

EM II MEETING OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN OF THE AMAZON



Vanessa Adriano



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Methodology

Diana Valdospinos, Bruna Pratesi, Fernanda González

Facilitation leader

Carmen Rodríguez

Thematic facilitators

Mayara Ferreira, Ana Vieco, Erwin Palacios, María Paula Miranda

Illustrations synthesis

Sara Gómez

Systematization

Diana Valdospinos, Carmen Rodríguez

Proofreading and editing

Bruna Pratesi, Fernanda González, Andrés Ramírez

Photographs

Emilio Aparicio

Design

www.naturalezacreativa.org

Translation

Linko languages

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CONTEXT

In 2021, Conservation International launched the *Amazonia Indigenous Women's Fellowship* as part of the Our Future Forests - Amazonia Verde project, funded by the government of France, and aligned with the mandates from the first Indigenous Women of the Amazon Basin Summit, held in October 2021 in Colombia. This historic event laid the groundwork to strengthen Indigenous women's movements in the Amazon and increase their participation in advocacy spaces and leadership opportunities.

Through this program, which currently has three generations of fellows, Conservation International has supported 95 Indigenous women from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname in the creation of networks, training and financing to implement their initiatives, manage their territories and promote conservation in the Amazon.

One of the main objectives of the program is to connect Indigenous women of the Amazon through spaces for the exchange of experiences and knowledge, promoting collaborative learning and the creation of support networks based on expertise.

The *Second Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon* took place from October 9 – 12 2023, in Subachoque, Colombia. During the meeting 37 Indigenous women participated from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname. We invited second and third generations fellows, part of the Amazonia Indigenous Women's Fellowship, to share their experiences in the program and the lessons they gathered during the implementation of their projects. The meeting was intended to inspire and motivate participants to act together and build a network of Indigenous women leaders in the Amazon. The week-long event was organized by Conservation International, in partnership with COICA, with funding from the Estée Lauder Foundation and the government of France.

“Indigenous women are like water, when we come together, we grow”.

Juana Pariamo
Fellow from Bolivia



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

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

The meeting served to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among Indigenous women considering their worldviews and actions in conservation. Through storytelling, music, and dialogue they came together to share their history, where they came from, who they are and their vision for the future. As they presented in panels and listened to project presentation, they learned about their talents in fomenting sustainable economies and caring for communities. Filled with new ideas and inspiration, they forged a commitment to go back to their communities to share this knowledge and continue fighting to protect their territories. Lastly, alliances were made, and a network was formed based on the collective care for the Amazon and led by Indigenous women from the many regions of the Amazon.

The methodology of the meeting was developed based on the topics of the program fellows' projects to promote joint learning and dialogue among the women. Four topic sessions and an Indigenous knowledge fair were held where the women presented their experiences, challenges, lessons learned and best practices on implementing their projects.

The following are the main messages¹ of these spaces:



Indigenous Women's Leadership

- It is important to eliminate the fear of speaking about what women want; they must raise their voices.
- This is not an individual struggle; it is the collective work that achieves objectives.
- There is not only one way to be a woman, to be a leader. They have to look to other women for inspiration.
- It is important for women to preserve and transmit ancestral knowledge to the next generations.
- It is important for men to be involved in the struggle for gender equity; it is a process that must be worked on together.



Territory and Management Plans

- The territory is the sacred place where Indigenous peoples live; it must be protected and preserved, it needs respect and gratitude.
- The territory is subject to a normative law, but also to a law of origin, where safeguards are important.
- Conservation is promoted in the territory through management plans and life plans to live in harmonious balance with nature.
- Defending the territory ensures the persistence of ancestral knowledge, which guarantees the forest remains standing.

¹ The messages are based on concepts that were expressed by the women through written or oral activities, and then synthesized into general ideas. These are not direct quotes, but a summary of the perspectives and opinions of the women participants.



Food sovereignty

- Sovereignty is important for Indigenous peoples because cultural conservation and soil sustainability depend on it.
- Women play an important role in the harvesting and cultivation of traditional crops, the preparation of ancestral and nutritious foods, and the conservation of the land.
- Sustainable solutions require the inclusion of women in decision-making regarding food security and natural resource management.



Reforestation and Restoration

- Reforestation and restoration allow the creation of strategies for spiritual and environmental healing.
- When we talk about reforestation and restoration, we are not only talking about planting, we are also talking about preserving the culture.
- Trees are spiritual beings that should be respected.



Indigenous Knowledge Fair

- The leadership and innovation of women seeking autonomy through ancestral knowledge is admirable.
- It is inspiring to learn about the projects of women who revalue ancestral knowledge and translate it into colorful handicrafts.
- Women working in ancestral medicine are inspiring; they reuse and make ancestral knowledge visible.

“This is a space for the empowerment of women and their participation in the conservation of the Amazon. They are the true caretakers; they are the ones who have on their shoulders the enormous work of caring for the lives of Indigenous peoples and nature”.

Fany Kuiru
COICA Coordinator

DAY 1

OPENING SPACES FOR RECOGNITION AND DIALOGUE

The fellows from Colombia led the start of the event, where they shared a small sample of their diversity and cultural richness. After this emotional start, Fany Kuiru, COICA Coordinator; Nemo Andy, Indigenous leader from Ecuador; Lilia Java, Indigenous leader from Colombia; Cándido Pastor, Director of the Amazon Program of Conservation International; and Erwin Palacios, Director of Biodiversity of Conservation International Colombia, shared messages (Annex 1) of admiration and encouragement to the 37 Indigenous women who mobilized from their territories, some very far away and with transportation difficulties, to participate in this meeting.

