fellows at two levels, in their personal journey as leaders and in their innovative projects that impact environments and livelihoods. By impact we refer to their ability to influence change based on the improvements they bring to their communities and their contributions rooted in cultural heritage. We also work to enhance learning through knowledge sharing and build confidence to address barriers and influence decisions.

As a program we are committed to providing a meaningful and effective system of support as well as provide funds for Indigenous women so they can grow in their influence and impact.

Here are some of the accomplishments achieved in 2023:

- 95 Fellowships awarded
- 72 women influencing decisions at local and/or national level
- 3123 members of the community participating in projects
- 90 Indigenous organizations engaged
- 63 knowledge exchanges for networking and peer-to-peer learning.
- 72 barriers minimized by the fellows due to participation.
- \$1.3 million³ in direct funding for Indigenous women in conservation.

³ This amount is calculated in USD and includes direct funding, mentoring, project extensions and learning.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONSERVATION

The solutions that Indigenous women bring to the protection of their environment and the sustainable management of natural resources constitute a key aspect of their accomplishments as leaders in their communities. Their actions and leadership contribute to our goal to avoid the tipping point and conserve 80% of the [Amazon rainforest](#). Below is a summary of their contributions in restoration, land management and innovation through sustainable value chains.

Improved management of Indigenous lands

- In Colombia Ana Isabel is identifying medicinal plants for the protection of 20 ha of forest.
- In Ecuador, Mariana Vargas is establishing community medicinal gardens to contribute to the conservation of 50,000 ha of forest in the Mashientz community. Her community became part of the Socio Bosque Program⁴ this year.
- In Suriname, Grace Watamaleo is developing a management plan for the Marinbo Park (1.2 ha), an area that is part of the Marijkedorp Indigenous village and an important heritage site for local communities. Her plan includes adaptation measures to prevent shoreline degradation, ensure park safety, and build capacities in tourism.
- In Peru, Imelina Santiago is working to develop a management plan for the Koshireni community that includes sustainable resource management and equality for women.



Image 3. Chief Grace Watamaleo working with children to raise awareness in protecting Marinbo park in Suriname. Children drew pictures of nature and stories were told about the importance of everyone's involvement in conservation. ©Grace Watamaleo.

4 The Socio Bosque Program was established by the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition of Ecuador. The program provided economic incentives to local people and Indigenous communities that voluntarily commit to the conservation and protection of their forest.

Restoration

- In Bolivia, Filomena Quispe and Agripina Tibubay, are restoring land with Brazil nuts, coffee, and cacao crops.
- In Colombia, [Maria Celsida Biguidima](#) is committed to restoring degraded areas with Canangucha (*Mauritia flexuosa*), a palm species responsible for maintaining water quality and food for wildlife. [Danixa Moreno](#) is collecting and harvesting endangered timber species such as Cedro, Ita Uba, and Siringa (*Cedrela odorata*, *Mezilaurus itauba*, and *Hevea brasiliensis*) to restore an area severely affected by extensive agriculture.
- In Brazil, Fellow Iranilde dos Santos, is working to restore her territory with local wood species and bring back to life an area deeply affected by extensive rice cultivation and cattle ranching.

Sustainable value chains

- In Brazil Tainara Munduruku, is working to sustainably extract copaíba oil, a non-timber forest product with medicinal benefits for the skin and respiratory system. The oil is also used to relieve symptoms such as arthritis.
- Fellows Jiyunt Uyunkar in Ecuador and [Filomena Quispe](#) in Bolivia, are promoting the pollination of crops through the protection of native bees.
- In Peru, Mirna Vasquez, Levis Rivera, and Zayra Rios are working to ensure the sustainable use of the charapita chilli pepper, chambira fiber, and Irapay palm leaves. Protecting these products is part of their efforts to value traditional ecological practices and generate income for Indigenous women.





