



# TOGETHER FOR THE RESILIENCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' FOOD SYSTEMS





## THE IFAD AND SLOW FOOD CASE FOR INVESTMENT

Supporting indigenous peoples, and particularly women and youth, means reducing poverty, improving food security and nutrition and increasing resilience to shocks like COVID-19 and climate change – all while protecting the world's biodiversity.



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The road to a resilient future and building back better needs to be inspired by indigenous peoples and their food systems.

Indigenous peoples are the custodians of large natural areas and biodiversity hotspots. However, they are also among the world's most marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Their traditional ways of life and livelihoods are increasingly being threatened and are rapidly disappearing.

Now, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the impact of historical underfunding and inadequate social and health services on indigenous peoples' communities.

During this crisis, resilient indigenous food systems have been vital in ensuring indigenous peoples' food security and sustainable livelihoods. However, additional efforts are needed to support indigenous communities in order to leave no one behind.

Here is why:

- Indigenous peoples living in rural areas constitute about 5 per cent of the world's population, but they account for about 15 per cent of the world's poor.
- Through their practices, sociocultural traditions and profound knowledge, indigenous peoples have long maintained rich biocultural diversities. However, they have historically been marginalized and their rights have been threatened.
- Investments in small-scale agriculture can help revive food production, create jobs to prevent forced migration and enable rural communities to thrive.

- This pandemic has shown the **centrality of food** in our societies and the importance of building resilient local food systems at the community level. Resilient food systems can mitigate the effects of shocks (such as climate change or COVID-19) on the most marginalized groups, enabling them to improve their nutrition and food security.
- **Indigenous women and youth** are especially vulnerable to shocks like climate change and COVID-19. Targeting these groups is essential to tackling inequalities and building more.

### WHY IFAD AND SLOW FOOD?

- IFAD and Slow Food share a vision of small-scale agriculture as a crucial source of income and nutrition for many poor rural households. It can also be a driver of rural economic growth.
- The partnership with Slow Food aligns with IFAD's mandate and builds on its expertise in reaching remote areas and the most marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- Since 2009, IFAD and Slow Food's partnership has contributed not only to innovative grassroots projects that enhance local value chains for traditional foods, but also to developing an indigenous peoples' network involving thousands of individuals in 86 countries.
- IFAD and Slow Food's partnership has enabled joint advocacy in support of smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and youth.

## KEY RESULTS OF THE PROJECT EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND THEIR COMMUNITIES TO DEFEND AND PROMOTE THEIR FOOD HERITAGE 2017-2020

Through training and exchanges organized by youth themselves, 500 indigenous youth enhanced their leadership capacities and learned how to protect and promote their food heritage.

Young people stated the need to train the new generations of food leaders in order to promote peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies.

- ▶ Indigenous youth organized **17** capacity-development and knowledge-exchange events that were attended by **308** indigenous youth, the majority of whom were young women.
- ▶ Food producers organized leadership training for **189** indigenous youth.

Trained youth founded their own local groups to protect biodiversity, held meetings with peers, shared experience and lessons learned and engaged in local value chains as leaders. They defined their experiences as life-changing and empowering events:

*"[The training] inspired, motivated and empowered [us] by providing access to opportunities to develop, strengthen and express our skills and competences, in advocacy, organization and action."*

*"[We] deeply identified with Slow Food as a worldwide movement that embodies our ideals for a better world, where everybody can have access to good, clean and fair food."*

*"Becoming part of the Slow Food movement has deeply impacted [our] personal and professional lives and gave us a goal, a direction and a structure for the way forward in pursuit of our ideals."*

*"[The Slow Food movement has] empowered our communities by giving value and visibility to our indigenous agricultural, cultural and culinary traditions."*

## ENHANCING LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAINS

More than 1,000 indigenous small-scale producers, including women and youth, expanded their food production, marketing opportunities and revenues while improving environmental and economic sustainability.

The project builds resilience and contributes to food security and poverty alleviation.

- ▶ Biodiversity was protected while generating additional income for producers.
- ▶ Market price doubled for three projects.
- ▶ Producers expanded their technical and managerial skills.
- ▶ Food security was improved.
- ▶ For five projects, food production increased by an average of 150 per cent.
- ▶ Narrative labels, new farmers markets, collective buyer groups and engagement with chefs helped producers improved relationship with consumers.
- ▶ Youth participation doubled, and youth emerged as leaders in all projects because of their managerial skills, technical skills and understanding of markets for quality foods.

## INNOVATIVE TOOL FOR MARKET ACCESS

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a cheap, flexible and easy-to-use system for certifying the quality of indigenous products. With immediate learning mechanisms, it allows producers to increase their product quality and performance over time while also protecting the environment.

Producers recognized that this tool, which adds value to their products and ensures credibility with consumers, meets their need for practical marketing benefits.

To strengthen and scale up these achievements, IFAD and Slow Food are calling on donors to increase their support for investments in the poorest and most marginalized people, who have untapped potential for sustainable development.

This partnership will continue to increase indigenous communities' resilience and scale up the results achieved by indigenous youth and women. It will also work to help rural people recover in a post COVID-19 world.

More youth and women could benefit from new skills and tools to improve their livelihoods, which would create fairer and more resilient communities as well as mitigate the effects of climate change and COVID-19.

We have a unique opportunity to rethink, adapt and reinvest in a more sustainable future, especially for the most vulnerable.

# WAY FORWARD

## CHAMPION INDIGENOUS YOUTH AS CHANGE ACTORS

Ensuring innovation and sustainability in the food system.

## ENHANCE SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS






Building resilient food systems.

## SUPPORT MARKET ACCESS

Contributing to food security and poverty reduction.



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