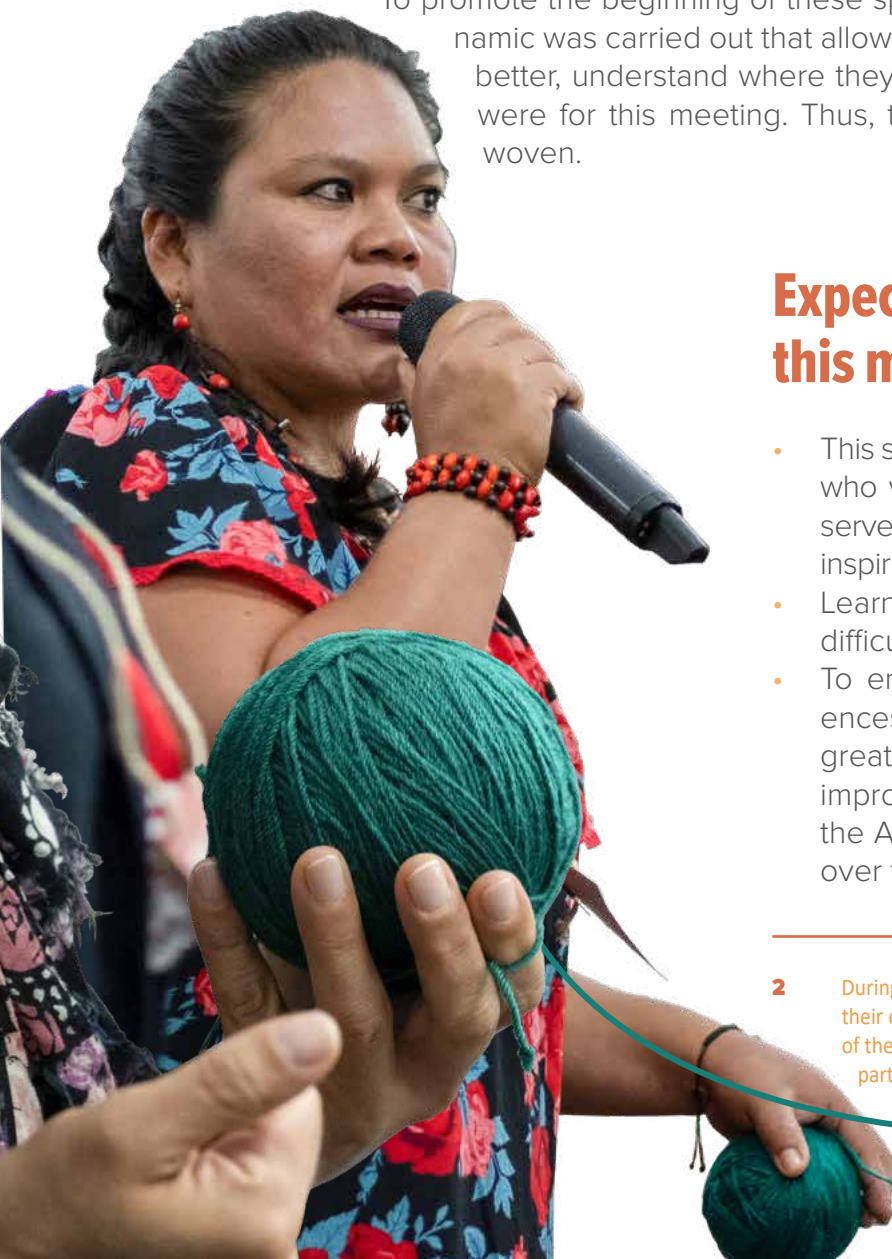
They highlighted the admirable work Indigenous women do to care for life in their territories, including the life of nature. They also mentioned how important it is to have these spaces for the exchange of knowledge among Indigenous women of the Amazon to promote the strengthening of their participation in conservation and the consolidation of the network of Amazonian women.

To promote the beginning of these spaces of recognition and dialogue, a dynamic was carried out that allowed the women to get to know each other better, understand where they come from and what their expectations were for this meeting. Thus, the network of knowledge began to be woven.

Expectations² of women about this meeting

- This space allows us to share what we know and who we are. Here, we gather strength to conserve our territory, and I hope to take away that inspiring strength from here.
- Learn from the achievements but also from the difficulties.
- To enrich myself positively with new experiences, wisdom from other women leaders, greater confidence for the development and improvement of my community, the defense of the Amazon and our culture so that it persists over time.

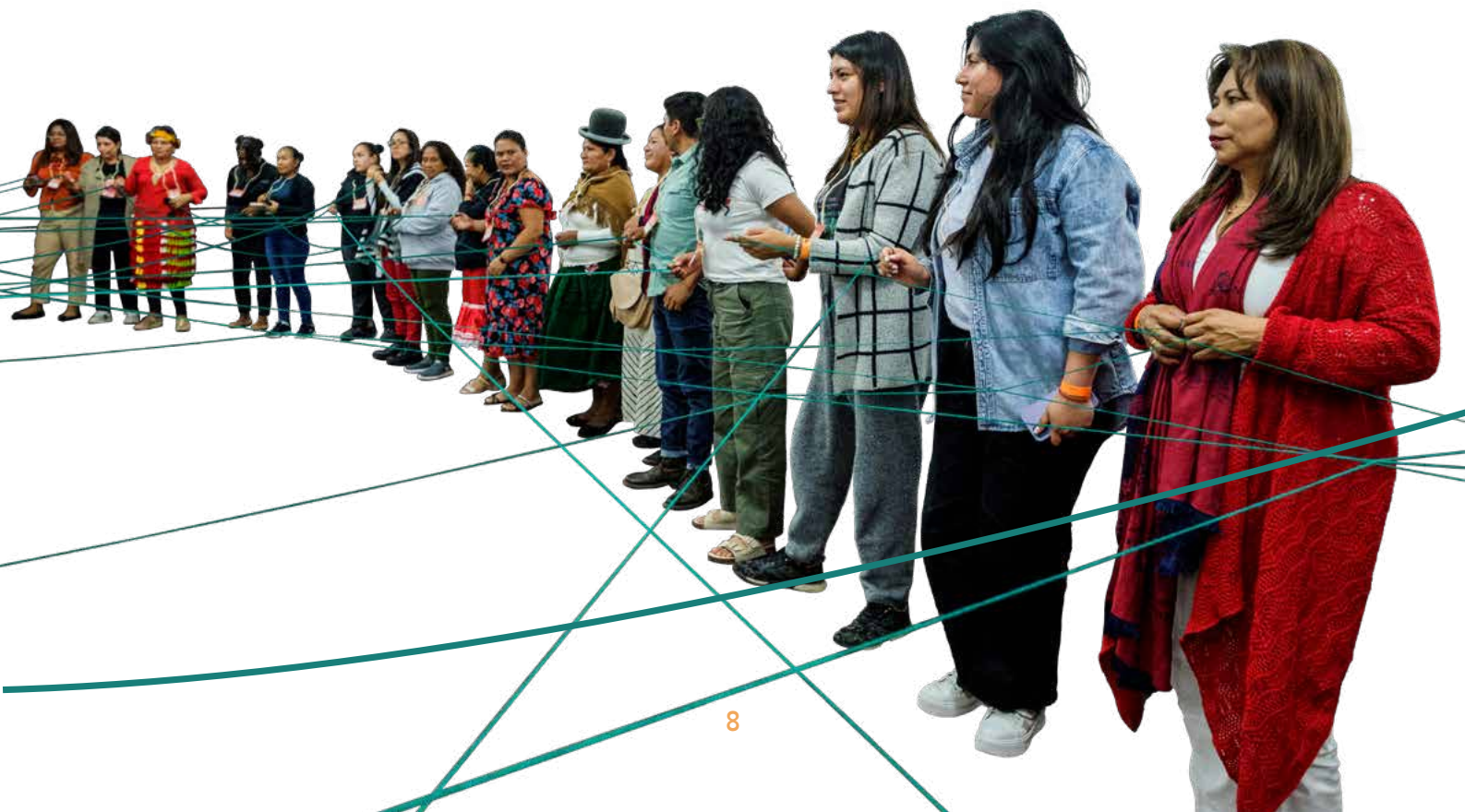
2 During the initial dynamic of the event, the women expressed their expectations about the meeting in writing. For this section of the systematization, some textual messages expressed by the participants were selected.



