

# Learning by working together

Microprojects financed through the  
Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)



Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

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Assistance Facility (IPAF)**

## Acknowledgements

The preparation of this report benefited from the support of consultants Francesco Mazzone and Francesca Chianese.

The report was also greatly enhanced by comments from the board members of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility; Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, (*Igorot*), Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Director of Tebtebba Foundation, Philippines; Mirna Cunningham, (*Miskito*) Director of the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Development, Nicaragua; Wolde Gossa Tadesse, (*Gamo*), Programme Officer, Christensen Fund, Ethiopia; Kyrham Nongkyhnrih, (*Khasi*) Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, North Eastern Hills University, India; and Jean-Philippe Audinet, Acting Director, Policy Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

APA	Amerindian Peoples Association
CAF	Andean Development Corporation (Corporación Andina de Fomento)
GIS	geographic information system
GPS	global positioning system
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPAF	Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility
IPO	indigenous peoples' organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRAIA	Regional Programme in Support of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon Basin (Programa Regional de Apoyo a los Pueblos Indígenas de la Cuenca del Amazonas)
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since IFAD began operations in 1978, it has supported, as part of its mandate to reduce poverty, many rural development programmes in which indigenous peoples have played an important role as stakeholders. Yet, during the early decades of its existence, IFAD's experience in many cases showed limited impact on indigenous peoples because project design and implementation placed indigenous peoples in a broader and undifferentiated category of poor rural people and did not consider the sociocultural dimension of their livelihood strategies.

Time and experience (including failures) and the evolving international framework led to the realization of the need for a better knowledge of indigenous peoples in all their diversity. This would allow a deeper understanding of their problems and their perceptions of poverty, and possible ways to tackle these problems with a view to supporting indigenous peoples in their own development. Through its experiences with programmes such as the Regional Programme in Support of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon Basin (PRAIA), a small grants programme that operated from 1992-2007, IFAD has learned that development strategies for indigenous peoples need to be both guided by a holistic vision and driven by the demands of those who will be affected. The *IFAD Strategic Framework 2007-2010* acknowledges the role of indigenous peoples as custodians of the world's biodiversity and providers of environmental services.

In September 2009, IFAD reached an important milestone when its Executive Board approved the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples.<sup>1</sup> This new policy aims to enhance IFAD's effectiveness in its engagement with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas, and to empower indigenous peoples to overcome poverty by building upon their identity and culture.

In September 2006, the IFAD Executive Board approved the transfer of a dedicated small grants facility, following the agreement between the World Bank and IFAD in June 2006 to transfer the World Bank's Grants Facility for Indigenous Peoples to IFAD. This transfer marked the beginning of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), which issues public calls for proposals and makes small grants to support indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world.

The IPAF was designed as an innovative financial approach that would enable building direct partnerships among indigenous peoples' communities, grass-roots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The IPAF also serves as a listening and learning instrument, which is useful in determining indigenous peoples' needs, proposed solutions and innovations. As a community-driven fund, it is able to scout for innovations and pilot projects that could open the way for larger projects. It also has the potential to become a partner in strengthening indigenous peoples' intercultural dialogue on national, regional and global policies that directly and indirectly affect them.

The IPAF's main objective is to select and finance microprojects. Projects are referred to as "microprojects", inasmuch as applicable grants cannot exceed USD 30 000 (most have budgets ranging from USD 10 000 to USD 30 000) and the projects cannot run for more than one year. Based on the Facility's experiences in 2007-2008, however, the amount of individual grants will soon be increased, and the project implementation period will be extended to two years.

IPAF's first call for proposals was issued in 2007. In response, 1 095 proposals were received and after a rigorous review, 30 microprojects covering more than 20 000 beneficiaries were approved in 24 countries for a total of USD 603 000. Its second call for

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/documents/ip\\_policy\\_e.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/documents/ip_policy_e.pdf)

proposals in 2008 received 805 proposals, and 43 were approved for USD 890 000 – an increase of 50 per cent over the previous year.

Having a resource base of almost 2 000 proposals represents a unique opportunity to learn directly, without intermediaries, about the needs and proposed solutions of indigenous peoples and about the communities and grass-roots organizations that support them with technical assistance. To deepen the knowledge about these diverse groups, a study was commissioned on all the proposals submitted in 2007 and then again on the proposals submitted in 2008.

The lessons learned from these studies show that indigenous peoples have a holistic perspective: their proposals address various issues which are generally broad and inclusive. For example, projects that promote livelihood opportunities, economic growth and food security also endeavour to protect biodiversity, natural resources, traditional cultures and indigenous rights, and aim to allow inclusion in society and participation in decision-making processes. Proposals that stress the loss of traditional livelihood systems and techniques plan their revitalization (sometimes through the use of indigenous plants, seeds and species) and integration with the development of alternative means and mechanisms to mitigate climate change.

The proposals also address social issues. They generally seek to promote gender equality, and women appear among the beneficiaries in most projects. Proposals include an intergenerational focus, together with a perspective that directly involves the communities' youth. Efforts are made to stimulate communication between young people and the elderly to transfer traditional knowledge, create value around their identity and increase solidarity within and between generations.

Other projects combine the promotion of cultural identity with indigenous peoples' rights – an objective pursued through documenting, promoting and raising awareness about their cultural and historical heritage at local and national levels. Efforts are made to spread traditional knowledge and ensure that rights are respected and recognized both nationally and in international standards through culturally appropriate educational activities and health services, or by integrating indigenous systems with national educational and health systems. The proposals encompass measures to promote good governance and the participation of indigenous peoples in state policies.

One thing that differentiates all of these microprojects from other initiatives is the fact that they were conceived on the basis of a demand expressed directly or indirectly by the final beneficiaries and that the degree of ownership by the beneficiaries and the implementing organizations has been very effective. Some distinctive cross-sectoral issues in many of these microprojects set them apart from many other initiatives. These issues are described in Part One of this report, through a review of specific microprojects in Africa, Asia and Latin America addressing issues of livelihoods, land and territories, gender, local traditional knowledge and identity and culture.

In August 2008 and January 2009, IFAD organized two exchanges among the representatives of indigenous peoples in charge of the microprojects, the members of organizations supporting indigenous peoples and IFAD. The discussions at these exchanges raised some important points to be considered when establishing any technical and financial cooperation with indigenous peoples. Leaders of the indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and NGOs at the workshop raised the following points:

- For indigenous peoples, the focus of interest is not land ownership, but rather territorial rights, which encompass use and management of the land as well as spiritual and other connected aspects, making up a holistic view of well-being. In order to address problems of occupation of territories by large-scale investors, the territorial rights of indigenous and tribal peoples must be promoted, guaranteed and implemented. Local action must be complemented by advocacy at the regional and national levels.

- For indigenous peoples, poverty is not just economic, and material development cannot be separated from spiritual development. Actions to combat poverty must focus on food sovereignty instead of food security, so that indigenous peoples can make decisions about their activities based on their own perspective. Development indicators must include cultural and spiritual aspects among other important non-economic and non-material aspects, in a way that reflects indigenous peoples' holistic belief system.
- It is extremely useful to discover that people in other countries are facing similar problems, to which they have found (or have tried to find) solutions. The exchange of experience – “food” for thought – awakens new ideas and energies, stimulates open solidarity and allows the sharing of successes, failures, challenges and lessons learned.
- Indigenous peoples must be able to freely manage their economy, the natural resources and their own development. The support offered to indigenous and tribal peoples must focus on protecting their rights and the right to live according to their cultural values, while involving them in fully participatory processes that include their free, prior and informed consent.
- Indigenous peoples must participate in all the decision-making processes that concern them, while training and support must be given to building indigenous leadership at all levels – local, national and international.
- Technology brings an outside world view with it, and must therefore be adapted carefully, with sensitivity and with the agreement of the indigenous and tribal peoples. The distribution of biotechnological products must always be carried out under strict control to avoid the danger of indigenous peoples being exploited instead of benefiting from these products, or becoming dependent on the technologies adopted.
- The consequences of climate change have a disproportionate effect on indigenous peoples, who depend on the environment not only for their livelihood, but also to sustain their world view and their identity. If environmental catastrophes are not to become excuses for violating indigenous peoples' rights, networks for exchanging information must be created, compensation must be planned in cases where policies or practices affect them and, above all, indigenous peoples must always be consulted before megaprojects are carried out that may affect them.

The indigenous organizations at the workshops offered recommendations to IFAD and others involved in promoting the development of indigenous and tribal peoples, some of which coincided with some of the points made by the IPOs and NGOs. In addition to those, the indigenous organizations recommended the following:

- The provisions of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* must be taken into account in all operations.
- It is essential to carry out a prior appraisal of the potential impact of any programme or project on the indigenous and tribal peoples' society, culture and environment, particularly for megaprojects that have or could have a negative impact on the self-sufficiency of these peoples, creating dependency on agents and inputs from outside the local society.
- Alternative livelihood systems must be developed that are sustainable in social and cultural terms, sensitive to local contexts, in tune with indigenous cultures and developed from the bottom up. These systems should combine increased productivity with sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. If this is to be achieved, it is vital to recover, understand and use indigenous and tribal peoples' knowledge.
- It is vital to guarantee respect for juridical pluralism, autonomous indigenous justice systems and indigenous self-government systems. Efforts must be made to consolidate



guarantees for indigenous peoples within the legal frameworks governing laws on land tenure, forests and other areas of interest to them.

- Natural resource management in indigenous and tribal peoples' territories – whether or not they are demarcated and recognized – must reflect indigenous concepts concerning reforestation. This will entail the promotion of intercultural dialogue on forest management techniques and consolidation of community forest protection systems.
- It is important to develop market mechanisms that are favourable to indigenous peoples, incorporating the "distributive economy" typical of indigenous peoples, based on concepts of reciprocity and equality.
- It is vital to find the most effective ways of safeguarding indigenous peoples' knowledge from speculators who have the know-how and means to patent it. At the same time, indigenous and tribal peoples must be supported by facilitating their access to the national systems that grant patent rights.
- Gender discrimination needs to be addressed through traditional institutions, which are changing their attitudes toward this important matter.

Key lessons were learned during the first two years of IPAF's activity. Among these is that time is a variable that depends on the culture in question and influences consultation, discussion, participation and implementation approaches and procedures. The concept of time for indigenous peoples is different from our own.

Another lesson is that means must be sought to translate the basic concepts of development into the languages of the indigenous and tribal peoples with whom work is being conducted. For everyone to participate, it is vital that everyone understand what they are participating in.

Monitoring of microprojects must also be stepped up, not simply to exercise control over project execution, but also to collect material (including living testimonies of indigenous thinking on these processes) and establish closer and more effective communication, which encourages critical local-level dynamics.

Finally, when the reports of the supervision missions were analysed, it gradually became clear that sustainability was more probable when the project was part of a larger programme or a permanent support process already under way, provided that the process is local in origin, demand-driven and in line with the principles adopted by the Facility. This finding indicates the advisability of considering an operational link between IPAF microprojects and national programmes financed by IFAD.

IPAF's future lies in its capacity to become a solid long-term financing instrument to support small development initiatives coming from indigenous and tribal peoples. With this goal, IFAD has been seeking to mobilize resources from donor countries and international organizations. IPAF's role within IFAD is also important for negotiating and building strategic partnerships among indigenous peoples, national organizations and civil society – partnerships that are fundamental for supporting indigenous movements in their demands.

# INTRODUCTION

## 1. Broadening experience: IFAD and indigenous peoples

In 1987, a meeting was held at IFAD with Ramón Gil Barros, a Wiwa Arsario leader from Sierra Nevada de Santa Maria in Colombia. The meeting “marked a new horizon and sowed the seeds for projects based on demand and respect”. Barros maintained that “indigenous peoples have a different way of seeing things, different ways of understanding the world, with their own spaces and times and their own particular conceptions about life” and they “do not want projects that have no trust in their initiatives and no solidarity with their proposals”.<sup>2</sup>

This represented an important shift in perspective. Since IFAD began operations in 1978, it has supported, as part of its mandate to reduce poverty, many rural development programmes in which indigenous peoples have played an important role as stakeholders. Over the past six years, an average of 22 per cent of the annual lending programme has supported development initiatives with indigenous peoples, mainly in Asia and Latin America. Yet, during the early decades of its existence, IFAD’s experience in many cases showed little positive impact on indigenous peoples because project design and implementation placed indigenous peoples in a broader and undifferentiated category of poor rural people and did not consider the sociocultural dimension of their livelihood strategies.

Time and experience (including failures) and the evolving international framework led to the realization of the need for a better knowledge of indigenous peoples in all their diversity. This would allow a deeper understanding of their problems and their perceptions of poverty, and possible ways to tackle these problems with a view to supporting indigenous peoples in their own development.

IFAD has learned that development strategies for indigenous peoples need to be both guided by a holistic vision and demand-driven. This approach generally encompasses economic growth, creation of income opportunities, boosting of food security, support for local organizations, sustainable management of the environment with all its precious assets, recognition and protection of social, economic and cultural rights, and protection of land and territories. This provides a substantial base for the production and reproduction of a complex society.

A milestone in this direction was undoubtedly the Regional Programme in Support of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon Basin (PRAIA),<sup>3</sup> which sought to better understand and support the initiatives of the many different indigenous peoples whose territories are in the countries that form part of the vast Amazon region. This small grants programme, co-financed by IFAD and the Andean Development Corporation [Corporación Andina de Fomento] (CAF), operated in three phases between 1992 and 2007. IFAD supported the programme with three grants totalling USD 3.6 million, leveraging an additional USD 15.8 million from other sources. Some 140 microprojects were financed in the areas of natural resource management, land tenure support, production and marketing of traditional forest products, ecotourism, bilingual intercultural education and cultural activities, among others. The project benefited some 90 different indigenous peoples in the region. The experiences of the PRAIA microprojects stimulated larger interventions, such as the Sustainable Development Project for Beni Indigenous Peoples (PRODESIB), which ran for eight years in Bolivia. This project was designed to provide land security to indigenous peoples by working to strengthen their organizations and involve them in the land reform process. As a result of the project, areas totalling about 1.3 million hectares were delimited and titled, benefiting 157 indigenous communities of more than 15 500 men and women.