Image 4. Danixa Moreno at the Second Meeting of Indigenous Women in the Amazon.
©Emilio Aparicio

Danixa Moreno – Colombia

Danixa is from the Nonuya people of Colombia. Her project focuses on restoring her Indigenous land with native timber species such as Cedro, Ita Uba, Siringa, and others. As part of her project activities, she has led collective planting of 5,400 trees in the community of Peña Roja. She is working to strengthen Indigenous governance and promoting the participation of Indigenous women. The Nonuya people believe that trees are spiritual beings and bearers of culture, by reforesting them, they are not only taking care of their natural resources but also of their cultural identity.

“For many years it has been taken for granted that the trees would always be there for us; the most important lesson of our project was that as a community we understood that we are the ones who need nature and that is why we must take care of it and if we do, it will give us the economy we need” **Daxina Moreno, fellow in Colombia.**

MINIMIZING BARRIERS

The Fellowship is greatly committed to providing the necessary tools and support to reduce the barriers that impede the participation and influence of Indigenous women in conservation. This year, we engaged with the fellows to identify these barriers and work towards minimizing them. Below are some of the highlights.

Communications

During the year we worked with the fellows to improve their writing skills and foster their confidence in public speaking. Fellows have expressed increased self-esteem in communicating about their achievements and local needs. Having more confidence has meant that they were able to trust in their voices and reduce the communication barriers that Indigenous women traditionally have faced. Communicating with other women in their communities and driving collective actions has also been an achievement for many. They expressed having enhanced their negotiation skills and leadership style to be able to gain influence in their communities. Katty Guatatoa, [Mariana Vargas](#), Valeria Etzamaren, and [Clara Tankamash](#) shared that they were able to overcome their shyness and fear of public speaking by explaining their projects to authorities and guiding the women they work with.

Access to funding opportunities

This year in Ecuador the call for fellows took a unique approach to reach more Shuar and Achuar women. The team organized in-person workshops in the communities to present the program to the women, explain how the application process works, and go through the steps of designing a project proposal. This exercise ensured applicants had the skills to design projects based on their insights and needs. This effort enabled four new fellows to be selected.

Access to long-term financing

Many fellows expressed acquiring new technical and administrative skills as well as the confidence needed to access new funds. Katty Guatatoa, leader of the AWANA Collective is now managing a community savings account for emerging women-led economies. [Gladys Grefa](#), current president of the Napu Teje women's Network, has raised over 90,000 USD to continue her work in conserving native plants and fruit species for natural dyes and fibers. These funds are part of a bigger engagement she is leading with the German Development Cooperation and the Global Climate Fund.

Administrative skills

Through the mentoring program, fellows learned about budgeting, financial planning, and devising financial solutions. Financial management skills were key for fellows to rearrange budgets due to changing prices and validate changes with the community. Having proper administrative systems and office supplies including computers and internet access, was also key to improving administrative capacities.

Technical capacities

This year fellows participated in awareness and education training to optimize the use of land and natural resources, as well as gender. Knowledge about agroforestry systems was key for Filomena Quispe's projects. She is now able to apply new techniques in managing resources to improve livelihoods. Tainara Kirixi shared that her project in sustainable management of copaiba oil has enabled her to engage with men in her community and train them in new practices.

Community participation

To foster participation fellows led consultation meetings, gave project presentations, and looked for ways to involve women, youth, men, and elders in their project activities. As a result of their leadership, we had a total of 3,123 members of the community engaged in project activities.

Leadership skills

Mentors and advisors worked with the fellows to build their strengths and personal skills in areas such as time management, leadership, teamwork, writing, and negotiations. For many these skills have enabled them to face challenges and participate in new and challenging settings. Danixa Moreno shared that she is now more confident to lead community activities, share her ideas, and provide insights to influence others. Gladys Grefa expressed that she has gone from being a housewife to a businesswoman. Her work is currently recognized by other organizations who wish to work with her. Mariana Vargas and [Antonela Mukuink](#) reported that their projects have opened more doors with other entities, and they are now being considered to speak and participate in fairs and events representing the Achuar Indigenous nationality.