- Learn from the constant struggle in defense of the territory; how through the empowerment of women they have been able to strengthen skills and knowledge to learn and promote the bioeconomy, weaving dreams and networks from the community.
- Learn from the talent of Amazonian Indigenous women; meet, connect, inspire, and encourage the exchange of experiences and knowledge among all the women leaders of the seven countries.
- I come with an expectant heart to meet more wonderful women and share my experience with the sisters of the Amazon rainforest.
- To take away learning, knowledge, wisdom, inspiration, word weaving to apply in my project, in my territory, with my community.
- May this meeting be the beginning of a journey together to help each other and to have greater economic and political empowerment, to make ourselves heard with greater strength and impact.
- Continue strengthening our capacities as women leaders in the Amazon.
- To meet powerful women from different parts of the Amazon, with words of wisdom and resilience.
- I want to take with me the bonds of friendship that complement the fabric of sisterhood that we need to continue defending and protecting the Amazon.
- To learn more about each woman's work in their community and their projects, and to take the lessons learned back to my territory.

“I learned to weave the networks of ancestral knowledge; the activity allowed me to understand that we are all connected, even if we don't see each other, we share a common cause for the conservation of our Amazonian territory. Here, we wove networks, but we also built from the human aspect, a connection that makes us friends, to combine strengths, learn from successes and mistakes. We learned to connect, and with this activity, we started to weave a network”.

Cecilia Martínez.
Fellow from Peru



DAY 2

WOMEN PROMOTING LEADERSHIP AND CONSERVATION



Start-of-day ritual led by Guyana fellows. ©Emilio Aparicio

The fellows from Guyana led the start of the day, and in their ritual, they expressed gratitude for the strength of Indigenous women who are fighting for the conservation of their territories. After this energizing ceremony, we began with the learning sessions:

Session: Indigenous Women's Leadership

Objective

To learn about the activities and initiatives implemented by Indigenous women to encourage greater political participation in decision-making spaces, to improve their livelihoods, and understand the connection with the conservation of their territories.

Introduction

Nemo Andy

Facilitator

Mayara Ferreira

Speakers

Valeria Etzamaren
Shondell Rodrigues
Fabiola Yaun

Methodology

Thematic panel: The panel began with an introduction by Nemo Andy, an Indigenous leader from Ecuador, about her background and experience on the topic. Then the facilitator, Mayara Ferreira, gave a brief context of the topic and gave way to the speakers to explain their projects and actions. Afterwards, the facilitator asked specific questions to each of the speakers and finally opened the floor for questions from the audience. See Annex 2 to read the participants' narrative memory.



Illustration synthesis of the leadership session. Sara Gomez.

Main ideas³ from the panel:

- The processes of access to economic power and women's participation have been difficult.
- Women's voices have not been heard; they have often been minimized.
- Among women, strength is sought, which allows them to continue in the constant struggle for autonomy.
- Economic empowerment is fundamental to gaining autonomy.
- It is important to eliminate the fear of speaking about what women want; it is important to strengthen their processes and raise their voices.
- Women's opportunities must be seized without allowing anyone to diminish their efforts.
- Collective work, thinking about solutions, achieves the objectives; this is not an individual struggle, it is necessary to learn and teach by actively listening to the women who are at your side.
- Women who touch the lives of others should be encouraged.
- There is not only one way to be a woman and a leader, and you have to be inspired by others.
- Men must be included in the struggle for gender equity; it is a process that must be carried out jointly, it is not only about women.
- It is important for women to be in conservation decision-making spaces because women have a unique connection with nature, they know its needs and how to heal it.



"The women who are here have had to fight very hard against patriarchy, but here they are, and they have achieved great things. Our strength, is to say, I can".

Valeria Etzamaren
Fellow from Ecuador

Shondell Rodrigues, Fabiola Yaun, Mayara Ferreira, Valeria Etzamaren during the Indigenous Women's Leadership panel. ©Emilio Aparicio

³ The ideas are based on concepts that were expressed by the women through written or oral activities, and later synthesized into general ideas. These are not direct quotations, but a summary of the perspectives and opinions of the women participants.

Session: Territory and Management Plans

Objective

To understand the projects of women related to management plans, to comprehend how these plans have helped promote the conservation of territories and why they are important.



Dream maps session. ©Emilio Aparicio

Facilitator

Ana Vieco

Speakers

Juana Pariamo
María Elena Paredes Márquez
Grace Watamaleo
Ema Tapullima

Methodology

Dream Maps: In a dialogue space, facilitator Ana Vieco, together with the women, built the concepts of territory and management plans. Subsequently, the women participated in an activity where they were given a poster with a map and three blank sections. On the poster, they had to draw, write, or put photos about the past (how it was before), present (what they did and how it is now), and future (how they see the future) of their projects (Annex 3. Presentations territory and management plans session). Finally, the women whose projects are related to management plans and territory presented their dream maps.



Ema Tapullima fellow from Peru, presenting her dream map. ©Emilio Aparicio

Main ideas⁴ from the session:

- The territory is the sacred place where Indigenous peoples live; it must be protected and preserved, it needs respect and gratitude.
- The territory is subject to a normative law, but also to a law of origin, where safeguards are very important.
- Territory is the greatest wealth of Indigenous peoples, where there is food, medicine and home.
- The territory is conserved through a territorial management plan, life plans and handling plans to live in harmonious balance with nature.
- **Management plans:** tools in which the community differentiates zones for the environmental use of the territory. Each community has its own regulations on what it can and cannot do.
- **Life plan:** route agreed upon by the communities to reflect all the axes of development, education, culture, environment and construction of the Indigenous communities.
- Management plans should include zoning of the territory to identify areas for cultivation, sustainable use of species, harvesting of timber and other forest resources, and protection of areas of conservation importance.
- Management plans record ecological calendars, which allow defining times for planting and harvesting. Likewise, community agreements include monitoring and surveillance activities that communities are responsible for in their territories.
- Defending the territory ensures the persistence of ancestral knowledge, which guarantees that the forest remains standing.

“Marinbo Park is very important for my community. In my project, with the participation of young people and women, we have cleaned and recovered it because it was deforested. We have also created a management plan to restore it and turn it into a park full of trees; and identify sources or economic initiatives for economic progress”.

Grace Watamaleo
Fellow from Suriname



Illustration summary of the session on Territory and Management Plans: Sara Gomez

The fellows from Peru led the closing of the day, where they shared with us a little about the rites, dances, and cultural diversity of the different Indigenous peoples of the women who accompanied us in the meeting.