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<sup>2</sup> CAF, FIDA, PRAIA: *Escuchar... aprender... hacer con ellos. PRAIA, 10 años acompañando a los indígenas amazónicos* (La Paz: CAF, FIDA, PRAIA, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ifad.org/english/operations/pl/regional/657-caf/documents.htm>

On the basis of this and other experiences, IFAD consolidated its commitment to indigenous peoples. The *IFAD Strategic Framework 2007–2010* identifies indigenous peoples as an important target group because they face economic, social, political and cultural marginalization in the societies in which they live. The Strategic Framework highlights the fact that indigenous peoples often stand to lose the most when there is a breakdown in the traditional system of natural resource governance and when commercially driven systems emerge. It also acknowledges the role of indigenous peoples as custodians of the world's biodiversity and providers of environmental services. Furthermore, the Strategic Framework stresses the need for enabling indigenous peoples "to build organizations to manage resources effectively and generate an income stream that will provide for sustainable resource use".

The United Nations General Assembly's landmark *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, adopted on 13 September 2007, established a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world's indigenous peoples. The Declaration addresses both individual and collective rights and provides a frame of reference for IFAD's commitments to indigenous and tribal peoples. It outlaws discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them. It also secures their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own priorities in economic, social and cultural development.

In September 2009, IFAD reached an important milestone when its Executive Board approved the Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples.<sup>4</sup> This new policy aims to enhance IFAD's effectiveness in its engagement with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas, and to empower indigenous peoples to overcome poverty by building upon their identity and culture.

The policy sets out nine principles of engagement – including free, prior and informed consent – that IFAD adheres to in its work with indigenous peoples. These principles are consistent with international standards, in particular with the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. The policy is firmly rooted in IFAD's 30 years of experience in working with indigenous peoples in rural areas of developing countries. It also draws on consultations with indigenous peoples' leaders and on inputs from members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and from other experts.

## **2. An innovative process: the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (2006–2008)**

In September 2006, the IFAD Executive Board approved the transfer of a dedicated small grants facility, following the agreement between the World Bank and IFAD in June 2006 to transfer the World Bank's Grants Facility for Indigenous Peoples to IFAD. This transfer marked the beginning of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), which issues public calls for proposals and makes small grants to support indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world.

The IPAF was designed within IFAD as an innovative financial approach that would enable building direct partnerships among indigenous peoples' communities, grass-roots organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It solicits applications from organizations that design and implement development projects based on their own perspectives, values and priorities. It only has minimum requirements to ensure that the organizations applying have sufficient administrative and operational management capacities.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/documents/ip\\_policy\\_e.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/english/indigenous/documents/ip_policy_e.pdf)



The IPAF also serves as a listening and learning instrument, which is useful in determining indigenous peoples' needs, proposed solutions and innovations. As a community-driven fund, it is able to scout for innovations and pilot projects that could open the way for larger projects. It also has the potential to become a partner in strengthening indigenous peoples' intercultural dialogue on national, regional and global policies that directly and indirectly affect them.

However, the IPAF's main objective is to select and finance microprojects. All proposals are reviewed in a rigorous and competitive process, and funding is allocated based on criteria such as the project's effectiveness and feasibility and the institution's capacity and credibility.

Projects are referred to as "microprojects", inasmuch as applicable grants cannot exceed USD 30 000 (most have budgets ranging from USD 10 000 to USD 30 000) and the projects cannot run for more than one year. As will be seen below, the amount of individual grants and the project implementation period will soon be increased.

The institutional structure and procedures for establishing and defining the functions of the IPAF Board were laid down by IFAD in consultation with the World Bank and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). The IPAF is currently governed by the IPAF Board and managed by the Coordinator for Indigenous and Tribal Issues in IFAD's Policy Division, who is responsible for administrative, technical and financial matters. These arrangements emerged from the innovative process that established the IPAF.

The voting members of IPAF's Board are four leaders of indigenous peoples, one member of UNPFII and one representative of IFAD.<sup>5</sup> The board members are responsible for the overall direction and supervision of the use of funds provided by IFAD. They directly participate in the final review and approval of proposals, in accordance with the set criteria, guidelines and the IPAF review process.

Once the call for proposals is issued, the communities and their organizations submit project proposals, which the Board examines (with the support of a technical team) through a rigorous and highly competitive selection process. At the end of this process, the Board makes final recommendations on allocation of funds. IFAD, in turn, approves the selected projects and enters into grant agreements with the organizations that will implement the projects designed by them and the beneficiary communities.



### 3. Experience in 2007

The first call for proposals was issued in 2007; it was advertised in all available media, including through IFAD-funded projects in countries in which the Fund operates. In response, IFAD received 1 095 proposals, which allowed it to engage with those applicant organizations and with many more indigenous communities associated with them.

The selection process was complex and involved assessing the reliability of these organizations and the extent to which they fulfilled the eligibility requirements. The

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<sup>5</sup> These are currently as follows: Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, Mirna Cunningham, Kyrham Nongkynrih, Wolde Tadesse and Jean-Philippe Audinet (Acting Director of IFAD's Policy Division).

technical review process was carried out with the support of international consultants who reviewed all the proposals and produced a summary report on each one, including a recommendation for Board approval or rejection. The Board then conducted its own review, approving 30 microprojects for a total of USD 603 000 in 24 countries (ten projects were in six Asian countries, 16 projects were in 13 Latin American countries and four projects were in four African countries). The 30 projects began to be implemented in 2007; they reached approximately 500 communities of 50 indigenous and tribal peoples, covering more than 20 000 beneficiaries. At the end of this process, recommendations were gathered from the members of the IPAF Board with a view to improving the mechanisms and procedures for the call for proposals and the selection process.

Having a resource base of 1 095 proposals represents a unique opportunity to learn directly, without intermediaries, about the needs and proposed solutions of indigenous peoples and about the communities and grass-roots organizations that support them with technical assistance. To deepen the knowledge about these diverse groups, a study was commissioned on all the proposals submitted in 2007.<sup>6</sup> The study results showed that the majority of these organizations had a holistic perspective, with a concrete focus on sustainability.

In many cases, the proposals used approaches based on cultural identity and human rights; these approaches, much like those that focus on environmental regeneration, help to improve livelihoods and the management of natural resources and land. This approach seems both modern and sustainable in the long term. Gender issues were also prominent in most of the projects, with a view to promoting indigenous women's livelihoods, furthering their knowledge, strengthening their organizations and building their advocacy and participation in society. Land is a focal issue in many regions, and indigenous peoples are promoting and reviewing their land rights (or implementing existing legislation), and establishing mechanisms to monitor their land and the legal issues associated with it. Many projects highlighted the twin objectives of promoting livelihoods and generating income while conserving natural resources.

The projects challenge the current one-dimensional economic model, in which the main focus – productivity and growth – overrules ecological, cultural and social dimensions. Indigenous economic concepts, which focus on using natural resources with a view to regeneration, differ from linear western concepts, which focus on exploiting natural resources and making quarterly profits. The indigenous model combines sustainability, a distributive economy and an environment that regenerates social justice, all of which are rooted in an evolving culture. The projects offer a number of interesting approaches and are set out clearly by organizations with a wealth of knowledge.

Limited funds were available to monitor the microprojects and implement an innovative process. IFAD, with the support of consultants who were experts in indigenous peoples' issues, directly supervised 20 of the 30 microprojects approved in 2007. The IPAF relied on the support of indigenous organizations and high-level experts who work with and for indigenous peoples to carry out field missions, supervise activities and support executing organizations in order to improve implementation of the various initiatives.

#### **4. Experience in 2008**

In preparing the 2008 call for proposals, the IPAF had an opportunity to review the recommendations of the indigenous and non-indigenous organizations and the lessons drawn from the previous process. In this second call, applicants were asked to provide documentary evidence of the indigenous or tribal group's request if the proposing organization was not a grass-roots indigenous organization. In order to obtain guarantees about the degree of effective participation by the indigenous group(s) or community(ies) named in the proposals, the applicants were required to provide a letter expressing the free,

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<sup>6</sup> Anita Kelles-Viitanen, *Custodians of culture and biodiversity. Indigenous peoples take charge of their challenges*, financed by the IFAD Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation and the Government of Finland (Rome: IFAD, 2008).

prior and informed consent of the group or community in question. Another innovation was to ask the organizations whose proposals were approved to send a logical framework for the project to the IFAD representative. This approach was used so as not to overload all the organizations with more work before knowing whether or not their proposals were approved. The logical framework tool, while thus not part of the initial review process, is useful during the monitoring stage and enables the executing bodies to clarify the rationale for their projects.

The changes and new requirements did not discourage the submission of proposals, although there were not as many this time as in the previous year. On the other hand, their technical quality and compliance with requirements had improved. In 2008, the IPAF received 805 proposals, and 10 per cent more projects were declared eligible than in 2007.

Following their own recommendations, the IPAF board members were supported by indigenous experts in reviewing the proposals. These experts guaranteed that any proposed project directly benefited the indigenous peoples in an inclusive, culturally appropriate, sustainable manner, and with a gender perspective. In 2008, the technical review process was decentralized to the regional level and the first review of proposals was carried out by seven consultants belonging to indigenous and tribal peoples from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

In 2008, the Board recommended 43 proposals for approval: 16 microprojects in 9 countries in Asia, 15 microprojects in 12 countries in Latin America and 12 microprojects in 11 countries in Africa. The microgrants totalled USD 890 000 – an increase of 50 per cent over the previous year. In order for the IPAF to be sustainable and increase its impact, its Board recommended stabilization of its financial resources at an adequate level, estimated to be at least USD 2.5 million per year, beginning with the next call for proposals.



Following the same process used to study the 1 095 applications received the previous year,<sup>7</sup> the indigenous experts reviewed the projects and prepared a report on each one. Lessons were similar to those found in 2007. Indigenous peoples have a holistic perspective, which means that their proposals address various issues which are generally broad and inclusive. Projects that promote livelihood opportunities, economic growth and food security also endeavour to protect biodiversity, natural resources, traditional cultures and indigenous rights, and aim to allow inclusion in society and participation in decision-making

processes. Proposals that stress the loss of traditional livelihood systems and techniques plan their revitalization (sometimes through the use of indigenous plants, seeds and species) and integration with the development of alternative means and mechanisms to mitigate climate change. Poverty reduction and income generation are planned through activities covering a number of aspects, ranging from the development of microcredit to the creation, strengthening and training of indigenous cooperatives and organizations. In many of the proposals, the indigenous peoples' rights are closely linked to environmental rights and protection.

The proposals generally seek to promote gender equality, and women appear among the beneficiaries in most projects. Some proposals specifically focus on improving and strengthening the situation of indigenous women through capacity-building, creating economic opportunities and raising awareness about their rights. Proposals include an intergenerational focus, together with a perspective that directly involves the communities' youth. Some proposals seek improvements in the situations for youth through income-generating activities and the participation of young people at local, national and regional levels. Simultaneously, efforts are made to stimulate communication between young people

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

and the elderly to transfer traditional knowledge, create value around their identity and increase solidarity within and between generations.

Other projects combine the promotion of cultural identity with indigenous peoples' rights – an objective pursued through documenting, promoting and raising awareness about their cultural and historical heritage at local and national levels. Efforts are made to spread traditional knowledge and ensure that rights are respected and recognized both nationally and in international standards (such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* of September 2007) through culturally appropriate educational activities and health services, or by integrating indigenous systems with national educational and health systems. Cultural identity is also linked to the demarcation of territories, the management of conflicts over land and the development of ethno-ecotourism as a means of promoting cultural practices and preserving the environment. The proposals encompass measures to promote good governance and the participation of indigenous peoples in state policies. They also promote adapting traditional institutions to address new needs and strengthening their role and capacities through training and network-building.

## 5. A preliminary assessment

The added value of the IPAF does not lie in how the microprojects are carried out or their activities as such, but rather in the fact that the needs they seek to address (and indeed the possible responses) have been identified by those who are directly involved – those whom IFAD seeks to support through the IPAF.

Analysis of the supervision and completion reports shows that most of the projects approved under the IPAF are relevant and that the beneficiary communities are extremely poor and vulnerable – and not only in the economic sense; in many cases, the communities have been dispossessed of the foundations necessary for their well-being.



Analysis of the material produced by these 30 microprojects reveals a “family resemblance” – great similarities among their actions, even though they differ widely as a result of having different starting points in cultural, social, historical and economic contexts.<sup>8</sup> One thing that differentiates all of these microprojects from other initiatives is the fact that they were conceived on the basis of a demand expressed directly or indirectly by the final beneficiaries and that the degree of ownership by the beneficiaries and the implementing organizations has been very effective. Some distinctive cross-sectoral issues in many of these microprojects can help us understand what makes them so different from other initiatives.

During the in-depth dialogue with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its eighth session in May 2009, two organizations that had carried out IPAF-funded projects shared their experience (the Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ) and the Panamanian Foundation for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge (FPCI)). Representatives of these organizations requested IFAD to continue the IPAF and to expand the programme in terms of funds and the length of projects. They also asked governments to support IFAD through greater financial contributions and recommended that the experience of the programme should serve as a basis for a new collaboration between indigenous peoples and the State.

One of these issues is intercultural dialogue to integrate local and “imported” knowledge. This dialogue is sought in almost all the projects, not in a theoretical or ideological manner,

<sup>8</sup> Here we refer only to the microprojects summarized in the present work, that is, only those that were approved and financed within the framework of the 2007 IPAF call for proposals. Evaluation of the over 1 000 proposals submitted can be found in the study by Anita Kelles-Viitanan (*op. cit.*).

but directly because it is useful or necessary. This is seen in all the projects that adopt procedures based on global knowledge and new technologies in order to obtain results that can be broadly categorized as recovery, communication and management.