Support from local authorities

Fellows invested greatly in engaging with community leaders, a group mostly made up of men. Having strategies to involve these leaders, invite them to learn more and participate in the projects has been fundamental to preventing conflicts and enabling the support from their authorities for sustained actions. The Fellowship proved to be an opportunity to engage and consult with leaders to build trust, support, and recognition in their role as leaders. Although the Fellowship is a one-year chapter in their journey, the women expressed a significant impact in gaining recognition through their project achievements. The projects they lead provide them with more visibility and access to new spaces of coordination, enabling the women to be recognized as leaders working to address community needs and encouraging equitable participation.

[Carmenza Yucuna](#) in Colombia shared that when she started her project, she needed permission from the Indigenous Council of the Mirití-Paraná to be able to continue her activities. The approval took a long time and leaders were hesitant to allow her to manage the budget. By the end of her project, she was able to gain trust from the Indigenous Council and the authorities were more involved and dedicated to making collective changes in the community. They were now motivating both women and men to apply to new funds.

“Before the Fellowship, I had no idea how to coordinate a project, now I can write, coordinate, and involve my community in sustainable projects”. **Caroline Lima da Costa, fellow from Brazil**



Image 5. Jiyunt participating at Second Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon.
©Emilio Aparicio

Jiyunt Uyunkar – Ecuador

Jiyunt is from the Achuar people of Ecuador. She is currently working in reforestation and native beekeeping. In her project, she is advocating for the women of the Wachirpas community to have greater participation in decision-making, especially in communal economy and income generation. In the future, she wants to form the “Mother Earth” association to formalize activities of collective care and defense of their forest with the support of other women and men of her territory.

*“The project has strengthened the communities and our women, we already have vice-president of the community for the first time; five women leaders, already are presenting their concerns in the community”.***Jiyunt Uyunkar fellow in Ecuador**

BUILDING CAPACITIES

In addition to providing grants to inspiring leaders, we created a learning program that ensures fellows are well-equipped to continue leading lasting changes. This year we implemented personalized guidance to increase women's leadership as an important outcome in the program. The trainings are crafted to the fellows' comprehensive set of needs based on their experience, goals and ambitions. This requires understanding the needs of each fellow and the competencies they wish to develop. All mentors conduct a needs assessment to understand the strengths and areas for development defined by the fellows.

This year training topics included: Indigenous peoples' rights, women's rights, project and financial management, Indigenous negotiations, self-esteem, and leadership.



Image 6. *In-person project management workshop in Quito, Ecuador. © Sara Gómez.*

At the beginning of their projects, some women were invited to visit first-generation fellow Carmenza Yucuna in Colombia so she could share her experiences in native beekeeping. The exchange sought to build the technical capacities of new fellows working on similar projects. In February we organized the exchange in Putumayo, Colombia and five fellows from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia participated. They learned about the materials needed to start a beekeeping project, the health and economic benefits of native bees, their behavior and biology, and how to identify nests and build hives. The women also shared the importance of Indigenous knowledge and storytelling in the protection of native bees.

On International Bees Day we shared a [video](#) featuring the fellows as part of small campaign. The video communicates a powerful message about the vital role of Melipona bees in traditional medicine and food sovereignty in the Amazon.



Image 7. Indigenous women from Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia gathered to learn and share experiences in working with Amazonian Melipona bees. © Sebastian Espin.

"Conserving bees in their native environment. This is what I have learned, and I have given workshops to the women of my community, with the young people, and with the children about the importance of conserving the melipona bees that are found around our community".

Carmenza Yucuna, fellow in Colombia

In October five fellows from four Indigenous nationalities in Ecuador (Shuar, Achuar, Kichwa, and Siekopai) participated in the Indigenous Negotiation Course. The course lasted four days. Participants reviewed the national legal framework for negotiations and learned the skills and strategies that can guide them in making collective decisions and developing agreements. This training was part of a bigger effort to include fellows in activities aimed at strengthening Indigenous rights.

In Bolivia Fulvia Medina received technical assistance from experts helping her integrate her quality handmade textiles with a market strategy. [Juana Pariamo](#) was provided training in Indigenous territorial law, the impacts of extractive activities, territorial management, and women's rights. With this newly acquired knowledge, Juana developed a territory and management plan based on the principles of conservation and gender equity. She is currently organizing workshops with other leaders to transfer this knowledge.