⁴ The ideas are based on concepts that were expressed by the women through written or oral activities, and later synthesized into general ideas. These are not direct quotations, but a summary of the perspectives and opinions of the women participants.

DAY 3

EXPANDING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

The fellows from Suriname led the start of the day, filling us with energy with their traditional dance, and then initiating the knowledge fair.

Session: Indigenous Knowledge

Objective

To learn about the activities that women are implementing to revalue or recover ancestral knowledge.



Yadira Ocoquaje's stand, Ecuadorian fellow. ©Emilio Aparicio

Facilitator

Carmen Rodríguez

Morning speakers

Elinalda Gama Da Silva Kumaruara
Maria Valdenice Silva De Souza
Ana Isabel Lopez Rojas
Kim Spencer
Zoila Ochoa
Cecilia Martínez
Gabriela Loayza
Fulvia Medina
Yadira Ocoquaje

Afternoon speakers

Levis Rivera
Judith Reymundo
Melisa Marvell Fredericks
Vickiola Aaron
Carmen Ritchie
Mariana Rodriguez Gonzales
Claudia Mamani
Lorena Wampanti
Mariana Vargas
Alcira Morales Gonzales
Jeny Jazmín Juagibioy

Methodology

Knowledge Fair: Each speaker was assigned a booth to present the results and challenges of her project. The fellows who did not present, went around each of the booths, asking questions to the speakers. In this space, not only were knowledge networks woven, but also bonds of solidarity, respect and appreciation for each other's knowledge were created.

At the end of the fair, the women told us about the experiences⁵ that they liked the most from their peers and the lessons they took away with them to share with their communities:

- I take away a lesson on how to take care of ourselves with the foods that we grow and that give us good health.
- I take from Ecuador the leadership and innovation of women seeking autonomy through ancestral knowledge.
- I take away the work of the 'Guardians of the Clay' from Ecuador, teamwork, and traditional knowledge.
- From the Brazilian women, I was inspired by the creation of a fire brigade and the rescue of ancestral utensils to avoid the use of plastic.
- Zoila Ochoa from Peru is an admirable, audacious and wise woman, who found in the art of orality the means to strengthen her own knowledge.



María Elena Paredes, Gabriela Loaiza, Zoila Ochoa y Levis Rivera. Fellows from Peru.
©Emilio Aparicio

⁵ The participants expressed in writing the experiences that they liked the most from the fair and that they take back with them to their territories. For this section of this systematization, some textual messages expressed by the participants were selected.

- I was inspired by the projects related to ancestral medicine; a very useful way to make ancestral knowledge visible.
- I take with me the idea from Peru, that in order to fight climate change it is important to ensure that communities are fed with healthy food.
- From Guyana, I was motivated by the forest management project with young leaders to guide them in the knowledge of the forest.
- I learned from Peru the need to be agile and adapt to the needs of the communities; they are an example of how to use medicine after COVID.
- I was motivated by all the projects on the good use of ecosystems and the transformation of products, and especially the value chains they have for export.
- From Suriname, I have learned from the process of training women in project management, public speaking and helping to strengthen women's capacities in managing and handling of their economic resources.
- I take with me the message of "existing by caring, planting, teaching, living and being territory".
- From Colombia, I take with me the revaluation of ancestral knowledge that is embodied in colorful handicrafts; the carving of aquatic animals such as the buffalo and fish.
- I really liked the Ecuadorian project to establish medicinal gardens using traditional plants; I want to convince my people to think and act in a similar way.

The fellows from Ecuador led the closing of the day and taught us about the diversity of their dances and rituals. They also prayed to the spirit of nature for the strength of all Indigenous women.

"We ask the spirit of nature to give us a lot of strength so that each one of us, wherever we are in our territories, continue with more strength, standing up to fight to protect our nature, the territory and our loved ones".

Jiyunt Uyunkar
Fellow from Ecuador



DAY 4

WOMEN DEFENDING THEIR TERRITORIES AND SOVEREIGNTY

The start of the day was led by the scholarship recipients from Bolivia, who invited us to fill ourselves with joy with a small demonstration of their diverse cultural rituals, and then to begin the topic sessions on the last day of the event.

Session: Food Sovereignty and Meliponiculture

Objective

To learn how women provide solutions to the health of the environment and the health of people, and how these actions contribute to good living.



Facilitator

Erwin Palacios

Speakers

María Do Rosario Piloto
Caroline Lima Da Costa
Jiyunt Uyunkar
Filomena Quispe Surco

Conclusions

Cecilia Martínez

Erwin Palacios, María Do Rosario Piloto, Caroline Lima, Jiyunt Uyunkar, Filomena Quispe, during the panel on Food Sovereignty and Meliponiculture. ©Emilio Aparicio

Methodology

Thematic panel: Facilitator Erwin Palacios provided a brief context on the topic and then invited the speakers to explain their projects. Subsequently, the facilitator asked specific questions to each of the speakers, and finally, the floor was opened for audience questions. Finally, Cecilia Martínez, an Indigenous leader from Peru, concluded the panel. For the narrated memory of the participants, please refer to Annex 4.

Main ideas⁶ from the panel:

- Food security is important to the community, and it is a role that has mainly been fulfilled by women.
- Food autonomy has been threatened, especially for Indigenous peoples.

⁶ The ideas are based on concepts that were expressed by the women through written or oral activities, and later synthesized into general ideas. These are not direct quotations, but a summary of the perspectives and opinions of the women participants.

- The ability to make decisions about food and crops is required.
- Sovereignty is important for Indigenous peoples because cultural conservation, identity, maintaining and transmitting knowledge and culinary practices, and soil sustainability depend on it.
- Women have a role in gathering and cultivating traditional foods and conserving the land and its elements. Therefore, we must educate ourselves and make decisions related to food sovereignty.
- Women's economic empowerment is important and achieved by taking advantage of what is produced and marketed.
- Food sovereignty must be addressed with a holistic approach involving production, preparation, distribution, and consumption.
- Women are essential for food sovereignty; in their hands lies the responsibility for food; they possess a diversity of knowledge crucial for addressing climate change.
- Meliponiculture is a practice that consists in working with native stingless bees, known as meliponas.
- Indigenous communities have used the honey from these bees as medicine.
- In addition to being medicine, honey is a potential source for the economy of the communities and promotes sustainable production.
- For the garden to be healthy, there must be a spiritual connection to it, and so it provides Indigenous peoples with healthy food.
- Food security is vital; doing it through agroforestry with fruit and timber trees and applying knowledge based on studies and knowledge of the communities ensures sovereignty.
- Sustainable solutions must be sought, and to this end, women must be included in food security and natural resource management decision-making.