- **recovery** of territory and access to natural resources (e.g. water and forests), and recovery of knowledge, specific livelihoods and identity as a people;
- **communication** with the outside world, which has no knowledge or understanding of their perspectives, practices, customs, philosophies and ideologies; with the internal world, which is losing its points of reference in an ongoing struggle against types of formal education that do not respect its culture; and against the mass media and centrifugal forces that cause a rift and alienation from identity and local society;
- **management** of territory, renewable natural resources, their knowledge and social and gender relations, their development processes and planned changes and self-governance.

Many of these microprojects (especially those in Asia and Latin America) already use products based on global knowledge: maps, georeferencing with the global positioning system (GPS) and geographic information systems (GIS) all provide a graphic representation of the reality world view and practices that indigenous peoples have developed around them in order to achieve important objectives directly connected with their survival. The same is seen with rapid learning techniques in local contexts, which are adapted to the rural setting through the introduction of ethnographic sensitivity, as in the case of participatory rural appraisal, a tool widely used in these microprojects.



The ways of using “imported” methods and tools also vary. In some cases, the focus is on improving external communication in order to achieve recognition and territorial rights, or on internal communication in order to achieve participation, cohesion, a sense of membership and consensus. For example, the microproject “Territorial Management by the Indigenous Communities of North-eastern Salta, Argentine Republic”<sup>9</sup> carried out a training exercise for a topographical survey of the lands of some Wichí communities; this resulted in developing skills to produce instruments potentially capable of demonstrating the concepts of traditional use of indigenous lands to government authorities and the public. By focusing on cultural knowledge and greater interchange and collaboration with neighbouring organizations, it also aimed to improve collective awareness about territory-based people.

In other cases, global knowledge techniques based on study, testing and analysis of results are combined with traditional botanical knowledge to produce an innovative methodology that can respond to new and very concrete challenges. For example, the microproject “A Study on the Giant Earthworm and its Impact on the Survival of the Cordillera Rice Terraces” addressed the invasion of rice terraces by a species of giant earthworm whose traditional environment – local forests – has been destroyed. The earthworm, which is highly resistant because of the excessive use of agrochemicals, causes soil erosion and contributes to a reduction in the food security of indigenous peoples in a wide area of the Philippines.

In the microproject “Strengthening Social Control for Land Appropriation among the Nasa People of Sa’th Tama Kiwe”, the situation is somewhat different, because new technologies – especially GPS – are totally at the service of the Nasa cosmology, which is a living alternative to the dominant worldwide society and culture in the particularly difficult context of armed conflict in Colombia.

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<sup>9</sup> For projects with titles in languages other than English, only the English translation is given in the text.



Another cross-sectoral element is organization, which is the key to building something to be stronger and more solid. Many of the microprojects seek to strengthen local organizations and community participation. This in no way means that indigenous peoples see themselves as disorganized: their social structures and traditional self-governing structures are functioning, although sometimes they are in disarray for lack of intergenerational continuity, and sometimes they are not fully able to communicate effectively with external entities (e.g. central or local government, markets, international organizations). Some of these projects therefore seek to adapt traditional institutional systems to meet the new challenges – testifying to the fact that indigenous societies are neither immutable nor entrenched in a space beyond history, and that all customs change over time. The fundamental point is that such change should not be imposed and should not destroy the indigenous identity, leaving a vacuum, but should be the outcome of internal development. This process is also part of the intercultural dialogue that is sought with these microprojects: they are making an effort and now it is up to us to strive above all to listen and understand.

A common element is that all these peoples belong to the land (mountains, rivers, lakes and seas) and obtain their livelihood and inspiration from the living beings that occupy the land (e.g. from rearing livestock, hunting, growing crops or gathering). All the projects refer to the need to have access to renewable natural resources (water, forests, plants and animals) and exploit them in a sustainable manner. Many microprojects fully incorporate this in their effort to boost livelihoods, which indicates that while indigenous and tribal peoples are suffering from dispossession, environmental degradation and loss of traditional production systems, most of them for a long time have been addressing the needs brought about by change and require money to meet those needs.



Another important and common aspect of these microprojects is the focus on valuing one's own assets more than those coming from the outside. This is addressed in rearing small poultry in the Bolivian microproject "Improving the Livelihoods of Aymara Women in Los Andes Province by Rearing Native Chickens" and in the Ugandan microproject "Local Chicken Rearing and Multiplication". The Bolivian microproject stresses the value that Aymara women place on "native" chickens as opposed to cross-breeds. In the second microproject, some tension emerged with an NGO (the Northern Uganda Women and Children Initiatives (NUWECHI)) when it wanted to bring in chicks from markets in the capital because they were an improved breed. The people opposed the introduction of this breed, firmly insisting on support for rearing birds that belonged to the local environment. However, as with a microproject in Mongolia, it sometimes seems important to adopt measures, including biotechnology, to improve a breed and increase the survival rate and quality of the animals being reared. Even so, it all depends on what is meant by "quality". Local animals sometimes have characteristics that allow them to adapt better to surviving in the local environment, even though they might produce fewer eggs, less meat or less milk. We know nothing of the reaction of Tsaatan nomads to artificial insemination of their reindeer. Nevertheless, what comes from the outside can eventually become local, although it may take a very long process over several generations.

A gender perspective is also evident in most of the 30 microprojects, although here we have chosen only a few particularly clear examples. Similarly, the generational perspective is evident in many microprojects that aim to renew or enhance communication between youth and elders, or that include activities aimed at encouraging the participation of young people and increasing their sense of belonging to a collective identity. Respect for indigenous rights is another topic of major relevance today, although it is always addressed to the outside world; it is not expressed, for example, by aiming to revive or strengthen traditional means of administering justice or respect for the rights of neighbouring groups which are perceived

as inferior, such as many nomadic groups in voluntary isolation or those who resist any initial contact.

The project elements mentioned above do not describe all of the activities presented in the following pages. All of the microprojects are innovative, with varying degrees of originality. In general, it is important to provide concrete answers to concrete emerging problems. This seems to be accomplished in initiatives carried out both by indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and by NGOs associated with indigenous organizations and communities. Perhaps the difference is not in their focus – insofar as they all recognize and respond to basic demands of indigenous communities – but in the way the work is conducted: NGOs use more technical elements and place greater importance on the presentation of results, which is generally more detailed.

## **PART ONE - LEARNING BY WORKING TOGETHER MICROPROJECTS APPROVED UNDER THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ASSISTANCE FACILITY**

As mentioned above, indigenous peoples do not divide their life into segments, although they have had to adapt their world view to ours when dialoguing with us, constructing one discourse on health, another on education, another on agriculture, another on natural resource conservation and another on justice, depending on the person with whom they are dealing – generally someone offering goods and services connected with a particular sector of development. The holistic perspective that currently distinguishes traditional knowledge from globally dominant knowledge is undeniably hard to understand and communicate, based as it is on a range of cosmogonic narratives. However, everything is interconnected within these narratives; for example, health depends on the conservation of natural resources and on correct behaviour, while the administration of justice has much to do with education, and education in turn with health. The links that make up this holistic approach are practical and apparently natural in the daily life of indigenous peoples (for example, if someone's son falls sick, it is normal to think that he has hunted excessively, killed a totemic animal or felled too many trees), but everything becomes complicated when these links have to be presented in a structured document. For this reason, we decided to revert to our sectoral perspective in order to facilitate understanding among the readers of this document, not all of whom will be indigenous people.

Nevertheless, we tried not to separate the various topics too much, and thus only five sectors or broad topics are covered: livelihoods; land and territory; gender; traditional local knowledge; and identity and culture. Each broad topic encompasses other topics, which, as in a hall of mirrors, lead into other topics. All the projects are found in this publication, with varying degrees of detail. We hope they will always be present, enriching humanity with their unique contributions.

### **1. Livelihoods**

The overall objective of most of the proposals submitted and projects approved under the 2007 IPAF was livelihoods improvement, with a view to increasing food security and income generation. This was to be expected, considering that indigenous and tribal peoples are generally the poorest and most economically marginalized groups in the countries in which they live.

Analysis of the proposals shows that poverty is not related solely to a lack of money or to low human-development indicators, but that it increasingly tends to be the outcome of changes arising from natural resource exploitation and depletion, destruction of the environment and the sociocultural changes flowing from these actions carried out by

external agents. Expropriation of traditional lands and territories and extinguishment of customary land rights together represent a major factor in the loss of traditional livelihoods. In some geographical and sociopolitical contexts, indigenous peoples are the victims of internal armed conflict, persecution and forced relocation, which entail migration, displacement and loss of territory, livelihoods and social unity. While their territories have always provided the resources necessary for sociocultural reproduction, the destruction of environmental balances in these territories and ecological niches requires indigenous peoples to adapt and adopt new livelihood systems to overcome their current poverty without depleting local natural resources.

The sustainability of livelihoods is a central issue in many of the projects. Indigenous peoples not only use natural resources, but also improve and regenerate them through a sociocultural system in which their cosmogony and social relations are intertwined with agro-ecological practices of environmental and biodiversity management. The projects seek to strike a balance between the preservation of local agro-ecological systems and their improvement by adopting exogenous techniques and technologies that can, in theory, help to increase production. However, creating and strengthening income sources and market access are also recurrent, important objectives in the proposals. The projects identify fresh opportunities arising from new market openings, such as trade in organic agricultural or agroforestry products or in the fair-trade market.

## Microprojects in Africa

The project "Reduction of Food Dependency and Improvement in the Income of Five Baka Groups in the Yokadouma Area" in **Cameroon** was promoted and executed by the NGO, Support for the Self-Promotion of Boumba and Ngoko Women (AAFEBEN). The beneficiary



communities are five **Baka** ethnic groups who (like various other ethnic groups) have historically been called pygmies, a word now considered disrespectful. The Baka are hunter-gatherers living in the equatorial forests of Cameroon, Gabon and the Congo. Although traditionally they have been nomadic, the accelerated processes of change to which they are exposed, especially deforestation, are altering their way of life, and their communities are becoming increasingly sedentary. The Baka

live in the same areas as Bantu farmers, with whom they have an unequal exchange relationship: In the project zone, the Baka depend on the Bantu for access to food and agriculture, while the Bantu exploit Baka labour, manage their cocoa plantations and exchange products of industrial origin with them for agroforestry produce.

AAFEBEN set up women's and mixed organizations in each community, distributed agricultural inputs and improved farmers' agricultural training, especially in the use of agrochemical products and conservation techniques, all of which led to an increase in production, especially of groundnuts, and allowed storage of surplus to be used as seed for the following year. One result of the AAFEBEN initiative has been the Baka's gradual reduction in food dependency on the Bantu and the steady disappearance of the traditional *yana* system of barter, which was unfavourable to the Baka.



IFAD's microproject helped to back up AAFEBEN's long-term efforts (because the NGO's resources and skills are still not enough to respond to challenges in the area) and consolidate the results. The project has allowed group work to

be tested and strengthened, and the best results have been seen especially with women, who have proved more active than men. In fact, many Baka take part in meetings and training sessions, and some are ready to contribute to building community infrastructure, such as storage centres for agricultural produce. However, not all of the target population participates in the activities and some communities feel excluded from the benefits that the NGO can bring.

In **Uganda**, the NGO Northern Uganda Women and Children Initiatives (NUWECHI) implemented the microproject "Local Chicken Rearing and Multiplication" together with 362 **Acholi** families. The Acholi are an agglomeration of small ethnic groups descended from various Luo migrations. Some historians think they are the product of intermarriage between Luo originating in southern Sudan and Madi groups. The Acholi make up about 4 per cent of Uganda's population and have suffered persecution (for example, during the period of the dictator Idi Amin Dada, President of Uganda from 1971 to 1979) and recent displacement due to armed conflict between government forces and the armed fundamentalist group, the Lord's Resistance Army, which captured many Acholi children, trained them as soldiers and forced them to attack their own villages. As a result, many Acholi were relocated to refugee camps. These forced relocations, carried out by the Government to ensure the safety of the Acholi, have caused collateral damage in the destruction of their traditional livelihoods, depriving them of their livelihood systems.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, it can be seen that the objective of the microproject (i.e. transferring microenterprise models for chicken rearing to the communities in order to meet local market demand) was an appropriate response to the situation of food insecurity and vulnerability being suffered by the Acholi. NUWECHI purchased, vaccinated and treated hens and chicks. It also trained the beneficiaries in rearing methods, distributed chicks and supervised and monitored production and marketing activities. Power cuts are common in the district, and the situation worsens during the rainy season, causing many problems with incubation and reducing the percentage of chicks hatched.

#### Testimonies

**Concy Olworo** (52 years) is a widow who was living in great penury. She says the project introduced by NUWECHI has changed many people's lives: "I have used the money earned from selling eggs and chickens to buy food, changing my diet. Now I can sell some eggs to buy things like soap and give some money to my children for their food. I have also used the money to buy school materials and cover other basic needs. I have five children and they are all benefiting from the project. If it weren't for the school, I'd have used this money as capital to start a small business."

**Juan Lupenyi** (60 years) is an elderly farmer who tells us: "My son, this chicken has brought all the old memories with it. We use the chicken for many things. When we receive important visitors, we kill a chicken to show them that they are important and valued. Before you brought the chicken, we couldn't welcome our visitors properly, but now we're proud that we can receive them happily. And the little we get by selling them has covered our basic household needs. We can go to Mass with clean clothes because we have enough to buy soap, kerosene, second-hand clothes. May God bless you and the donor. Unfortunately, we have to disturb you for other things. Since our land hasn't been touched for 20 years and is now very fertile, will they help us again so that we can plant our own food instead of waiting with our hand out for help from other well-wishers? You have shown us a great heart, please go on. Thank you to everybody who helped us through you, and we are so grateful to you for running an organization that can be sent out to do something good. We'll bless you for ever more."