CREATING AN AMAZON-WIDE NETWORK

The networking component is key in the program. This year creating spaces for the women to share common barriers, challenges, and reinforce their power as movement-builders was accomplished. In October we organized the [II Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon](#), a gathering of fellows from across the region. The event was held in Bogota - Colombia with 62 participants, including fellows, mentors, advisors, and Indigenous leaders. The meeting sought to connect inspiring women leaders to foster a network of learning and support based on the principles of responsibility for the environment and people. The meeting included project presentations, expert panels and a knowledge fair for fellows to showcase their Indigenous knowledge. During the exchange the women shared their projects and learned about their talents in fomenting sustainable economies and caring for communities. By the end, they forged a commitment to continue conserving their territories.

This year national exchanges took place in Ecuador and Peru with the participation of second- and third-generation Fellows. In March, four fellows from Ecuador met in Quito for an in-person exchange to learn about the tools they can apply in project management. In November the team in Peru organized a [national gathering](#) with 42 Indigenous fellows and leaders from five different Indigenous communities. The objective was to create a space for women to express their challenges and celebrate their achievements in leading solutions. Here is an [inspiring video of the meeting](#).

To consolidate an Amazon Indigenous women network, we are gathering lessons to continue connecting fellows across generations. Next year we will be implementing our networking strategy that aims to involve alumni fellows as mentors, facilitators, experts, and advisors. We also plan to improve the communications channels among fellows to promote collaboration and information sharing.



Image 8. Dream maps session at the Second meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon. ©Emilio Aparicio.

INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING

This year the fellows had an impact influencing individuals and organizations. Many of the women led the way to enhance local leadership, foster decision-making, and bridge gender gaps in local, national, and regional conservation.

2023 was a historic year for the Ecuadorian Amazon. Part of that movement was Nemo Andy, activist, and regional fellow dedicated to raising awareness about the threats Waorani women face. She was part of a movement of Indigenous communicators, journalists, and influencers contributing to [media campaigns](#) and [public debates](#) about the importance in saying YES to end oil production in Yasuní National Park. With amplified voices through various media channels and with the support of civil society the population voted against oil exploitation in the Amazon.



Image 9. Nemo Andy Guiquita sharing lessons from Yasuní for the future in New York during the events of the NY Climate week in September 2023.

In 2023 six Fellows were appointed to influential positions in government and local associations showing advances in Indigenous women's representation. Their participation in national politics fostered a stronger sense of support from their communities enabling them to engage as communal representatives and advocates.

- Katy B. Machoa, fellow from Ecuador was appointed Secretary General of the Culture House of Ecuador “Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana - Benjamín Carrión”.
- Yadira Ocoguaje from Ecuador is now recognized as a leader in her community and among the Siekopai people and a spokeswoman for the protection of their ancestral territory, Pë'këya.
- Maria Do Rosario in Brazil expressed that the fellowship has given her more confidence to take up leadership roles. In May, she was appointed as the new Coordinator of the unit of the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI) in the Rio Negro region, in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. As part of her project, she developed a booklet about the diversity of plants in the Rio Negro region to promote food security for local families.
- Grace Watamaleo is Chief of Marijke Dorp village in Suriname. Her fellowship has enabled her to build more networks and collaborate with other stakeholders, both within and outside her community. This has been key as her project aims to create a management plan for Marimbo Park. She has expressed increased confidence in her ability to contribute to the development of her community.
- Katty Guatatoca from Ecuador is president of the AWANA association, a collective of Kichwa women dedicated to Amazonia gastronomy. Through her leadership, the association is generating income to six families and the women report an increased sense of pride in their Indigenous culture. In May, she was featured with Fellows Althea Harding (Guyana), Elibeth Peredo and Evelyn Garcia (Bolivia) in the [National Geographic](#) article on International Women's Day.
- Watatakalu Yawalapiti from Brazil is the general coordinator of the women's department of the Xingu Indigenous Land Association (ATIX - Mulher). She is a pioneer leader deeply committed to the rights of the Indigenous women and youth of the Xingu National Park.