“From my perspective as an activist, leader and mom, food autonomy has been threatened. Before my project, women and the community were sick because industrialized food was not avoided. Today, among women, we have strengthened ourselves to face this situation; the important thing is to work together and dialogue among ourselves”.

María Do Rosario Piloto Martins
Fellow from Brazil

Sustainable solutions

Resilience to climate change and other challenges

"Our rebellion should be conserving and building ourselves as women leaders"
Cecilia Martinez

Public Policy

Inclusive, by taking into account the needs of all

Holistic approach

Production
Distribution
Preparation
Consumption

"No one has to tell us what and how to grow our food"
Cecilia Martinez

Gender Equality

Including women in decision making

Processed Food



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

@saraenlinea.ec



Food & Medicine

Cultural conservation

Maintain and transfer culturally traditional practices

Decision making regarding food

Nutritious, healthy and culturally relevant food



Environmental Sustainability

Seed collection
Restoration
Reforestation

"If we grow our own food, no one could bend us"
Jiyunt Uyunkar

Economic empowerment

Focused on women for their families' and communities' benefit

"Women push each other hugh each other, and move forward together"
Filomena Quispe

Session: Reforestation and Restoration



Construction of concept maps in the Reforestation and Restoration session. ©Emilio Aparicio

Objective

To learn about the actions women are implementing to reforest and restore biodiversity and how this has an impact on the territory.

Introduction

Lilia Isolina Java

Facilitators

María Paula Miranda
Carmen Rodríguez

Speakers

María Celsida Biguidima
Danixa Moreno
Claudia Flores

Methodology

Concept Maps: The session began with an introduction by Lilia Java, an Indigenous leader from Colombia, about her background and experience on the topic. Then, facilitators María Paula Miranda and Carmen Rodríguez, asked the speakers questions about their projects, objectives, results, challenges, and lessons learned. The speakers' answers were systematized on poster boards. Afterward, the audience was asked to put their questions on paper and paste them next to the cards. The facilitators filtered the questions from the audience for the speakers to answer. For the narrated memory of the participants, see Annex 5.



Main ideas⁷ from the session:

- Reforestation is an activity that controls the damage caused by deforestation and forest degradation.
- The care of species contributes to the conservation of the Amazon and brings benefits to local communities.
- It is necessary to make communities aware of the need to reforest and restore, because by planting trees we are giving life.
- Reforestation and restoration allow the development of strategies for spiritual and environmental healing.
- When we talk about reforestation and restoration, we are not just talking about planting, we are talking about preserving the culture.
- Trees are spiritual beings that should be respected.
- It is necessary to utilize forests sustainably as mandated by the law.
- The land has been affected and needs to be healed; restoration and reforestation are the best alternatives in the territory and a bioeconomy can be generated to support local communities.

“For many years it was taken for granted that the trees would always be there for us; the biggest 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”.

Danixa Moreno
Fellow from Colombia



7 The ideas are based on concepts that were expressed by the women through written or oral activities, and later synthesized into general ideas. These are not direct quotations, but a summary of the perspectives and opinions of the women participants.

KNOWLEDGE THAT WE TAKE BACK TO OUR TERRITORIES

For the closing of the event, a final dialogue space was created, where a review of the topics worked on throughout the meeting took place. The fellows were asked to share the knowledge they have gained during these days and that can be applied in their territories. Here are the main insights⁸ they shared:



Indigenous Women's Leadership

- As Indigenous women, we consider and identify ourselves as part of our territory, which both men and women inhabit.
- Participation in the different spaces must be equal. The importance of Amazonian women is to work together with a single purpose, and to spread what they learn with other women.
- Leadership for women means economic empowerment and forest conservation. Women, we are strength and family.
- The importance of leadership is knowing how to cope with problems and take turns supporting each other.
- If we want to be different, we must grow differently.
- Indigenous women are stronger when we unite; raising our voices empowers us.



Territory and Management Plans

- Territory is the home that provides us with security, food sovereignty, and knowledge.
- Life plans and management plans are strategies for implementing that knowledge for the responsible use and management of the territory, which has no borders.
- We now know how to take advantage of different activities such as forest management and food security.
- Territory is life because it is our origin, and our life depends on the spiritual connection between nature and humans. The work of Indigenous women is to reclaim and conserve it.
- For the proper administration of our territories, it is necessary to work on a territorial management plan and, in turn, establish an action plan.
- The territory is not only what is seen; it is a spiritual concept. Therefore, management plans should arise from that spiritual conception, not from an external technical framework.

8 For the closing of the event, we asked the women to write down the knowledge they take back to their territories and a final message about the meeting. For this section of this systematization, some textual messages expressed by the participants were selected.



Indigenous Knowledge Fair

- Colombia and Brazil emphasize the importance of reclaiming our ancestral knowledge and recovering wisdom, bringing it back to the territory.
- Conservation is very important, stemming from our ancestral heritage.
- Sharing what we know as Amazonian women leaders is fundamental, teaching and teaching always.
- Traditional arts, rooted in ancestral knowledge, tell stories, and preserve Amazonian culture.
- We need to strengthen ourselves to create bioeconomy's that allow us to manage resources for the conservation and preservation of the Amazon.
- Economic power is a key tool, but it must go hand in hand with training and appropriation for the Amazon. Let us be fearless leaders, confident, inspired, and putting words into action.



Food Sovereignty and Meliponiculture

- Food security is vital; doing it through agroforestry with fruit and timber trees and applying knowledge based on studies and knowledge of the communities assures us sovereignty.
- The foods we use are also medicines; they nourish the body, heal it, and nourish the spirit.
- To have a plot of crops is to have life. All women are pursuing the same goal: to save the planet.
- Native seeds should be collected and saved for planting in the communities; that is the best decision that the communities can make.
- Meliponiculture means agroforestry, medicine, and conservation.
- No one can overpower us if we have our own crops or gardens. We must be autonomous in every way.





Reforestation and Restoration

- Our land has been affected, and we must heal it. Restoration and reforestation are the best alternatives in the territory because we return to the origin and can generate a bioeconomy to support local communities.
- Our actions set an example for others. That's why women leaders generate conservation with sustainability for the environment and the communities by reforesting with native species and restoring and caring for the species that are part of their diet.
- The communities need more financial support to continue with these programs that benefit the communities and the Amazon.

Messages from the Fellows about Indigenous Women:

- United women are an unstoppable force.
- Women have power, strength and are living nature.
- Indigenous women are like water; when we come together, we grow.
- The power of collectivity transforms the world.
- The woman's strength sustains the land; from the power of the land, the planet thrives.
- One of women's strongest weapons is their voice.
- Together we can do anything, even though we live in different areas, we are in the Amazon territory, and we are complementary, we learn from all of them and we nourish ourselves from their learning.
- The diversity of knowledge helps to increase resilience, learn from others, and face challenges such as climate change.
- The Indigenous women of the Amazon are united to make fire, and we come together like water to move forward and achieve our dreams, to protect our people and to be resilient in the face of the challenges facing our region.
- Indigenous women are stronger when we unite, raising our voices empowers us.