**Piyara Acan** (46 years) says: "This chicken helped me go to the Kitgum Hospital and get treatment for a sickness in my stomach that was very painful. I used the money to travel there and back, and for medicines. The medicines I bought helped me a lot, and now I can do housework that I couldn't do before because of the sickness. If it wasn't for the chicken, where would I find the money for the treatment? My prayers are endless that God bless you and the people who help in the project."

Source: NUWECHI, Project Final Report (2008)

<sup>10</sup> Minorities at Risk Project, *Assessment for Acholi in Uganda* (UNHCR, 31 December 2003), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/469f3ade1e.html> [Consultation 7 October 2009].

The project has enabled the communities to acquire skills and knowledge about rearing chickens, record-keeping and marketing, which they can pass on to their families and which will help them carry out similar activities in the future. The training was based on the learning-by-doing approach, and the initiative was highly satisfactory because many children and young people participated since the techniques are not very difficult to learn. In addition, the project added value by creating income-generating activities, helping beneficiaries learn to use chicken droppings as fertilizer for their crops (although many still refuse to use them on food plants) and giving beneficiaries something more substantial to fall back on in case of a serious health problem or other emergency. Some families used the income they earned to pay for schooling and school materials for their children, and medical treatment. Although the mortality rate of chicks is always high, the communities are very positive about the sustainability of their chicken farms and have agreed to give 15 per cent of their earnings to NUWECHI as a contribution to the sustainability of this NGO.

This microproject has raised the self-esteem of the beneficiary population and also increased their hope and confidence that one day they will return to the economic state they enjoyed before the war and be able to cultivate their land as they traditionally did. Nevertheless, given the pressing needs of Acholi refugees, although this project has been important for families, its contribution has been a mere drop in an ocean of unfulfilled needs. Many families outside the project area who have not yet been reached by NUWECHI's interventions have complained and asked to be included in order to enjoy the benefits it brings, which poses a challenge to this NGO.

In **Kenya**, the microproject "Rehabilitation and Protection of Kireita Forest", submitted by the Kireita Forest and Wildlife Conservation Association (KFWCA), has been implemented with five communities living in the forest area. Many of Kenya's forests are suffering rapid degradation, which opens the way to erosion and desertification processes. The Kireita forest in Kiambu district is at high risk because of unsustainable exploitation. The initiative launched by KFWCA, which has been carrying out activities to protect the Kireita forest for ten years, aimed at raising the awareness of local communities on the importance of conserving forest resources (also in order to have more water) and encouraging them to sell non-wood forest products. Also included were activities for the reproduction and reforestation of indigenous trees in order to



help the natural regeneration of the forest. All these initiatives have a direct and indirect impact on the conservation of local people's livelihoods. KFWCA regards this project as the basis of a long-term programme for sustainable management of the Kireita forest ecosystem.

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## Microprojects in Asia

The **Tsaatan** ("people of the reindeer" or "reindeer-men") are a people living in northwestern **Mongolia**, where winter temperatures are between  $-29^{\circ}\text{C}$  and  $-53^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The Tsaatan are the smallest ethnic group in Mongolia, reduced today to a mere 52 families (243 people). For centuries they have dedicated themselves to reindeer herding, travelling over the vast plains of the *taiga* in search of pasture. In a very harsh environment, the survival of the Tsaatan depends entirely on the reindeer: they occasionally eat its flesh, make butter,



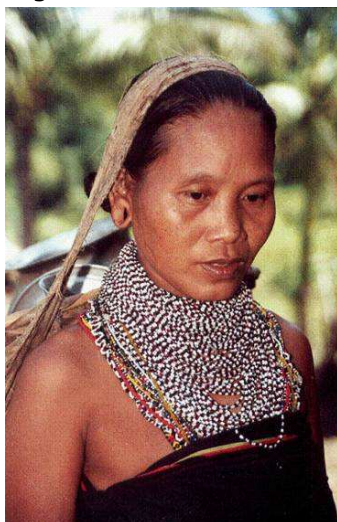
yoghurt and cheese from its milk, make homes (tents), shoes and clothing from its hide and make handicrafts from its horns, bartering these with their neighbours. It is no surprise, then, that the reindeer is a sacred animal for these people and that the oldest reindeer in a family herd is the family's spirit guide. However, problems caused by inbreeding and various diseases transmitted by the herds (such as brucellosis) have led to a situation today in which there are only 846 reindeer left in the herds of the 52 Tsaatan families, making an average of only 16 reindeer per family, whose life depends on the health of their reindeer.

The project "Improved Livelihood of Tsaatan through Biotechnological Method" was implemented by the Thenkhleg Khugjil Organization with the aim of increasing the quality, survival rate and number of reindeer bred in each herd through artificial insemination, thereby improving the breed of local reindeer and raising the sustainability of the Tsaatan families' livelihood. The executing NGO carried out a preliminary study and various support activities to ensure that the communities would assume ownership of the initiative and to increase their capacities for organization and supervision; two herders' cooperatives were created, and training was provided so that the communities could carry out their own monitoring and evaluation. It is important to stress that implementation of these activities was piloted and supervised by a local community council (composed of five men and three women) and two traditional leaders.

The project team provided regular veterinary service and the biotechnology for improving the breed, with an estimated success rate of at least 75 to 80 per cent. It also provided support in strengthening local skills and increasing participation in group activities. According to the final report, the key stakeholders involved in the qualitative survey and participants clearly indicated that the families' livelihood had improved as a result of improved breeding and the increased number of reindeer. The Tsaatan herders now know how to form an organized group and carry out monitoring activities and, above all, they know about community participation. They also learned about risk management, contingency plans and pasture management.



In **India**, the microproject "Participatory Learning, Institutional Design and Collective Action", proposed and implemented by the Raigarh Ambikapur Health Association (RAHA), a national NGO, was designed to provide support to 20 communities belonging to the **Oraon** tribe, living in four districts in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. The Oraon, also known as the Kurukh, live in various central and eastern Indian states, and also in Bangladesh. Their traditional livelihoods are forest-based, using shifting cultivation and fallow techniques, although in recent times they are gradually becoming farmers. Also, some small groups have migrated to north-eastern regions to work as unskilled labourers on tea plantations.



After obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of the communities' members to work together to solve common problems, a complex participatory process was launched with a view to strengthening the capacity to define priority needs and identify relevant ways of meeting them. For this process, two representatives of each community used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) as an instrument to work with the villagers to carry out social mapping of the communities, existing services and opportunities in the tribal territory, and to collect other relevant data. Based on the discussions that emerged from this exercise, the villagers had to select a priority problem whose possible collective solution would provide a common material benefit. Following this, a group discussion was held to establish

the procedure to be used in searching for a solution to the problem and identifying the corresponding activities.

The community then worked together to identify the goals and benefits, including the necessary resources and the operating, maintenance, information and coordination costs. Specific responsibilities were assigned to the members of the group. Finally, a detailed budget was drawn up, containing estimated costs and anticipated benefits. Each group formulated its own operating rules and established responsibilities (including for the supervision process) and sanctions applicable to those not complying with the agreed rules. The two people charged with supervision on behalf of the community also had the task of resolving any conflicts that occurred during group work.

The main focus was the collective preparation of an agricultural calendar, which allowed the community to identify the highest priority needs, most of them related to livelihoods and the natural resources (e.g. water) needed to reproduce them. Possible courses of action were identified in order to solve problems reported by the community. The most significant changes were seen in the villagers' awakened interest in community self-organization. Their broad participation in workshops and meetings showed their enthusiasm and increased their self-esteem and awareness of the possibility of concretely addressing the existential challenges that arise. The participants also strengthened their self-confidence: now they know they can organize themselves and do something together for their own development.

Other microinitiatives financed by the Facility in Asia have had the primary objective of improving food security, showing how important it is for tribal communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of their livelihoods. Examples here are the microproject "Livelihood Security of Jumia (Swidden People) Bringing Diversification in Cultivation", carried out in **Bangladesh** by the Community Advancement Forum (CAF), and the interesting microproject "District-level Networking of Kui Communities in Northern Cambodia for Livelihoods Development". In that project, the NGO Organization to Promote Kui Culture (OPKC) provided training and established intercommunity networks to create community-level conditions for better natural resource management by the **Kui** communities of **Cambodia**.



Another microproject, "Improving Household Income through Development and Conservation of the Seedless Persimmon of Bac Kan" in **Viet Nam**, carried out by the Viet Nam Rural Development Association (PHANO), focused on increasing family income by improving the cultivation of a particular type of fruit tree and the conservation and marketing of its fruit. The guiding principle of this microproject, addressed to **Tay, Nung** and **Dao** tribal communities and others, was to support local production of this fruit, which is typical of the region, by applying the same criteria as those adopted in Europe for appellation of origin (AO or CAO) certification. This certification indicates the geographical origin of an agricultural or food product and, in so doing, gives added value to the product by certifying that its quality and characteristics are fundamentally and exclusively a result of the geographical environment in which it is produced, so that it cannot be produced in any other place. In order to pursue this aim, it was vital first to boost relations between the Seedless Persimmon Producers' Association (APK), a body involved in this initiative, and organizations providing technical assistance and support to growers in the region.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Bac Kan Province, the Centre for Vegetable Varieties of Bac Kan Province, the Farmers' Association of Cho Don District, the Agriculture and Forestry Bureau of Cho Don District, the Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, the Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute and the Centre for Research and Development of Agricultural Systems.

## Microprojects in Latin America

In **Guatemala**, the microproject "Plantation of Agroforestry Systems, with Community Representatives of Microregional Associations in the Ixcán Municipality of El Quiché Department", promoted by the Intermicroregional Coordinating Association of Ixcán (ASCIMI), is a legitimate and effective example of microprojects implemented in the 172 villages in the region.

The Ixcán municipality in the El Quiché Department is in a region very far from Guatemala's major urban centres. Primarily since the end of the armed conflict in 1996, the whole region has been populated by new settlers coming from various departments in the country and by others returning from Mexico, where they had migrated during the war years. The diverse population and the lack of social and cultural harmony are very obvious. These people come from different indigenous groups of Mayan descent and speak at least eight different Mayan languages (the most important of these are Quiché, Kakchiquel, Kekchi and Mam). Most of the population has received land granted by the Government from the 1980s onwards; shifting cultivation is the most widespread system and maize is the main crop. This has led to severe environmental degradation, massive deforestation and the loss of basic livelihood resources.<sup>12</sup>



This initiative was carried out with representatives of seven microregional associations who collaborated with interested institutions within the Ixcán municipality to introduce new agroforestry systems in the seven corresponding microregions. The project supported training, extension, agroforestry management, promotion and popularization activities.

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In **Ecuador**, the microproject "ÑUKANCHIK KAUSAY, Our Life", promoted by the Federation of Kichwa Peoples of the Sierra Norte of Ecuador, Chijalta, Fici, Chinchaysuyu Jatun Ayllu Llaktakunapak Tantariy, was implemented in synergy with the project "Ayllu Llaktakuna Waykarishun, Building Our Land Together", supported by the French NGO Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières (AVSF). It was aimed at consolidating the results of the latter, which was intended to promote the local socio-economic development of rural areas. Cofinancing the "Our Life" project within the IPAF framework was relevant because it supported the processes for empowering indigenous organizations; it formed local technical teams from the **Kichwa** (or Quechua) groups of the Sierra Norte so that they could autonomously manage their territory and sustainably manage the local natural resources.<sup>13</sup> The microproject managed to carry out almost all of its planned activities, despite territorial conflicts among the various social stakeholders in the region, climate-related problems that prevented progress in developing an inventory of water resources and the political circumstances surrounding elections for the National Constituent Assembly.

In **Mexico**, the microproject "Consolidation of the RITA Tour Operator 'Constitution, Promotion, Dissemination and Marketing. An Alternative for the Sale or Marketing of Entrance to National Parks in the 24 Communal Holdings of RITA Ltd.", was proposed and implemented by the Indigenous Network of Alternative Tourism (RITA), comprising men and women from more than 20



<sup>12</sup> A. Colajanni, Report of Project Monitoring Mission (IFAD, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Report of Project Monitoring Mission (IFAD, September 2008).



indigenous villages in Quintana Roo State. This initiative aimed at strengthening the position of this indigenous tourist enterprise in the ecological and alternative tourism market by promoting sustainable and cultural tourism through the creation of travel itineraries with environmental, historical and cultural content that take advantage of the area's assets of land, history and culture.

In **Nicaragua**, the microproject "Productive Rehabilitation of Basic Grains in Nine Communities of the Mayangna Sauni Arung Ka Territory" was the outcome of a strategic partnership between the local territorial government of Matunbak, which functioned as the executing agency, and the Alistar-Nicaragua Foundation, which administered the funds and supervised execution.

This microproject contributed to the rehabilitation of traditional cultivation methods and improvement in the processing and conservation of non-traditional products (such as rice) in order to increase the food security and income opportunities of nine communities belonging to the **Mayangna** (or Sumo) people. This Mesoamerican people, together with the better-known Miskito, live in the North Atlantic Autonomous Region, one of the poorest areas of Nicaragua. They experience conflicts with Nicaraguan settlers over land tenure because of the lack of recognition of their territory.<sup>14</sup> There are about 20 000 Mayangna in all, and only one third of them live in the indigenous territories of the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve.<sup>15</sup>

The project was intended to support indigenous communities in controlling their lands, while contributing to their livelihoods by delivering rice-threshing machines and silos. At the outset, 50 household heads from the nine involved communities were selected as direct beneficiaries; this caused resentment among the rest of the population, obliging the Matunbak local government and the microproject coordinators to increase the number of beneficiary households to 130. Although the project encountered some difficulties, mainly because of Hurricane Felix (hurricanes are recurrent events in the region) and problems of communication and cooperation between the foundation receiving the grant and the executing agency (the Matunbak local government), they were addressed and overcome.