This year, fellows in Peru received prestigious awards showcasing their outstanding leadership. Below are some highlights.

- Zoila Ochoa was awarded the “[Meritorious Personality of Culture](#)” award from the Ministry of Culture in recognition of her career and work to transmit, preserve, and disseminate the Murui Buee Indigenous cultural heritage.
- [Maria Elena Paredes](#) was awarded the 2023 Carlos Ponce del Prado Award for outstanding park rangers and conservationists. This award is an initiative by the Ministry of the Environment in Peru.
- Marisol Garcia also received the “Meritorious Personality of Culture” award for her outstanding work in favor of the well-being of Kichwa women and communities.

María Do Rosario Piloto Martins – Brazil



Image 10. *María Do Rosario Baniwa leading the closing ceremony at the Second Meeting of Indigenous Women in the Amazon. ©Emilio Aparicio.*

Maria Do Rosario is from the Baniwa people of Brazil. Her project focuses on promoting food autonomy through income generation for Indigenous women. As part of her project, she worked with women to develop a booklet in the Indigenous language, Nheengatu, about the diversity of plants in the Rio Negro region and the harvesting techniques used by Indigenous women. She organized a fair of local products like yuca flour, sweet potatoes, beiju, maniwara, and local fish intended to generate income while promoting food sovereignty. Her amazing leadership is nurturing a network of women advocating for healthy food habits aligned with their cultural heritage.

“From my perspective as an activist, leader and mom, food autonomy has been threatened. Before my project, women and the community were sick because of industrialized food. Today, among women, we have strengthened ourselves to face this situation; the important thing is to work together and create a dialogue among ourselves.”

Maria Do Rosario Piloto Martins, fellow in Brazil.

LESSONS LEARNED

Project implementation

Fellows have identified that having close support in the initial stages of their projects helps them to be more successful in their objectives, especially in developing and implementing a work plan and defining strategies for community engagement.

Collaborative work plans

Coordination with mentors from the beginning of project design is fundamental to ensure that the project activities align with the fellows' needs, challenges, and aspirations. Applying a needs assessment to understand the barriers they face, their strengths, and the skills they want to develop are key to designing a work plan tailored to local needs.

Community Engagement

An important part of the mentorship has been the guidance in defining strategies to engage with community members and leaders. We identified that it is important to support fellows in ensuring a plan for community engagement for greater involvement in project activities. This includes working with fellows to devise effective ways to involve participants, share information and foster a sense of collective ownership in the project.

Sustainability plan

This year we identified that it is crucial to ensure all fellows develop a sustainability plan as part of the project design phase and review this plan throughout their project cycle. The plan includes an outline of the responsibilities and commitments to ensure continued actions after the projects end. Next year we will implement common guidelines for mentors to define this with the fellows from the beginning of their fellowships.

Mentors and advisors

Mentorship is key in supporting fellows as they manage their projects and troubleshoot challenges, as well as ensuring fellows have catered learning opportunities. This year, we learned that fellowship coordinators are best equipped to take on the role of advisors in project management while alumni fellows have the potential to be mentors and transfer their expertise and knowledge to build on the learning environment.

Capacity building

We identified that there are common challenges that the women are facing during project implementation. In many communities, women either do not participate or are not allowed in political spaces and in cases where they are, it is common for obstacles to arise throughout their projects.

Through this struggle they have learned that involving both women and men in their efforts helps them succeed. Next year we want to generate tools that will help mentors and advisors be better equipped to support women facing this challenge. We will work with them to develop a training focused on masculinity and how to generate community engagement with the support from men.

Knowledge sharing

Creating spaces where women can meet, connect, and learn from each other is essential to motivate them and unite forces to face common threats. During the year we developed methodologies for our exchanges based on the fellows' main social and environmental priorities. In February we organized an exchange in native beekeeping. In October the regional exchange was based on the fellows' projects themes. These knowledge spaces had a great impact not only in collective learning, but also in consolidating the network of Indigenous women of the Amazon.