The closing of the event was led by the fellows from Brazil who, with their great cultural richness and diversity, guided us to an emotional and joyful closing.

NEXT STEPS



Closing circle of the meeting. ©Emilio Aparicio

The Second Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Amazon has been one of the main milestones of the Program in 2023. On the one hand, it allowed us to learn about the results, challenges, and best practices of the projects of some of the fellows from the second generation. On the other hand, it enabled the fellows participating in the third generation to leverage these experiences to enhance the implementation of their projects in the initial stage.

The Amazonia Indigenous Women's Fellowship Program is currently in its third generation, and to continue fostering joint learning, there are plans to promote more spaces for the exchange of experiences among the fellowship recipients with a focus on the topics and experiential learning. We want to implement a participation plan to strengthen the network of fellowship recipients who have participated in the Program. This plan aims to encourage fellowship recipients from the first and second generations, who have completed their fellowship, to remain connected to the program as topic mentors, national mentors, or facilitators.

In 2024, a call for proposals will open for the fourth generation of fellows in the seven countries.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank all the women who joined us in this meeting and shared their knowledge, wisdom and inspired us with their experiences:

Fellows

Bolivia

Filomena Quispe
Fulvia Medina
Juana Pariamo
Claudia Mamani
Mariana Rodriguez Gonzales

Peru

Cecilia Martinez
Claudia Flores
Ema Tapullima
Gabriela Loayza
María Elena Paredes
Zoila Ochoa
Judith Reymundo
Levis Rivera
Fabiola Yaun

Guyana

Shondell Alana Rodrigues
Kim Spencer
Carmen Ritchie
Vickiola Indeira Aaron

Colombia

Ana Isabel Lopez Rojas
Danixa Moreno
Lilia Isolina Java
Alcira Morales Gonzales
Jeny Jazmín Juagibioy
María Celsida Biguidima
Paola Margarita Chindoy Chicunque

Brazil

Caroline Lima Da Costa
Elinalda Gama Da Silva Kumaruara
Maria Do Rosario Piloto Martins
Maria Valdenice Silva De Souza

Ecuador

Nemo Andy
Jiyunt Uyunkar Kaniras
Valeria Etzamaren
Yadira Ocoquaje
Lorena Marina Wampanti Yankuam
Mariana Mónica Vargas Vargas

Suriname

Grace Watamaleo
Melisa Marvell Fredericks

Special guests, CI staff and mentors

Bolivia

Cándido Pastor
Jaime Rivera
Andrés Ramírez
Omar Espejo

Brazil

Bruna Patresi
Marilena Campos
Mayara Ferreira

Suriname

Arifantie Landburg

Ecuador

María Fernanda González
Diana Valdospinos
María Muñoz
Sara Gómez

Colombia

Fany Kuiru
Ana Vieco
Erwin Palacios
Luisa Castaño
María Paula Miranda

Guyana

Gillian Albert

Peru

Gabriela Benito
Mirko Ruiz
Carla Aroca
Milagros Oblitas

Mexico

Lia López
Montserrat García

USA

Makayla Canfield

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Opening session quotes

COLOMBIA

FANY KUIRO - COICA Coordinator



“This is a space for the empowerment of women and their participation in the conservation of the Amazon. They are the true caretakers, they are the ones who have on their shoulders the enormous work of taking care of the life of the Indigenous peoples and of nature which, at the end of the day, is the life of the planet. Your presence here is part of a process; in 2022 we met to talk about our situation because, although you are caretakers, your work and your voice have been silenced and overshadowed. Men are the ones who are talking about climate change and conversation in meetings and decision-making spaces, but those who are actually taking care of the land in their territories are women. When Danixa goes to the field every day to pick seeds, she is restoring, planting, caring and thinking about the memory of the ancestors, where the knowledge that helps us take care of the Amazon comes from. In 2022, one of the mandates we gave ourselves was the creation of a fund for women to finance the common agenda; this fund is currently being managed”.

BOLIVIA

CÁNDIDO PASTOR - Senior Director Amazonia and IPLC Program Senior Director



“It is an honor to share with you the cause of conservation; we aim to conserve 80% of the Amazon by 2030, and we have come here to learn. This women’s movement involves seven countries (should be nine). There are more than 80 communities related to the Program, the largest in the Amazon with 96 fellows, and it is beautiful to see how the struggle to conserve transcends generations. Twenty-three years ago, I met a girl who today has become a powerful leader. Today we have her here with us, Juana represents her people. She is respected for what she thinks, for what she knows and for what she does, and from CI we want to carry these virtues into the future”.

ECUADOR

***NEMO ANDY* - Indigenous Leader of Ecuador**



“I extend a warm greeting to the fellowship leaders who have done a great job coming out of their territories. It’s not easy to do so; we still have many limitations, and one of them is sexism. We need to work on that because it’s not about fighting among peers but working side by side, together. If women don’t pass on knowledge, the language, the knowledge of the jungle, and the stability of communities are lost. However, women’s work is not valued. In large spaces, there are always men or women who don’t live in the territories. Those of us in the territory are here, weaving the fight for our rights. It’s a pleasure to be with you, learning from each other”.

COLOMBIA

***LILIA JAVA* - Indigenous Leader of Colombia**



“It is my first time on such a big stage, and I am happy to be here to learn from all of you and to share what I know. These spaces are not achieved overnight. We have been trained in our territories, strengthened by our elders in lakes, fields, rivers, and jungles. It’s these teachings that we have come to sow. Here, we have biologists, ecologists, doctors, many without formal degrees but with knowledge and education learned in the territory. I welcome all of you. You have come from the farthest corners of the Amazon jungle to bring your knowledge and make the common dream come true. It’s time to tell all governments that it’s not the time to talk; it’s time to act, to strengthen community initiatives. Today, we face many social and environmental problems, and this meeting should generate ideas to reinforce the process. United as indigenous people, we accomplish more, thinking about the future and our youth. Today, we will plant seeds of unity and fertility”.

COLOMBIA

***ERWIN PALACIOS* - Biodiversity Participative Management Director - CI Colombia**



“Meetings where women are the majority are very special because in their attire, decorations, and paintings, they showcase not only their culture but also part of the beauty of the jungle they inhabit. Two months ago, we were in a similar setting, opening the graduation ceremony for young Indigenous individuals who participated in training for several months. That ceremony, involving youth who are the result of the care and love of their mothers, connects today with this event where women take center stage, demonstrating that many people are working and joining hands and ideas to protect the Amazon. For the past two years, several women leaders have been developing their projects in the southeastern Colombian Amazon. Projects led by women certainly have a clearer direction. It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to our country and host these days of work. I wish you much productivity, ideas, coordination, and unity. We continue with the inspiration provided by the fellowship recipients from Colombia, where they shared their ancestral practices to give the perfect opening to the dialogue”.