## 2. Land and territories

Collective land tenure and indigenous territories are two interconnected topics which are present in the proposals from all countries. There are many problems, ranging from the lack of adequate legislation to delays in the demarcation and issuance of titles (even within an advanced legal framework); from the existence of individual ownership titles that conflict with collective land tenure, to unequal distribution of land; and from conflicts with other indigenous groups or poor farmers (sometimes the result of recent migration or displacement) to conflicts with the private sector or the State, which grants large businesses concessions on indigenous territory for the exploitation of natural resources (such as forests, underground resources or water).



In many countries, indigenous groups live in border zones and in two-nation contexts, and states do not always know or recognize customs and traditional conceptions of territory. This situation runs counter to national security measures and the norms of bilateral relations between neighbouring countries. It should also be remembered that, even when current legislation recognizes an indigenous territory with its own rights of administration and collective land ownership, indigenous rights to the subsoil –

<sup>14</sup> Alistar-Nicaragua Foundation, Project Final Report (2009).

<sup>15</sup> URL: [http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=4573&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/science/en/ev.php-URL_ID=4573&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) [Consultation: 7 October 2009].

which possibly contains petroleum, gas or other important mineral resources – are often not recognized. Furthermore, wilderness areas, preserved through the state's oversight and by the sound management of indigenous peoples, often come to be declared national parks or nature reserves – a status that sometimes places strict limits on traditional productive activities and contradicts other possible legal statuses which grant autonomy of environmental management to indigenous peoples.

There is often an inadequate understanding or recognition of the fact that land is more than a resource for indigenous peoples. It is the basis of their existential, social and cultural reproduction: it is a territory – a sacred territory – whose place names contain their past and present history, a cultural landscape where their founding heroes have walked and where their ancestors and their dead rest, a framework that comprises the very essence of their society and the basis of their culture. This subject was also addressed in the sixth session of UNFPII.<sup>16</sup>

The projects also touch on the theme of governance of indigenous territories. The process of recognizing indigenous territories and protecting indigenous lands is at different stages in different countries. Therefore, the proposed interventions are adapted to different contexts, starting with raising community awareness about the usefulness of mapping and political action to protect areas of traditional and customary use. However, it seems that regardless of the stage reached in the process of recognition and protection, indigenous peoples' territorial rights can be endangered by outsiders, large enterprises, groups operating on the edges of the law and settlers. Some projects therefore aim at setting up various monitoring institutions and defence mechanisms that recognize territories, boundaries and resources, and fix them on maps, using modern technologies such as GPS. It is also proposed that checks be conducted to ascertain the existence of clandestine mining and other illegal practices that threaten the environment, the livelihoods and the sociocultural integrity of indigenous peoples.

## Microprojects in Latin America

**Argentina** has an indigenous population of about 600 000,<sup>17</sup> and many indigenous peoples are fighting for their territorial rights. The microproject "Territorial Management by the Indigenous Communities of North-eastern Salta" was carried out by the NGO Foundation for Development in Justice and Peace (FUNDAPAZ) in cooperation with the Council of Wichí Organizations (COW). The **Wichí**, also known as the Mataco, live in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. There are about 36 000 in Argentina, the majority living in Salta, Chaco and Formosa Provinces. They are hunter-gatherers of the Gran Chaco Americano, traditionally accustomed to extensively using the natural resources in their territory, without causing any major changes to nature and taking only enough for their subsistence (mainly through hunting, fishing, gathering fibres for clothing and implements and harvesting medicinal and other plants and mountain fruit). It is hard to identify the locations of the natural resources they traditionally use, and even harder to demonstrate them within modern administrative and legal systems, which is necessary for the allocation of territories to rights-holders.



According to the executing organization,<sup>18</sup> over the past 100 years Wichí lands have been repeatedly invaded by logging companies that have carried out indiscriminate logging and by settlers whose livestock herds have contributed to the rapid desertification of

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *Sixth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Special theme: Territories, Lands and Natural Resources* (New York: United Nations, 14–25 May 2007). URL: [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session\\_sixth.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_sixth.html) [Consultation: 07/10/2009].

<sup>17</sup> National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of the Argentine Republic, *Encuesta Complementaria de Pueblos Indígenas [Complementary Survey of Indigenous Peoples]* (2005).

<sup>18</sup> Project Execution Report (2009).

the territory, invading even the indigenous peoples' small agricultural plots. At present, the agro-export economic model (mainly concerned with genetically modified soya) is driving the expansion of agriculture and resulting in the displacement of indigenous communities and the destruction of their livelihoods. The annual rate of land clearing in Salta Province in the past ten years has been 120 000 hectares, which is causing an environmental emergency. Moreover, there is insufficient clarity on the part of Government and public opinion regarding the concept of indigenous territory, which makes it hard to understand title demands for Wichí lands. Hence, indigenous groups need tools to effectively demonstrate their occupation of the territory and a means of developing the capacity to replicate these tools. The objective of this initiative was therefore to train men and women from these communities in a methodology and techniques to create maps of the territories of some communities belonging to COW, so that they could submit claims to the authorities for rights of customary use over these lands.

The results of this initiative included: training 13 members of seven Wichí communities in using GPS; mapping communities and interpreting maps and satellite images; preparing three maps of community territories approved in assembly; creating local capacities to replicate the exercise; incorporating GIS technology in territorial claims; and formulating use plans to manage natural resources. It should be noted that FUNDAPAZ gathers funds from various sources in order to obtain title to land for the indigenous and local communities of the region, which improves the living standards of both; the community maps thus were drawn up with the help of other donors. With funding from IFAD for this project, equipment was purchased to improve the quality and use of the maps, thereby contributing to the long-term consolidation of this process. For the future, FUNDAPAZ proposes mapping 90 more communities and unifying the map-making method, the GIS and the territorial management of all the organizations of hunter-gatherer peoples in the Chaco Santeño zone.

In general, the microproject has helped raise awareness of the need to incorporate modern technology to demonstrate the effective occupation of land. The mapping exercise also helped create greater unity within communities by involving many family groups from each community, achieving greater interchange and collaboration with neighbouring organizations and building greater appreciation and enhancement of local knowledge. The recovery of traditional knowledge, one of the project results, was summed up in the words of a Wichí man who had taken part in the process: "We learn a lot about our brothers, their journeys and their knowledge of the old ones. Some of us no longer knew place names in our own language" (José Sánchez, Media Luna community).

In **Guatemala**, the project "Control and Monitoring of Agricultural Tribunals and Cadastral Survey. A Step in Building up Agrarian Institutions" was implemented in various municipalities in the Alta and Baja Verapaz Departments by the Permanent National Coordination on Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Land (CNP-TIERRA) in association with the National Coordinator of Indigenous and Farmers' Organizations (CONIC).

The Alta and Baja Verapaz Departments are populated for the most part by the **Q'eqchi'**, **Poqomchi'** and **Achí**, all indigenous Mayan peoples. The area was badly affected by violence in the period of internal armed conflict. At present, it has a high concentration of large estates and many disputes over land tenure, and, as a direct result, high levels of poverty. As is the case throughout the country, access to land and inequality in its distribution are central issues leading to much conflict. A new land law passed in 2005, partly thanks to the efforts of various civil society organizations (including CNP-TIERRA), declared the whole zone eligible for the cadastral survey exercise.

There are generally two systems of land tenure in the highlands of Guatemala: the system derived from Mayan culture and the European system. However, the former has never been systematized or recognized by the State, meaning that indigenous groups have to adapt to the official system. The microproject is part of CNP-TIERRA's approach, which holds that producing a cadastral survey will allow solutions to be found to land conflict situations that arise wherever the population is active and organized. The cadastral survey must be part of

an overall strategy allowing the development of rural communities and including the training of community leaders on agricultural and land registration matters. To this end, a course of ten face-to-face meetings and practical exercises was planned for each of the participants. These activities were intended to build the capacity of men and women leaders to hold community workshops that would spread information about all the existing forms of organization within the communities (planning, organizing, implementing, evaluating and preparing reports).

However, according to the final report of the executing agency, project planning did not take realistic account of the resources available, only nine face-to-face meetings instead of the anticipated ten were held, and it was not possible to hold the practical exercises that had been planned. In the resulting search for alternatives, contact was made with international and national NGOs to secure more resources and, although it did not prove possible to obtain more funding, these organizations did indicate the possibility of future support to continue the process that had been launched with IPAF funding. The difficulties meant that there were considerable unfulfilled expectations with regard to the community workshops that were planned but could not be held. Despite this, the project succeeded in meeting some of its objectives: participants acquired skills and perhaps 90 per cent of the population was keen to be involved. Moreover, CNP-TIERRA's member organizations in the area were involved, as were participants from various municipalities in the Alta and Baja Verapaz regions.

An important result was that various cadastral survey monitors are encouraging the regularization and legalization of lands in indigenous communities, and negotiations are being held with State authorities to award some form of recognition to participants who completed the course. During the whole process of training cadastral survey monitors, there were sufficient materials to allow the participants to consolidate their knowledge, and CNP-TIERRA promoted two specific actions that were also part of the course: drafting proposed laws, and lobbying, negotiating and searching for consensus on these proposals.

### 3. Gender

Many indigenous peoples maintain a certain degree of gender equality, with women leaders and shamans exercising public functions that everyone recognizes. Among other peoples, women's role is fundamental, but it is expressed only in the intimacy of the household, not in the public sphere. Among still others, women are subject to traditional rules and standards that limit their self-determination and opportunities.



However, women's role is always fundamental in the existential spheres of many of these groups. Women hold a large proportion of the indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge (especially relating to production and reproduction), and also are mainly responsible for passing on this knowledge to new generations through the daily lessons they give their children and grandchildren. They act as guardians of the environment, their culture and the identity of the group.

In the farming world, it is women who best know the needs of the family, best handle its finances and have a greater capacity for saving. They are able to intervene in disputes and conflicts, using their down-to-earth attitudes to preserve the cohesion and peaceful coexistence of the group. They add value by innovating in production chains and play a fundamental role in seeking the welfare of extended families.

However, among all indigenous peoples, women have to meet new challenges arising from the particular process of change facing them. Women have to seek other ways of

participating in a community's public life and in the market. For women, this always involves work, for work is what strengthens them and enables them to expand their capacity for reflecting and deciding on the course of their own lives and those of their families. This work, however, is almost always in addition to their daily work in the house, with the children, in the kitchen garden, collecting water, gathering firewood and harvesting fruit from the land, the forest or the desert. This excessive load is generally shared with their husband's other wives, their mother-in-law, sisters or granddaughters, and sometimes with their husband, sons and daughters ... but sometimes with no one.

The small-scale productive activities carried out by indigenous women are always important. They may start slowly, but they are good businesswomen, working with goats, cheese, chickens, etc. It is enough for them to make their own money because women do save – their modest income is indispensable for the welfare of the family. However, they also may be able to find other business opportunities suitable for women, such as expanding their enterprise into the field of processing.<sup>19</sup>

If this is to happen, women must be empowered by raising their and their menfolk's awareness, increasing their access to land, capital, new knowledge and technology, and boosting their power of decision-making within their communities and in grass-roots and umbrella organizations. Women's full participation is a complex issue which has to be addressed through the development of new forms of leadership and the institutionalization of women's participation in decision-making processes. It is also necessary to work with men in order to reduce women's work burden, so that they have some time of their own and can exercise their rights, contributing in an additional way to the long-term welfare of their families, communities and peoples.

As Anita Kelles-Viitanen stresses in her study, gender issues predominate in most of the submitted proposals, which seek to promote women's livelihoods, harness their knowledge, strengthen their organizations and build their advocacy and participation in society.<sup>20</sup>

## Microprojects in Africa

In **Niger**, the microproject "Strengthening the Capacities and Affirming the Cultural Values of Woodabee Peul Pastoral Communities" was implemented by the National Federation of Niger Herders (FNEN Daddo) with some **Woodabee** women, who are nomads of the Fulbe (Mbororo) ethnic group, with technical assistance from the French NGO Agronomes et Vétérinaires sans Frontières (AVSF).



This initiative was intended to improve the food security of this African people, who live in Niger's Zinder region, bordering Nigeria. Its specific objective was to create and consolidate the capacity of 20 groups of nomadic women to produce and market milk and cheese. This training in the processing of a primary product within their economy has enabled them to increase the value of the milk and also to access the market.

A fair was organized with the nomadic pastoralists of the Sahara and the Niger Sahel in order to exchange products, traditional knowledge, experience and customary practices. Besides the 20 groups of women directly involved in the project, many other people participated and many sold good-quality milk products. Meetings were held during the fair to exchange ideas on a process that would lead to producing documents complementary to the rural and pastoral code, with the main purpose of reducing conflict between pastoralists and farmers.

<sup>19</sup> Lisette Canavesi, Verónica Humerez, Jaime Iturri and Claudia Vargas, *Negocios con sello femenino. Hacia el empoderamiento de las mujeres andinas. I Concurso regional de mujeres en lucha contra la pobreza* (La Paz: FIDA & Fundación PRAIA, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Kelles-Viitanen, *op. cit.*

## Microprojects in Latin America

In **Honduras**, the project “Incorporating Lenca Women into the Process of Enterprise Development by Promoting Rural Banks, Agricultural Businesses and Rural Microenterprises”, managed by the Foundation for the Development of Rural Enterprises (FUNDER), focused on building up the business capacities of members of the National Council of Indigenous Lenca Women of Honduras (CONMILH), an umbrella organization made up of 121 grass-roots groups comprising 3 528 women from eight municipalities in La Paz Department. The **Lencas** are the largest indigenous group in Honduras, living in the west of the country (100 000 people) and also in El Salvador (37 000 people). In Honduras, they are concentrated in the Lempira, Intibucá and La Paz Departments.