LOOKING AHEAD

Going into our fourth year, we plan to build on the program's success. The major tasks include continuing to expand our program by supporting new and ongoing projects, building capacities based on their changing needs, and connecting leaders through networks. We want to sustain our partnership with fellows by including them as mentors, experts, and facilitators. We want to secure quality funding for the next generation of Indigenous women leaders and their commitment to confronting the crises affecting our world.

We hope to continue moving forward in our mission to support emerging and established Indigenous women so they can participate fully and equally in conservation.



Image 11. Participants of the Second meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon. ©Emilio Aparicio.

ANNEX

List of fellows in the second and third cohort (2022-2023)

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
2	Simona Montesinos Lara	Bolivia	Quechua	Generating income opportunities for the women of Cocapata.
2	Carmen Fuentes Apaza	Bolivia	Quechua	Promoting women's roles in vicuña management and construction of the vicuña Community Management Center.
2	Juana S. Pariamo Apana	Bolivia	Quechua	Territorial management and development through conservation and equality
2	Fulvia Medina Cartagena	Bolivia	Tacana	(Re)valuing Tacana identity through weaving
2	Filomena Quispe Surco	Bolivia	Aymara	Implementing practices in native beekeeping with the participation of the women of Alto Chispani.
2	Taynara Caragiu Guajajara	Brazil	Guajajara	Harvesting Dreams: restoring rivers and springs.
2	Maria Valdenice Silva de Souza	Brazil	Inu Kui Ni	Intercultural knowledge to tackle the solid waste problem in the Inu Kui Ni (Nukini) communities.
2	Caroline Lima da Costa	Brazil	Puyanawa	Recovery of degraded areas to promote food sovereignty among the Puyanawa Indigenous people.
2	Juma Xipaia de Carvalho	Brazil	Xipayá	Legal and administrative knowledge for the Xi-paia Territory
2	Elinalda Gama da Silva Kumaruara	Brazil	Kumaruara	Knowledge Oca (house)
2	Maria do Rosário Piloto Martins	Brazil	Baniwa	Enhancing food culture and promoting income generation for Indigenous women through sustainable production in the Rio Negro.
2	Ana Isabel López Rojas	Colombia	Áwa	Recovery of biocultural knowledge in Putumayo communities.
2	Imelda Restrepo Prada	Colombia	Comunidad Vuelta el Alívio	Repopulate a degraded area with medicinal plants through research of traditional health systems for the protection and prevention of diseases affecting women.
2	Danixa Moreno Miranda	Colombia	Nonuya	Recovery of high-quality timber plant species in the community of Peña Roja to improve quality of life through the empowerment of women.

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
2	Livia Yaneth Ahue Carron	Colombia	Aticoya	Improving cassava production in Indigenous communities of the RAMSAR Tarapoto, Amazonia, Colombia
2	Celina Miraña Perea	Colombia	Madroño	Equipment to improve cassava production.
2	Jiyunt Uyunkar Kaniras	Ecuador	Achuar	Reforestation and native beekeeping activities to protect biodiversity and generate income through the production of bee products such as honey, wax, propolis, and others.
2	Katy Jacqueline Betancourt Machoa	Ecuador	Kichwa	Building women's capacities in Napo and Pastaza schools by creating teaching materials and disseminating knowledge.
2	Valeria Etzamaren	Ecuador	Achuar	Strengthening leadership among Achuar women to promote conservation and territorial defense.
2	Yadira Jessenia Ocoquaje Piaguaje	Ecuador	Siekopai	Perpetuate cultural practices through the daily practice and knowledge of ancestral ceramics.
2	Shondell Rodrigues	Guyana	Warao	Indigenous Warao women as leaders in sustainable forest and garden management to perpetuate ancestral knowledge, forestry, and agriculture.
2	Tekwitha Kim Spencer	Guyana	Wapichan	Enhancing the leadership capacities of female Indigenous youth in the Rupununi, Guyana
2	Maria Elena Paredes Marquez	Peru	Ashéninka	A sustainable development plan for the Sawawo community.
2	Cecilia Elvira Martinez Mesias	Peru	Yanesha	Working with Indigenous youth to reinforce their cultural identity to adapt to the effects of climate change.
2	Mirna Angélica Rengifo Mori	Peru	Yaguas	Trainings on production and sales of the charapita chili bell pepper for income generation and improved quality of life in Indigenous territories
2	Angelica Peña Vasquez	Peru	Bora	Create a booklet about medicinal plants based on the knowledge and practices of wise men and women in the Ampiyacu watershed and recover areas with medicinal plants.
2	Claudia Milagros Flores Santillan	Peru	Murui Huitoto	Recover and sustainably manage taricaya turtle in the Tres Esquinas community.
2	Zoila Ochoa Garay	Peru	Murui Buee	Working with youth to recover ancestral knowledge and good environmental practices.