Annex 2

Panel Quotes on Indigenous Women's Leadership

ECUADOR **NEMO ANDY**



“The processes of access to economic power and women’s participation have been difficult; we do not have the same opportunities as women in the cities. Breaking the patriarchal gap in the territories has cost us lives, and in many cases the expulsion from our communities. Among women we seek strength, that strength that allows us to continue in the constant struggle for autonomy. In our context, women must obey the leader, the husband, the wise man; our decisions are based on what others say, not on what we think. But through empowerment we bring

about social changes that demand sustainable development in accordance with our vision.

That is why economic empowerment is fundamental to obtain autonomy. Dependence on our husbands forces us to remain silent, and in the organizations, there is no space to talk about what is happening in the territories, about what is happening to us; this is the time to open the door and talk about those things that really matter to us. This is not a call to rebellion, but to dialogue and to the search for solutions to this reality that is felt. Why are women’s lives worth less than men’s in the territories?

We can talk about what we feel and create beautiful things, and for that it is necessary to have political, organizational and economic power. Seeing them here gives me strength because it is difficult to leave the territories; from here we will come out stronger talking about rights and climate change; we are connected to the territories”.

MODERATED THE PANEL **MAYARA FERREIRA**



“I work on gender issues, and in my studies, I have delved into the role of men, women, and other gender perspectives. In this space, we will talk about two fundamental issues: Indigenous women and Indigenous peoples. Each community has a different history, and Indigenous peoples are very diverse, with their own worldviews, cultural expressions, roles, division of labor, and vulnerabilities. The concept we have of gender comes from Europe and arrived violently with colonization. Indigenous people, of course, bore the brunt. Before colonization, there was no

sexism; each community had different concepts of the roles of women and men. Sexism came with the Europeans. In Brazil, a country with 300 Indigenous peoples, there is not a single police station with interpreters to receive reports, complaints, or demands from Indigenous women because they do not speak Portuguese. Many times, the State cannot support them, and when they think of becoming leaders, the situation becomes very difficult.

Sexism, inequality, and hierarchy between men and women came with colonization, and this does not only happen in Indigenous communities. In the broader society, complementarity and the role of women are also minimized; being a homemaker is seen as a less important activity. Unlike Indigenous peoples, “white” women do not always have support from their peers. Indigenous people think collectively; I have seen that women help each other collectively, thinking together for the community. For the “white” person, this thinking is not valued; only money matters, and how money takes care of the children and maintains the house. In Indigenous communities, if there is no communal work, the community does not function.

Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and white women must rethink our roles, and although a single vision of gender and leadership cannot be generalized, it is essential to listen to what makes sense and what is important for each community. Indigenous people teach us to build society from diversity. Our panelists will share their stories and projects, and then we will ask some questions”.

WARAO - GUYANA
SHONDELL RODRIGUES



“I am Shondel Rodriguez, I come from the largest Indigenous village in Guyana, Kamwatta, Warao territory. My nation is small and over time we have lost our culture, language and way of life; in Guyana we are known as the gentle people of the river, because our livelihood, harvesting and fishing come from the river; however, we have had to adapt to formal agriculture. My project is based on the use of ancestral knowledge to find solutions to agriculture and forest management. In my community the women are the ones who take care of the household and gather the crops; we need to

empower ourselves in other community spaces, but there is not always an opportunity to participate or to work.

Our project is based on the rescue of ancestral knowledge to use forest products in a sustainable way. Today, the forest resources are not available as they used to be and we need to understand what is happening. We have invited the elders to teach us how to manage the forest and we are farming without using pesticides, only organic manure and natural pest control. In our project, the home garden is of great importance because that is where the family’s food comes from; with the participation of the whole community, we collect seeds and promote home gardens. In addition, we are recovering and documenting our language because the elders no longer teach, as a result there is already a manual produced in the original language”.

ACHUAR - ECUADOR
VALERIA ETZAMAREN



“I am a former vice president of my nationality and I supported the organizational issues of the Achuar. I share the knowledge and skills of the Achuar women. The Achuar have 28 years of organizational life led by men, but we women have won spaces and on two occasions we have been vice presidents. This is a struggle that the women of the 89 communities that make up the Achuar nation have fought. I do not support rebellion, but rather the reflection of the men on the importance of us in

the organizational process. Here with us is our colleague Mariana Vargas who is president of a community, a fighter for the empowerment of women.

In the beginning my project was a women's association for political advocacy, at that time the organization did not support our demands, so we made changes with the members and families. Ours is not a large community, but we are concerned about the loss of our culture; what will become of the future of our people if we lose our culture? So we started an education project in which we did workshops with the community, worked with teachers to maintain the culture, the language, the identity. Our message is that if we do not identify ourselves as Achuar, we will only be people in the eyes of society, but if we speak our language, we are a nation and a unique people, with identity.

Taking care of the culture, highlighting the cosmovision and customs is our project. What we do involves all communities, not only women. Uncles, cousins, brothers are part of this; we also share the project with nearby communities. We have equally serious problems in which men have made decisions without taking us into account, as in the case of the highway that is making its way through our territory. Thanks to the project we are carrying out, today they listen to us, we share our thoughts, and we try to disseminate our knowledge. Women leaders explain to the next generations what we want and seek; we have achieved spaces for participation in the major issues of the community, and our voice matters in the fight against mining, oil companies, and the road”.

AWAJUN – PERÚ
FABIOLA YAUN



“I am a member of the board of directors of the Awajun community, and I have been in this space for three years, participating in various processes in my territory. One of them is leadership in my community. We are 16 communities working on governance schools, youth leadership, and community members because we understand that to conserve and recover the jungle, it is necessary to train conscious leaders, who love their culture and contribute to the protection of the territory.

Our school prioritizes participation for organization and conservation. We promote the active role of women and their contributions, this is what the school is all about. In San Martin, where I belong, three languages are spoken, through the school, we support women who are looking for spaces to discuss problems and seek solutions together. In the beginning we were few women, today we have grown in number and leadership because when we are together we have the strength to fight for our dreams.

We also work on the development of a cultural code for reporting violence against women; in the ordinary justice system, there are no interpreters to assist with these cases. That's why our work involves coordinating indigenous and ordinary justice to close the gaps that allow women to access justice. We have already addressed cases and complaints, and we have made

progress. I am also part of the fellowship program of the local organization, with 31 fellowship recipients from 11 alternatives where women actively participate. We, as women, are the transmitters of traditional knowledge, and even though we are currently going through a crisis, we seek opportunities to be part of leadership processes with organizational knowledge. We want to ensure the future.