The IFAD grant and the establishment of sustainable and equitable conditions gave a boost to rural banks and credit agencies, and encouraged both non-agricultural rural enterprises and women’s rural microenterprises and agricultural businesses. This contributed to diversifying income opportunities to improve the living standards of the members of CONMILH and their families. As time passed, other families from two other organizations from the same Lenca ethnic group were included: the Association of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of Marcala and Peoples of the Sierra (AMIPEMS) and the Mixed Women’s Cooperative of the Sierra Limitada (COOPMUSIL).

The project aimed to form and launch ten rural savings and credit banks to provide access to finance by: distributing seed capital; providing business training to members running the rural banks for the benefit of some 300 poor Lenca families; and organizing and launching ten rural microenterprise initiatives devoted particularly to non-agricultural activities (e.g. general stores, dairies, pickle-making, metal-silo-making, sewing workshops, bakeries, leather workshops). To this end, the project appraised the group’s microenterprises and opportunities, analysed the results and developed a shared strategic vision for the future as a first step towards their sustainability. The project also helped to generate and launch ten agribusiness initiatives through increased and diversified production, processing, marketing and the establishment and consolidation of women’s small-scale mixed farming initiatives. Despite all these achievements, the project encountered many obstacles. Because it opened space for women’s participation, it caused some friction in the home, which may have hampered the process of change. Promotional meetings were therefore held with men, to encourage them to support their wives and allow their participation.

### Lenca women

- Lenca women barely participate during the coffee harvesting season *because they have to harvest.*
- In order to obtain their participation, they were visited on non-working days and times *because the rest of the time they work and at all times they take care of the family and the home.*
- They have a low educational level and this tends to restrict their understanding in training courses *because they did not go to school.*
- They have no economic resources *because they depend on their husbands, married women, their parents and brothers and unmarried women.*
- In order to become members of rural banks (which most of them hope to do) they need the approval of their husbands. *Why?*

Source: FUNDER, *Project Final Report* (2009) (reworked by the present author)

In **Bolivia**, the microproject “Dissemination of International Agreements and Conventions Supporting Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Protection of Women’s Rights” was implemented by the National Network of Information and Communication Workers (RED ADA), a Bolivian NGO. The target group of this awareness campaign regarding rights was the indigenous and

native population of African descent, comprising mainly women, in La Paz Department.

The campaign provided information on international agreements, pacts and conventions signed by Bolivia supporting indigenous peoples' and women's rights. Partnerships were created between national and local women's organizations and institutions such as RED ADA to produce and distribute this material. Partnerships were also formed with communications media that broadcast campaign microprogrammes; these media organizations are willing to continue regular broadcasting on these matters, considering that the information is vital for the people of their communities.



Although not specifically targeting indigenous women, a similar initiative is the project "Indigenous Rights Capacity-Building for Indigenous Communities in Guyana", carried out

by the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA). This project aims to increase indigenous peoples' knowledge of their rights in national and international spheres, and train them in using international legislation to uphold their rights at the community level through the reform and application of laws and policies.

Again in **Bolivia**, 120 indigenous women from six **Aymara** communities in Los Andes Province are now breeding poultry which are known in the region as "native chickens". "They are not like farmyard hens and they take time to hatch, but they are not cross-breeds, so they are known as native chickens," says Claudia Pinto Colque, Executive Director of the Bartolina Sisa Training and Promotion Centre for Andean Women (CEPROMA B.S.).<sup>21</sup> These women and their families eat the meat and eggs of these birds, thereby improving their diet, and they sell eggs and chickens in local markets or in La Paz. They are also organizing themselves on their own initiative and paying into a small community revolving fund. With the help of the IFAD grant, they were trained by CEPROMA B.S. under the project "Improving the Livelihoods of Aymara Women in Los Andes Province by Rearing Native Chickens", the main objective of which was to promote the whole process of breeding native chickens: training, building sheds and chicken coops, purchasing inputs and animals, managing the birds, organizing and leading, and forming women producers' associations (for legal organization and image promotion).



Although some aspects need improvement, the project achieved a number of successes. The empowerment process varied from one local producers' association to another, but in general the organizations are calling for more back-up and training. In particular, they need to improve time management, assume greater responsibility for support and increase communication with the donor. Despite all this, these Aymara women now have an account in which to deposit and save a portion of their income from breeding poultry in order to create a maintenance fund for the productive infrastructure that has been incorporated into their agricultural and family systems. This aspect enabled the communities to acquaint themselves with the requirements of the banking system and efficient bookkeeping, and to create ten solid producers' associations having their own saving accounts.

These women have learned how to organize themselves, trying to overcome their shyness and submissiveness, even often standing up to their husbands. The majority of those

<sup>21</sup> Jaime Iturri, Report of Project Monitoring Mission (IFAD, 2009).

attending training courses were women, and their growing participation in community decision-making in the past decade has been striking. "Nothing is going to make us drop our coops, we say among our sisters," declares Claudia Pinto Colque, showing that they have the grit and will to persevere.



CEPROMA B.S. intends to provide support for the next two years to the women's chicken producers' associations that have been formed, promoting the creation of new technical and administrative skills. The adopted breeding system is semi-intensive and makes maximum use of the natural resources available in the area and of the situations of the family units, such as their small holdings. In addition, good management of breeding birds provides the family's farming system with healthy products such as organic waste to fertilize the soil without affecting local natural resources.

In **Peru**, the Regional Indigenous Awajun Federation of the Alto Mayo (FERIAAM) implemented the project "Strengthening the Indigenous Rights of Awajun Women: Enhancing Their Cultural Identity Rights through the Rehabilitation and Production of Their Handicrafts". The **Awajun**, also known as the Aguaruna, live in the regions crossed by the Marañón and Alto Mayo rivers, and, according to the 2007 census by the Peruvian National Institute of Statistics and Information (INEI), are one of the most numerous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon region.

The proposal, which is decidedly ambitious, targeted 14 Awajun communities of the Alto Mayo region. The project aimed to provide training and capacity-building activities to foster the empowerment of Awajun women in line with Convention 169 on *Indigenous and Tribal People in Independent Countries* of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This objective was pursued by rehabilitating the Awajun women's handicraft production, involving indigenous girls, adolescents, adults or elderly women. Although the desired results exceeded the possibilities for a project that had only the limited time and resources anticipated in the IPAF framework, the initiative did combine a relatively fast improvement in family income with strengthening the rights of indigenous women in line with the concept of gender equality. Nevertheless, according to the monitoring report,<sup>22</sup> this major result was partially reached only in one community, where there was already a group of relatively well-organized women. Thanks to the IPAF's input, a *maloca* or communal long-house was built, which is used as a multi-purpose centre to promote production of handicrafts (pottery, basketry, textiles, jewellery, carving and non-timber use of the forest), which generates added value and income for households.

#### 4. Local traditional knowledge

Local knowledge combines the culture, locality and environment around a specific geographical area, while global knowledge is formed through networks or with the participation of communities coming from different geographical areas. Indigenous knowledge is local; in other words, it has developed within specific communities and is integrated with other cultural traditions. Its reference point is its geographical and environmental context. Nevertheless, this does not mean that historically there has been no exchange of knowledge among indigenous peoples.

Local knowledge is implicit – it is transmitted orally and through direct observation, demonstration and imitation – and for this reason it cannot easily be codified. Stratified and distributed within the group, based on experience and on trial and error rather than on theoretical knowledge, it is constantly being validated and strengthened by its effectiveness in contributing to the survival of the local group and to the affirmation of individual and

<sup>22</sup> Vanda Altarelli, Report of Project Monitoring Mission (2008).



collective worth. It is knowledge that is learned through repetition, taking on the character of a tradition, even while it is constantly absorbing new facts and information. Repetition is one of the keys to indigenous learning, helping to strengthen local knowledge, just as the lack of repetition leads to its loss. Although it may be seen as static, indigenous knowledge is a heritage that is continually being modified, constantly losing and gaining information. It is not a cumulative knowledge, and, in general, what is not useful is forgotten.<sup>23</sup>

Global knowledge and local knowledge also intersect – something is added and something is lost. In general, the gradual loss of traditional knowledge is seen as an inexorable process, partly because of the succession of generations and indigenous peoples' insufficient valuation of their own heritage as compared with the regional reference model. Recovery of indigenous knowledge is therefore a theme in several proposals, which seek to recover, for example, traditional knowledge about handicrafts, agricultural practices and local plants and seeds. Sometimes this effort to recover and use traditional knowledge is incorporated into microprojects intended to improve indigenous families' food security, while sometimes it is used as a means of developing income opportunities and at the same time recovering a lost or weakened identity (see the section "Identity and culture" below).

Many authors, especially in the 1990s, have recognized the fundamental importance of applying indigenous peoples' knowledge in development programmes, particularly in the field of agro-ecology.<sup>24</sup> However, it is not easy to assemble and use traditional knowledge, especially if exclusively technical, agricultural or ecological knowledge is sought. Cultivation, for example, is a practical activity: although a basic knowledge of the biological processes governing plant cycles is needed if this activity is to be carried out successfully, traditional cultivators are unaware of all the variables that interact within the agro-ecological system and of the biological knowledge that they are applying, because they have not made any intensive studies of the elements that make up the ecosystem, unlike agronomists or ecologists, who see the specific variables as indicators of natural processes, carry out tests and evaluate the results, generally following the most effective short-term procedure.<sup>25</sup>

However, once local knowledge has been collected, there is still the problem of how to manage it. An international debate is taking place regarding the recognition and protection of collective intellectual property and the need to develop mechanisms to protect traditional knowledge and respect indigenous rights in this field.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Francesco Mazzone, "Plan de Acción diferenciado para el Área Indígena Warao, Municipio Antonio Díaz, Estado Delta Amacuro", *Convenio PRAIA FIDA/CAF – CIARA/PRODECOP* (August 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Francesco Mazzone, "La conoscenza tecnica e naturalistica indigena come elemento fondamentale nella gestione di progetti di sviluppo", paper presented to the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Congress of the Italian Association of Ethno-Anthropological Sciences (Rome, 28-30 September 1995), published in *Antropologia e Sviluppo* (1996).

<sup>25</sup> Janis Alcorn, "Process as Resource: The Traditional Agricultural Ideology of Bora and Huastec Resource Management and Its Implications for Research", *Advances in Economic Botany*, 7 (1989), pp. 63-77.

<sup>26</sup> The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007) contains two articles concerning indigenous peoples' knowledge and intellectual property: "Article 11. 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature. 2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs .... Article 31. 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. 2. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights."

## Microprojects in Latin America



In **El Salvador**, the microproject “Waking Woman, a Goddess on the Basis of Ancestral Textiles” was designed and implemented by the Institute for Salvadorian Indigenous Ancestral Recovery (RAIS). Its objective was to build up female identity in the La Montaña area through the revival of ancestral knowledge and skills in the art of weaving. It is a project to rebuild a weakened ethnic identity by reviving the craft activity of weaving with maguey (or American agave) fibre.

The project involved **Nahua, Maya** and **Nonualco** craftworkers (mainly women) of Chalatenango in the La Montaña region. It succeeded in awakening the women craftworkers’ continual interest in learning about weaving techniques and cultural identity through handicrafts, and in designing and developing two product lines. In order to ensure the sustainability of these gains, it was decided to incorporate the participants into the El Renacer Chalateco Craftworkers’ Cooperative, which has a programme of services for its members and is made up of 95 per cent women from Chalatenango Department. Sustainability also was sought by marketing new products woven on belt looms, which enabled the women to broaden the supply to local and national markets.

It seems that the initial aims of the project – setting in motion processes for the recovery of identity, working to strengthen the women who held ancestral knowledge, supporting them and giving meaning to economic initiatives – were achieved. The majority of the women who took part in the workshops had not previously connected their origins with their craft skills, while now, thanks to the impact of workshops, they are researching and reading about their territory and those who lived there. Moreover, the beneficiary women grasped the importance of affiliating with the cooperative for future benefits; they had never been aware of the advantages of belonging to a cooperative and never had the chance to work in an organized fashion. Also, preparing the handicrafts with maguey and natural dyes gives an authentically Chalateco seal to the products, which enhances the value of their territory.

In **Panama**, the microproject “Reviving the Traditional Knowledge of Panama’s Kuna Women”, managed by the Foundation for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge (FPCI), was carried out with the **Kuna** in various communities in the Kuna Yala region. The objective of the initiative was to revive traditional knowledge about native seeds and handicrafts (*chaquira* beads, pottery, hammocks and traditional blouse panels). Conservation of agricultural biodiversity and handicrafts are similarly important because they are identified as values for this people. Seeds were collected using the knowledge held by elderly men and women, who also collaborated on courses aimed at reviving knowledge about sowing and cultivation as a means of boosting food security based on agro-biological diversity. At a later stage in the project, an inventory was made of seeds in danger of extinction, listing various data, including their names in Kuna and Spanish.



With support from older women, 30 Kuna women from six communities were trained in making *chaquira* beads, aromatic products and hammocks, and work experience relating to biodiversity and traditional knowledge was exchanged among the communities. In general terms, the women’s attitude towards field work changed, and young people’s attitude towards craftwork changed. Moreover, the men are now motivated to strengthen the cultivation system and improve the conservation of traditional seeds. One of the beneficiary women said: “The project has given me the tools to speak with my husband and encourage him to work harder in the fields, and my children now depend much less on products that have been canned for many months or years.”