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
2	Ema Adith Tapullima Murayari	Peru	Kukama	Revitalize tourism activities through environmental awareness with the support of the Artisans Women's association.
2	Kathy Ruiz Tello	Peru	Huitoto	Recover ancestral knowledge, food variety, and plant diversity for the autonomy of local food production.
2	Kelly Lorena Patiachi Visse	Peru	Harakbut	"Amarakaeris women conserving our forest". Reforest three hectares in the native community of Shintuya and empower a group of women as environmental defenders.
2	Ubalдина Korinti Gonzalez	Peru	Machiguenga	Best practices in harvesting native cocoa and its sub-products with women producers of the Koribeni Native Community.
2	Herlita Elkin Crispin Soto	Peru	Yanesha	Promoting the participation of Yanesha Indigenous women in the criollo cocoa value chain with a new chocolate brand "Koyanesha".
2	Isabel Barboza Serina	Peru	Asháninka	Create a women's program to promote the work of women leaders in the communal reserves.
2	Leidy Pinedo Turuza	Peru	Mastanahua	Strengthen the capacities of Mastanahua women through the promotion of cooperatives networks.
2	Patricia Alania Campari	Peru	Asháninka	Develop a marketing plan for local jewelry to be sold at fairs and venues and capacity building about the benefits of the cocoa value chain as a mechanism for financial sustainability.
2	Grace Betty Watamaleo	Suriname	Arowak	Management plan for Marinbo park.
3	Rosmery Fernandez	Bolivia	Quechua	Generating income opportunities for the women of Cocapata.
3	Irene Santos	Bolivia	Quechua	Promoting women's roles in vicuña management and construction of the Vicuña Community Management Center.
3	Edileuza Gonzales Emilio	Bolivia	Machineri	Use and practices in caring for medicinal plants.
3	Mariana Rodriguez Gonzales	Bolivia	Yaminagua	Revaluation cultural identity through handicrafts.
3	Viviana Torrez Gomez	Bolivia	Ese Ejja	Empowerment and economic strengthening of women's organizations.

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
3	Claudia Vicenta Mamani Cama	Bolivia	Pallcapampa	Capacity building in eco-tourism, trekking guiding, protection of the endemic bird <i>Astheres Berlephi</i> .
3	Watatakalu Ywalapiti	Brazil	Ywalapiti	Revitalize the language by producing a dictionary and a video with testimonials from the elderly.
3	Tainara Kirix Munduruku	Brazil	Munduruku	Promote the copaíba oil extraction process to generate a flow of income that will improve the economic condition and quality of life of the Indigenous population.
3	Leticia Luiza	Brazil	Ywanawa	Training in the pajé course to rescue our medicine and also to make cultural exchange with other peoples to improve the knowledge we have in a knowledge exchange movement.
3	Iranilde Barbosa	Brazil	Macuxi	The environmental problem in our community and the restoration of rice plots.
3	Ana Livia	Brazil	Kumaruaara	Restoring my voice.
3	Alcira Morales Gonzales	Colombia	Paujil, comunidad del Porvenir	Strengthening of productive activities in the conucos (cultivation plots) through ancestral practices and leadership of the Indigenous women of the Bello Horizonte community of the Sikuani people in the Arrecifal reservation, in the department of Guainía.
3	Jeny Jazmín Juagibioy	Colombia	Camëntśá Biyá de Orito	Ecological restoration and strengthening of ancestral knowledge through reforestation and cultivation of native bees in the Camëntśá Biyá de Orito territory.
3	Lorena Marina Wampanti Yankuam	Ecuador	Shuar	Create a sustainable fashion brand of the Kaapar community of the Shuar Nationality of Pastaza to economically empower women and preserve our ancestral knowledge.
3	Teresa Dominga Shiki Masuin	Ecuador	Shuar	Empower vulnerable Indigenous women from the seven nationalities of Pastaza to recover ancestral knowledge as a tool for economic empowerment, food sovereignty, and leadership through a four-phase learning community process.
3	Rita Esthela Yurank Piruch	Ecuador	Shuar	Create a network of Shuar women of the Namakim Association “Nua Iruntramu Namakim” to recover ancestral knowledge in dance, clothing, food, handicrafts, cosmovision, and Shuar language.