Finally, I have participated in the elaboration of AIDSESEP's Women's Agenda, which gathers women's issues and makes them visible, seeking respect for their rights and the full exercise of them".

Annex 3

Presentations territory and management plans session

PERÚ

Dream Map by *María Elena Paredes*



“The Ashéninka community in Peru and Brazil shares territory between both countries. The community in Peru is losing its culture, threatened by invasions of loggers and a road that cuts through their territory. They have formed a community forest monitoring committee and established the Alto Amazonas Organization, through which they have filed complaints about illegal loggers and the road that traversed the territory. Today, they have managed to control invasions in the territory, and in the future, they want to strengthen the community as a whole, unify a

sustainable development plan, conduct a diagnosis of the territory, utilize seeds, and produce crafts to generate income. Today, the communities value their culture thanks to this process of revaluing territories”.

SURINAM

Dream Map by *Grace Watamaleo*



“Marinbo Park is a local park for connecting with nature and is part of the territory. It has an insufficient budget, especially after the war, and the area suffered significant deterioration. With CI’s project, they began the recovery of Marinbo Park, cleaned it up, created a new administration, and involved the community in its recovery. With young people, women, and men, they created a rule manual for visitors. In the future, Marinbo will be a place to relax, enjoy, and connect with the river. Their vision is to restore it and have community ownership to turn it into a tree-filled park.

They aim to identify sources or economic initiatives for economic progress”.

PERÚ

Dream Map by *Ema Tapullima*



“They live in a territory very far from populated areas, which kept them isolated, but in 2008, they grouped together as an Artisan Organization after a process of searching for economic options that would provide them with income. They did this through the production of crafts with seeds and fruits. Their territory covers 522 hectares, and in those years, they managed to connect with the Peruvian Society of Environmental Law, which offered support to the community with a biological environmental study and recognized their efforts to keep the forest standing.

This allowed them to participate in a seed fund competition with which they built a traditional communal house (‘maloca’). In 2016, with this project, they involved the children of the community in educational and tree-planting processes. In the conservation area, they monitor to prevent deforestation, and work is underway to signalize the area, increasing signage to cover the entire territory. In the future, the community plans to build a park with trails”.

BOLIVIA

Dream Map by *Juana Pariamo*



“In San José de Uchupiamonas, they are being affected by deforestation and mining. Their project was crucial to support women so that they can participate and be heard, but above all, to strengthen their knowledge of territorial rights and the importance of organizing to manage their territory more sustainably. They organize workshops and build alternatives to reduce pressures on their territory, working on Territorial Management Plans. In the future, they want to leave a message to future generations to conserve their territory free from pollution and mining processes”.

Annex 4

Food Sovereignty and Meliponiculture Panel Quotes

BRASIL

María Do Rosario Piloto Martins



“From my perspective as an activist, leader, and mother, food autonomy has been threatened. Before the project, women and the community were unhealthy because industrialized food was not avoided; there was a variety of plants and fruits to utilize and consume (for economic income), but it wasn’t being done. Women have many responsibilities as mothers, teachers, and farmers, and involving them was challenging due to a lack of time, while men said that women were not capable and lacked knowledge. Today, among women, we have strengthened ourselves to face this situation; the important thing is to work together and have dialogue among ourselves. Today, I work with three municipalities despite the difficulties”.

BRASIL

Caroline Lima Da Costa



“Today, we have studies in agroecology, producing food from the diversity of community products such as acre fruits, especially for children. Community production is carried out to avoid buying from places outside the community. In these processes, men, women, boys, and girls are involved to work on the recovery of plant diversity. It is important to understand that nature does not need us; we need it”.

ECUADOR

Jiyunt Uyunkar



“My project involves bees, and I connected with this activity since I was a child because I suffered from bronchitis. Since then, I began to have a deep relationship with bees – they take care of us, and I take care of them. The project started by bringing women together to discuss what is happening in the community, in the gardens, with medicine, with children, with health, education, and the economy – from personal to community matters. The project has strengthened communities and our women. We now have the first vice president of the community; five women leaders are already presenting their concerns in the community, even if they have not been heard yet. We have to think about producing healthy food in the gardens, instead of relying on the medical center where everything is covered with the same medicines that make us sick and damage the immune system. Honey is healthy and has the potential for conservation and the economy of communities. For the garden to be healthy, there must be a spiritual connection through sacred singing to treat the garden as if it were our child”.

BOLIVIA

Filomena Quispe Surco



“Women have not been taken into account in our society. Being a woman is difficult because, in addition to children and family, you have to find time to be a leader. Nevertheless, we are doing it. My project is about ‘Angelitas’ bees, stingless bees in a successional agroforestry system that requires a richness of vegetation to maintain the population. We must plant flowering plants, and they, in turn, support the pollination process. We have been trained, and we are already strengthened as meliponiculturists because we know the management, harvesting, and entry into the market of apiculture products. For now, we are using honey for our own consumption, but in the medium term, we want to increase production and include other products such as coffee and timber, supporting the bioeconomy in the community”.

Annex 5

Quotes on Reforestation and Restoration

PERÚ

Claudia Flores



“My project involves repopulating a species of aquatic turtle in the Tres Esquinas community to rescue this ancestral and traditional source of food. This has become a tradition in my community. We have developed artificial beaches for the rescue of 7,000 hatchlings. Despite institutional neglect and community detachment at the beginning, the main lesson from my project is that we must learn to value our ancestral traditions. This includes the territory and the species that inhabit it, and in that sense, the commitment of women was what pushed this idea forward”.

COLOMBIA

Danixa Moreno



“We worked to repopulate the forest with timber species, planting 5,400 trees. We created an informative booklet and strengthened the community’s organizational system, contributing to the social fabric and empowering women and the community. They now see us with more respect and support us. The most challenging part of the project was resuming the important activity of planting trees with cultural, environmental, and economic impact after a long time. For many years, it was always assumed that the trees would always be there for us. The most

significant lesson from 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. If we do, it will give us the economy we need”.

COLOMBIA

María Celsida Biguidima



“In our community, we have worked on the reforestation of the Canangucha palm in degraded areas of La Samaritana. We have reforested areas with the planting of 2,000 seedlings and have empowered women in territorial governance. Additionally, we have started developing enterprises with the fruits of the palm. The main challenges we have faced include prolonged droughts associated with climate change, difficulty in accessing the internet, and the security situation and violence affecting the area. However, we are united and excited to discover that

the Canangucha palm brings us significant environmental benefits through carbon sequestration, cultural importance in the territory, and economic advantages as we use the fruits for crafts and jewelry”.

II MEETING OF
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN
OF THE AMAZON



AMAZONIA

ESTÉE
LAUDER
COMPANIES

CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION



GOUVERNEMENT
*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*