In **Peru**, the project “Recovery of Traditional Knowledge on Dietary and Medicinal Biodiversity in Quechua and Asháninka Communities of Peru”, run by the Peruvian NGO Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ), had as beneficiaries the Federation of Mothers’ Clubs (FECMA) of Vilcashuamán Province in Ayacucho and the Native Communities Centre of the Selva Central (CECONSEC) in Junín Department. The first involved the **Quechua** people and the second the **Asháninka** people.<sup>27</sup>

The microproject had the objective of recording knowledge on dietary and medicinal biodiversity associated with biological resources, and recovering the indigenous culture of the Quechua communities of the Pomatambo microcatchment area in Vilcashuamán Province and the Asháninka communities of Chanchamayo and Satipo Provinces in the Selva Central region. The aim of simultaneously collecting, recording and organizing the traditional knowledge of the Quechua and Asháninka, the two largest groups with whom CHIRAPAQ works, was probably overambitious. Both areas selected are highly inaccessible, with travel times of about 16 hours from Lima (where the NGO has its headquarters) to the closest communities. Moreover, since some of the project’s most important activities started in the month of the rainy season (September), the people were too busy with farm work to fully participate in the meetings and courses on the legal frameworks governing intellectual property rights in Peru. In addition, although CHIRAPAQ had established partnerships with indigenous federations and local associations to carry out activities, the novel nature of the initiative required the constant supervision of an NGO officer to support the local change agents and communities.

Despite these constraints and the struggle to find a place in an overfull agenda of community meetings, a number of workshops were held on weekends: “Knowing our indigenous intellectual property rights”, “Spreading awareness of Peru’s law 27811 on the protection of indigenous intellectual property”, “Organizing ourselves to implement law 27811 in our communities” and “Recovering traditional knowledge associated with dietary and medicinal biodiversity through discussions with male and female elders”. All of these workshops were important experiences, particularly considering that little work is typically done with indigenous communities on these legal aspects. Now men and women leaders of these communities know how law 27811 protects their traditional knowledge about biological resources. In three Asháninka communities in the Selva Central region and four Quechua communities in the Pomatambo micro-watershed area, knowledge of dietary and medicinal biodiversity has been recorded. Also, each of these communities collectively agreed upon a register of knowledge, so that it could be protected by the National Institute for the Defence of Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI). In particular, 129 Andean and Amazonian plants were systematically recorded for 94 specific medical applications.

### Testimonies

**Paulino Hinostroza** is a Quechua man from the Vischongo community: “When I make a prescription, people must follow it to the letter, as with any medicine,” he says. “We have to follow the diet the doctors give us.”

**Vilma Gómez** is a 19-year-old Quechua woman from the Montecucho community (Vilcashuamán, Ayacucho): “I attended the INDECOPI workshop and then undertook to replicate it in my community. Before, I didn’t take part in training courses. I talked with the chief to coordinate things and to call my community together so that they could hear what I’d learned. He was at the course with me, but I talked to him and encouraged him to do the repeat, deciding when and how we would do it. I was very nervous at first, but I gradually got used to it. After my repeats I feel much happier and more of a leader. I’m more sure of myself. From then on, I’ve been changing because I have more experience.

<sup>27</sup> According to the 1933 census, the Asháninka are the largest indigenous group in the Peruvian Amazon region. According to the 1994 census, they total 52 461, or 21.89 per cent of the indigenous population counted. The Asháninka are traditional inhabitants of the areas of the Apurímac, Ene, Tambo and Pichis rivers. Those known as the Ashénincas (7 796 people) live in the Alto Perené, Alto Ucayali and Gran Pajonal regions.

I remember my mother was a leader, and now I like to be my mother's replacement. I'd be happy if my community was really active so as to improve itself."

**Bilda Tovar** is an Asháninka woman from the Kivinaki community (Perené, Junín) and works as Amazonian Secretary in the Permanent Workshop of Indigenous Andean and Amazonian Women of Peru (TPMIAAP). She tells us that when the women learned about law 27811 they said it had been a mistake to give away their knowledge so easily. She adds that when they were talking with the chief of Bajo Aldea, they wondered what should be done and thought that a pilot project could be run in Bajo Aldea: the first Asháninka botanical garden of Perené! And she says: "It would be another way of recovering our resources, which are getting lost. It's a dream that opens up our mind and spirit. We used to set no store by this matter. I've lost my grandparents, and now it's so hard to find someone who'll tell you, 'It's like this' or 'It's like this'. Now we really value our uncles, for they have knowledge! Right here, when they shared a little of their communities' knowledge and resources, people would ask for more, saying 'Give me a little!' and 'Me too!'" Bilda explained: "INDECOPI told us, 'We collect information from the universities', and I asked, 'How safe is this information?' because I've seen, I can't lie, that when students come, I see their books with lots of plants, but with wrong information. They'd say, 'If you take *matico* [a shrub like pepper], the organs work better', and I asked them, 'Who's been fooling you?' I don't know if I'll be sick, but I don't believe it's right. So they come and collect the wrong information. We Asháninka should make our own books."

Source: CHIRAPAQ, Project Final Report (2009).

## Microprojects in Asia

In **the Philippines**, the microproject "A Study on the Giant Earthworm and its Impact on the Survival of the Cordillera Rice Terraces", implemented by the Montañosa Research and Development Center (MRDC), sought to address an agricultural problem through the revival and application of methods based on traditional knowledge and modern technology.

Indigenous rice growers belonging to five of the eight main ethnolinguistic groups in the Cordillera administrative region requested an initiative to help them deal with a local problem – the accelerated erosion of rice terraces and the ensuing drastic decline in yields from their farms. The cause of all this is an annelid, a giant earthworm (*Pheretima*, *Metaphire*). The rice farms have been affected by a massive infestation of these worms, leading to food insecurity in the distant communities of the Cordillera region.

Under the project, indigenous systems of earthworm control still used by farmers in some remote areas of the Cordillera region and the north of Luzón Island were researched and documented with audiovisual material. Laboratory analysis was carried out in order to determine the ecology and taxonomy of this annelid, as well as the chemical features of plants with vermicial characteristics growing in the region which showed promise of containing the pest. Tests were carried out on the effectiveness of the various control measures identified. Lastly, a regional workshop on controlling the worms was organized to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and management systems among academics and local indigenous farmers to determine the most effective measures and develop recommendations. All of this resulted in a publication summarizing the various control systems.

The project worked with 986 families in ten communities. Through tests and the evaluation of results, it helped to consolidate local concepts concerning natural processes, traditional knowledge and the natural resource management systems developed by the indigenous peoples of the Philippine Cordillera region.



Also in **the Philippines**, the project “Capacity-building for Indigenous Communities through Alternative Health Care Delivery Systems” touched on a very important issue in which progress is being made especially in Latin America and Asia: empowering indigenous communities so that they can develop an alternative system of medical care by training local people in basic health skills, using both appropriate traditional indigenous knowledge and western medicine. The indigenous communities of Kasibu municipality were the beneficiaries of the microproject, which was executed by the Dapon Indigenous Peoples’ Center, working in collaboration with the Tebtebba Foundation and the Philippine Center for Traditional and Alternative Medicine (PCTAM). The Dapon Center conducted a comprehensive information campaign regarding indigenous rights and facilitated community actions to address the common problems and welfare issues facing these communities. As a result, an alternative system of medical care was established, managed by the indigenous communities of the area: indigenous and traditional medical knowledge and treatment of illness were consolidated, as was the capacity of the community to formulate and effectively implement organizational, educational and training plans in the health field.

### The “most significant change” (MSC) technique

The innovations promoted by the IPAF with support from IFAD’s Communications Division included testing the most significant change (MSC) technique, which was used in overseeing and evaluating the immediate effects of the project and its impact on the lives of the people. It showed that the farmers confirm the effectiveness of the botanical vermicides as an alternative control measure introduced by the project and believe they could control the giant earthworm infestation and prevent further destruction of their traditional source of food.

The three communities that were using chemical vermicides switched to natural control methods and botanical resources. However, when the *dallak* and the *lupha* became popular as effective resources for controlling the giant earthworm, sustainability of those species became an important concern. The *dallak* is an endemic and readily accessible tree, but the *lupha* is found only in certain forest areas. A spontaneous campaign was started regarding the sustainable use of these resources, and a search for other plants with similar characteristics was launched. Twenty-three plants were collected, which were then tried out on eight sites and also sent to the natural science laboratory of Saint Louis University for photochemical analysis. It was confirmed that these plants possess varying levels of toxicity.

The meetings and subsequent evaluations facilitated continued interaction among the participants in the communities, building their capacity for concerted action. For example, in Tanglag in Kalinga Province, the farmers supported a movement to declare the habitat of the *dallak* tree a protected community area and to regulate the harvesting and supervision of the tree, while optimizing its use and advantages. In Mayoyao, when only few *lupha* trees were found, the farmers and local government bodies agreed to preserve the remaining trees and seek ways of propagating them. A local farmer discovered that the fastest way of propagating the *lupha* was through cuttings from mature trees, and it is now being extensively propagated.

Source: Montañosa Research and Development Center, Project Final Report (2009).

### Microprojects in the Pacific

In the **Solomon Islands** in Melanesia, a microproject was implemented with the **Babanakira** and **Kolina** communities, under the title “Increasing Community Resilience to Natural Disasters through the Use of Traditional Coping Strategies on the Weather Coast Guadalcanal Communities in the Solomon Islands”.

In the past, the Solomon Islands have suffered a large number of natural and man-made disasters. The most recent of these was the April 2007 tsunami, which hit the western part of the country, causing the loss of many human lives and the destruction of livelihoods, and leaving a large number of people homeless. Moreover, between 1999 and 2003, these

islands were the scene of violent conflict, which also had devastating effects on the population. Babanakira is the collective name for a series of villages located in Guadalcanal Province and accessible only by sea. The region has major climatic variations which tend to affect crops, and is suffering particularly from the effects of climate change – a process that could get worse in the near future.

The project was designed and implemented by the NGO Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) to increase the resilience of the Babanakira and Kolina communities so that they could respond better to the impact of disasters. To this end, the organization decided to promote the recording of traditional knowledge and practices concerning prevention measures and response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, and to promote their integration into local contingency plans. The participatory rural appraisal method was applied in 11 communities in Guadalcanal Province to record a set of practices and customs concerning both prevention and proactive response mechanisms. The idea was to revitalize traditional practices and combine them with global scientific and technical knowledge so as to increase the possibilities of coping with these events in a sustainable manner and at a low cost, thereby mitigating the associated risks. The organization decided to involve the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in the first stage of the project, which allowed participation in meetings on national contingency plans.



The results achieved include: the compilation of preliminary information on traditional response mechanisms; the recording of village-level background information that could be used by the NDMO; the transmission to villagers of information produced by this institution regarding these issues; and the production by the villagers, with guidance from SIDT instructors, of a draft manual incorporating traditional prevention and proactive response knowledge and practices to cope with natural and man-made disasters.<sup>28</sup> A video was also produced, recording the work carried out by the communities.

The various lessons learned indicate that men's and women's knowledge plays an important and complementary role during disasters. While the communities recognize the importance of modern technology in alerting the population to disasters, they also say that when the communication bridge with the outside world is broken, all they can rely on is their traditional knowledge in order to survive. Another important result of this project concerns the transfer of knowledge from elders to the young, who were very pleased to learn that their traditional knowledge could save their lives; this also increased self-esteem and group cohesion.

## 5. Identity and culture

Indigenous cultures face many pressures and are at different stages of assimilation and change; indeed, some are becoming extinct. Their problems are not only external, as evidenced in a number of the projects. Internally, a generational shift is seen, since young people who migrate to cities are unfamiliar with the elders' traditions. Several of the projects address the key issue of keeping young people connected to their culture in a globalized world. The indigenous peoples of North America say that when an old person dies, a library of wisdom dies with him or her. "Rich diversity is also a basis for future innovations. It is often forgotten that innovation builds upon earlier knowledge that assimilates aspects of other cultures and mindsets".<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> SIDT, *The Power of People's Traditional Methods: The Knowledge You Cannot Uproot*, Project Final Report (2008).

<sup>29</sup> Kelles-Viitanen, *op. cit.*

Identity is contrastive and relational; in other words, identity is defined in relation to something else which is different. It can therefore be said that ethnic identity has a dialectical character based on social interaction. Similarly, ethnic identity plays a key role in obtaining recognition (both internal and external) of the group, a recognition based on traditional practices and their revitalization in the event of loss. The sense of belonging and the view of the self which is generated by ethnic identity allow the group to act as one in pursuing concrete objectives.

As for material culture, many of the proposals received aim to record, organize, conserve and use local knowledge. As has already been seen, the main objective of some projects is to recover local knowledge. However, in these cases the focus is on *applied* knowledge, which is valid for creating income opportunities or for achieving a specific concrete objective. Although many of the projects conserve and record aspects of culture, only a few incorporate culture as an active factor in developing programmes and direct their efforts to devising a methodology to facilitate the recovery of elements of their culture as a means of rebuilding or strengthening identity.

To counteract the erosion process afflicting many indigenous cultural identities, it may be necessary to resort to modern technological means such as GIS, as is seen in certain microprojects. Although the means may not be important, the goal is fundamental: recovering and strengthening a collective identity to enable the development and preservation of a sense of belonging (to a social group or territory) and to promote cohesion, reciprocity and solidarity. This goal is in addition to cultural identity as a right to be formally recognized. Moreover, applied knowledge is a manifestation of the proactive role of culture and identity, which are fundamental in adapting to change, with forms and expressions that are subject to a process of continual evolution. Similarly, as already seen, the recovery of specific knowledge that acts as a mark or stamp of origin can facilitate the rebuilding of cultural identity, which is also important in creating the confidence and self-esteem necessary to open up paths to development with identity.

## Microprojects in Latin America

In its proposal, the Association of Indigenous Councils Ukawe'sx Nasa Cxhab (ASOCABILDOS) in **Colombia** had the objective of preventing cultural impoverishment of the **Nasa** community, which was suffering a weakening of cultural identity, especially among its youth, who are susceptible to the changes that dominant cultural models are imposing throughout the world. The principles of this indigenous organization are: unity, culture, autonomy and territory. The project funded through the IPAF summarises these principles in its title: "Strengthening Social Control for Land Appropriation among the Nasa People of Sa'th Tama Kiwe".