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
3	Mariana Mónica Vargas Vargas	Ecuador	Achuar	Recover Achuar ancestral knowledge through intergenerational dialogue about gardening and medicinal plants and its health and economic benefits for women and the community.
3	María Antonella Mukuink Juank	Ecuador	Achuar	Strengthening Achuar women's leadership. Create intergenerational networks of care in three Achuar communities to strengthen women's leadership and promote gender equity. The actions involve women, men, and youth.
3	Tsapak Clara Tankamash Chinguime	Ecuador	Shuar	Foster intergenerational and ancestral knowledge of the Shuar Indigenous people through dialogues among members of the Shuar Namakim Association.
3	Vickiola Aaron	Guyana	Patamona	Revitalize and preserve the Patamona Indigenous language.
3	Carmen Ritchie	Guyana	Wapichana	Transfer traditional knowledge to youth and women through craft making.
3	Levis Rivera	Peru	Bora	Improving the fabrication and commercialization of chambira fiber handicrafts.
3	Zayra Rios	Peru	Murui	Sustainable management and use of Irapay leaf in the December 8th community.
3	Olga Alvarez	Peru	Murui	Empowering Indigenous women leaders of the Federation of Border Native Communities of Putumayo (FECONAFROPU).
3	Raquel Velasquez	Peru	Bora	Strengthening handicraft capacities of women to improve handicraft sales and secure fair prices in the Ampiyacu basin.
3	Patricia Ribeira	Peru	Murui	Generate economic resources with the sale of honey from native beekeeping in Mairidicai schools.
3	Judith Reymundo Ruiz	Peru	Yanesha/Ashaninka	Building capacities in agroforestry and market access in the Ashaninka Women's Entrepreneurs Association Iroperanto Koya.
3	Raquel Sedano Grabiell	Peru	Yanesha	Conserving and breeding native stingless bees led by the Yanesha women's empowerment school.
3	Marisol García Apagüeño	Peru	Kichwa	Revaluation and transmission of ancestral knowledge of the Kichwa culture in the Tupac Amaru community (CC.NN) ⁵ .

5 In Peru CC.NN are Native Communities or Indigenous groups linked by language, culture and social organizations who possess rights over the land through collective and permanent usufruct of the territory.

COHORT	FELLOW	COUNTRY	SELF-IDENTIFICATION	PROJECT
3	Chelly Sambache Diaz	Peru	Yanesha	Economic empowerment of Asháninka Women through sustainable forest management and traditional handicrafts.
3	Marisela Vargas Garcia	Peru	Machiguenga	Strengthening the sustainable economic activities of Native Community of Sepahua artisans.
3	Imelina Benavides Santiago	Peru	Yanesha	Frontier and living culture: developing the Koshireni's Life Plan for the sustainable development of the Yurua watershed in Ucayali, Peru.
3	Melisa Marvell Fredericks	Suriname	Lokono	Training program to build women's leadership capacities in Kabalebo.
3	Nemo Andy	Regional (Ecuador)	Waorani	Breaking barriers: regional actions to strengthen the network of Indigenous women of the Amazon and women guardians of the Waorani territory.





© Emilio Aparicio Rodríguez