This initiative resulted in an interesting combination of methods characteristic of global knowledge (e.g. georeferencing), technological development (e.g. GPS, computers) and Nasa cultural traditions (e.g. harmonization and other collective rituals). All of these methods were focused on the recovery of territorial knowledge in order to strengthen Nasa unity, identity and culture. The use of GIS made it possible to visualize the status of different forms of family-level social control in the face of economic, religious, environmental and educational issues in the Nasa territory of Sa'th Tama Kiwe.



The microproject focused on social and territorial control as a holistic process, with dimensions including health, education, attention to young people and production. The activities carried out comprised: harmonization rituals (at the beginning, during and at the

end of the project); socialization, planning, evaluation and monitoring meetings; surveying of the territory (georeferencing of family environments, family self-diagnosis concerning problems and practices of social control); awareness-raising workshops for elders; processing of GIS information; collation of workshop data and records; preparation of material for dissemination (leaflets and audio and video recordings); and participation in collective rituals.

### **Nasa organization**

*"In an integrated and collective manner, we, the elderly, the youth, children, men and women, must move forward with strength in revitalizing the values, actions and spaces of our culture in order to share, with awareness and a critical sense, the values of the non-indigenous society that surrounds us"* (Mandate of the Territorial Congress of Sa'th Tama Kiwe, 2003).

The indigenous Nasa people live in Cauca Department in the western mountain range of Colombia. In this area, the Caldono municipality, like others under indigenous jurisdiction, is organized into *resguardos*. These are collectively owned territorial units under a traditional authority called a *cabildo* (or council), an institution inherited from colonial sociopolitical organization. Previously the *cabildos* were, in fact, colonial *resguardos*, recognized by decree 843 of 8 October 1881, which ratified the title of *Cacique* (or Chief) Juan Tama (Juan de los Cinco Pueblos) of 1700.

The *cabildo*, comprising members of the community, is charged with regulating local life, distributing property, assigning punishments and guiding the *resguardo* in any decisions to be taken. The *cabildo* governor is the legal representative of the institution.

Changes in the legislation imposed a new form of government on indigenous territories, based on the territorial autonomy of the *resguardos*, on their participation in national revenue through the institution of transfers, and on a special indigenous jurisdiction. With these changes, indigenous peoples began to participate in local, regional and national elections, and their participation in making the laws of the republic was ensured through electoral districts for indigenous peoples. In this way, relations between indigenous peoples and the State acquired a new juridical, legal and institutional framework.

The indigenous peoples of Cauca Department were the first to undertake an organized process to recover their identity and claim their right of access to the land. Thus the *cabildos* of the region met in Toribío in 1971 and decided to create the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC), with a programme consisting of recovering and expanding the *resguardos*, strengthening the *cabildos*, making known laws regarding indigenous peoples and demanding their just application, defending indigenous history, language and customs, and training indigenous teachers. The creation of the CRIC encouraged indigenous organization in other regions. Eleven years later, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) was set up, which was to champion indigenous struggles at the national level and would very quickly become a voice for the demands of this sector of the population in dealings with the State.

Source: Claudia Rodríguez, Evaluation Report of the Project "Strengthening Social Control for Land Appropriation among the Nasa People of Sa'th Tama Kiwe", (IFAD, March 2009).

According to the supervision report, more than 150 people took part in the social mapping exercises. Claudia Rodríguez states that neither the organization nor IFAD could have foreseen the effect this work would have on young Nasa people and their families: everyone worked on these ideas with growing enthusiasm, recovering the importance of speaking and spreading the word. She adds that she hears the emotion and joy with which they refer to their elders and to all they have recovered while surveying their territory. She is constantly amazed by the world that is opening up to them, giving them hope and, above all, meaning.<sup>30</sup>

The difficulties encountered by the project showed something that is rarely considered: indigenous peoples also have a very full agenda. As an example, there was a two-month delay in implementing the microproject because of other activities, both regionally and throughout the Nasa territory (the Regional Congress of Youth in Pueblo Nuevo, the Saakhelu ritual in El Carmen-Pioyá and the *minga* [collective action] of indigenous

<sup>30</sup> Claudia Rodríguez, Project Supervision Report (IFAD, March 2009).



resistance in October 2008), and because of the many responsibilities of the teachers, who played an important role in directing activities. It should also be mentioned that Cauca Department was badly affected by armed conflict and territorial control exercised with force by armed insurgent groups.

Despite such difficulties, the project managed to produce thematic maps and communication materials (leaflets and audio and video recordings) describing the current status of cultural practices governing family-level social interactions and categorized these practices – which are undergoing change – as strong, weak or at risk. The process of recovering traditional systems and practices of self-governance stimulated the youth's reflection on their social and territorial situation, the growing closeness of the relationships between teachers and youth and the integration of knowledge among children, youth, adults and elders. The Association counts two important achievements of the monitoring process: young participants becoming involved with productive projects as an alternative to their being linked to armed groups; and families assuming responsibility for strengthening social control practices.

The microproject "Agrosociocultural Diagnosis of the Indigenous Communities of the Río Negro Commune and Prefeasibility Study for Declaration of an Area of Indigenous Development", implemented in **Chile** by the Mapuche Council of Río Negro in cooperation with the Newen Trawun indigenous community, is hard to categorize. It has been included in the present section, although its objective was to create a statistical instrument that would reflect the local situation of the **Mapuche** communities of the Río Negro municipality from economic, sociocultural and productive perspectives. Initially this instrument was intended to provide a guide for action and to coordinate the guidelines to be followed in the annual planning process; in other words, it was a diagnostic tool, producing an in-depth appraisal with the aim of demonstrating, by means of research surveys, that the declaration of an area of indigenous development is possible in line with law 19253.



means of research surveys, that the declaration of an area of indigenous development is possible in line with law 19253.

The project, implemented by the Newen Trawun community, had 11 Mapuche communities in Río Negro municipality as beneficiaries. Its objective was to discover the present degree of closeness of these indigenous communities to their traditional culture, their position with regard to development, their demographic composition and their living conditions in terms of education, health, housing, land tenure and the local economy.

The study resulted in a document on the economic, sociocultural and productive situation of the Río Negro Mapuche in both quantitative and qualitative terms. This document will, in due course, make it possible to draw up and plan proposals firmly based on the local situation, and will serve as a guide in making decisions with a clear view of the territory, within the framework of the project "Mapu Lahual Network of Community Parks". The objective of this latter project is to establish the basis for sustainable development with identity in a zone with a significant indigenous presence and high levels of poverty.

In **Guyana**, within the framework of the microproject "Indigenous Rights Capacity-Building for Indigenous Communities in Guyana", the Amerindian Peoples Association (APA) proposed holding a series of workshops to spread knowledge and understanding of national legislation and international conventions aimed at preserving indigenous identity and rights. In particular, the work of APA focused on making representatives of the almost 30 indigenous peoples of Guyana familiar with ILO's Convention 169 on *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, the draft *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* of the Organization of American States (OAS), the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Amerindian Act* issued by the Guyanese Government.

According to APA, these instruments are fundamental in putting an end to violations of the fundamental rights of the indigenous peoples of Guyana, whose right to exist as indigenous peoples is endangered in particular by both legal and clandestine large-scale mining and deforestation.

## Microprojects in Asia

In **India**, the microproject "Revival and Revitalization of the Historical Heritage and Cultural Identity of the Santals in Jharkhand and Adjacent State of West Bengal" was carried out by



the organization All India Santal Welfare and Cultural Society (AISWACS). The **Santal** (or Santhal) are one of the largest tribal groups in the country, living in the states of Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam, and are also the largest ethnic group in Bangladesh.

However, people also use the generic term *Adivasi* (literally "ancient inhabitants") to designate a heterogeneous collection of tribal groups identified as the original inhabitants of India, who make up a substantial minority of the population of this immense country and who are officially recognized by the

Government as scheduled tribes. For centuries, the resilience and regeneration of the forests have depended on the *Adivasi*'s agro-ecological form of cultivation based on the shifting cultivation and fallow system. As a result, these groups suffer more than others from the effects of deforestation and the expansion of extensive agro-industrial cultivation.

The initiative financed by the IPAF had as its main aim the reorganization, revitalization and consolidation of the cultural and historical roots of certain communities located in the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal. The specific objectives of the project were to train the members of these communities to analyse and identify their own historical and cultural heritage, to affirm their historical and cultural identity and to highlight the historical roots of some politically motivated beliefs. To this end, the project supported the collective growth of critical knowledge of their history and culture, not only among *Adivasi* communities, but also among key actors in national society. AISWACS sought to achieve these objectives by adopting a holistic perspective and addressing the sociopolitical, economic and cultural issues as a complex whole. It also planned to develop model communities through training on topics relating to the concept of self-determined development.

AISWACS adopted a participatory strategic planning approach with its affiliated organizations. The main activities carried out were: basic research on *Adivasi* history and cultural heritage; recording various aspects of this culture and historical legacy through audiovisual media; socialization through the information recorded; and training district-level extension workers (with the participation of inhabitants from 50 communities). The aim of these activities was to develop a critical view, analysis and affirmation of cultural and historical identity in order to plan, supervise, implement and evaluate programmes to include the culture and cultural values in social systems. The project also



included a campaign about cultural and historical heritage and a monitoring and evaluation workshop. The sustainability of the project was ensured through the revitalization and consolidation of local-level organizations, so that they could gradually take over the task of promoting and affirming their own historical and cultural heritage and identity. AISWACS will continue its work by establishing a network for the defence of Santal rights.

Also in **India**, the microproject "Indigenous Jenukuruba Community Empowerment and Natural Farming for Sustainable Livelihood" was carried out by the Nisarga Foundation with **Jenukuruba** gatherer communities in Mysore District, Karnataka State.

This initiative provided support to preserve identity during the transition from an economy based on hunting and gathering to one based on production and the market. The project encouraged women from this tribal group to organize and become promoters of cultural identity. The executing agency succeeded in making the local population aware of many important issues for the present and future of this people: agriculture, horticulture and the breeding of small ruminants; children's education; the capacity to negotiate with agents from outside the community; community participation and leadership; land tenure; and the reproduction of native plants.

These processes require long-term follow-up; the productive focus must be accompanied by effective empowerment and support in building up a sense of self-esteem and appreciation of the communities' own culture. A cultural centre was created in each village involved in the intervention, with the aim of recovering indigenous culture and identity.

## PART TWO: LESSONS LEARNED: SHARING WORDS AND EXPERIENCES

### 1. The possible exchange

Exchange is defined as “the action, or an act, of reciprocal giving and receiving of things in general”.<sup>31</sup> This is the principle of barter – the way of acquiring goods that was used before the market and trade (or commercial exchange) systems – and the method that many indigenous peoples still use or to which they have recourse when the market economy breaks down (as in the case of the economic crisis in Argentina).

It is important to note that while commercial exchanges may be unequal, barter rarely is. This is because barter is not based on a “conventional” value, but on the value placed on the object by those exchanging it. The concept of barter is therefore adequate to represent the exchange of something intangible such as experience. The exchange of experience is based on some fundamental principles: reciprocity, a willingness to share (e.g. information, opinions, ideas) and the participation of at least two actors, or a group. All these elements were present in the exchanges organized by IFAD to share reflections on the process carried out within the IPAF framework. These exchanges involved many people, all of whom were actors in



one way or another with the implemented microprojects or with the issues that they addressed.

The first of these exchanges took place on 6–8 August 2008 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and was attended by the people directly responsible for coordinating activities financed by the Facility within the framework of the 2007 call for proposals. The participants came to Chiang Mai from six countries in Asia: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Also present were representatives of the Christensen Fund, ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, UNPFII, two international consultants and the IFAD Coordinator who manages the IPAF. The workshop was hosted by the Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP).

The second exchange was held in Arequipa, Peru, on 12–13 January 2009. Representatives of the implementing organizations from 13 Latin American countries – Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru – took part, sharing their time and experience with representatives of the Indigenous Fund, the PRAIA Foundation and the Indigenous Health Directorate of the Venezuelan Ministry of People’s Power for Health. Also present were two members of UNPFII, an international consultant from IFAD and the IFAD Coordinator managing the IPAF.



In this first stage of the process, which was inaugurated with the first IPAF call for proposals, the two seminars facilitated an encounter among the representatives of indigenous peoples in charge of the microprojects, the members of organizations supporting indigenous peoples and IFAD. These two exchanges, carried out against the background of this first stage of the Facility’s use, facilitated application of IFAD’s principles with respect to the IPAF, so that the IPAF would be a means of building

<sup>31</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford University Press, 1993).

(through listening, understanding and learning) a relationship or partnership with indigenous peoples, in order to explore possible future means of innovative and concrete cooperation.<sup>32</sup>

## **2. The words exchanged**

The debate on the projects allowed some important points to be made, which should be taken into account when establishing any technical and financial cooperation with indigenous peoples. The elements collected and set out here were directly raised by the leaders of the IPOs and NGOs who took part in the two workshops.

### **Land and territories**

For indigenous peoples, the focus of interest is not land ownership, but rather territorial rights, which encompass use and management of the land as well as spiritual and other connected aspects, making up a holistic view of well-being. Indigenous land and territories are rich in natural resources and cultural heritage, both of which are essential for indigenous and tribal peoples' livelihoods. The collective ownership of land is not something that is in doubt: it is a fact, and the recovery of territory must be undertaken collectively.

In order to address problems of occupation of territories by large-scale investors (both the State and large companies, which make harmful use of natural resources, basing their activities exclusively on an economic rationale), the territorial rights of indigenous and tribal peoples must be promoted, guaranteed and implemented. However, such initiatives, which must include processes of recognition, appraisal and demarcation or titling, cannot be confined to the local level. Local action must be complemented by advocacy at the regional and national levels. The processes may be (and frequently are) long, involving many key actors including the army and the judiciary, and they are processes that benefit from having allies within the country, such as other sectors of civil society, in addition to international allies. Nevertheless, community work can lay a solid basis for a just claim to rights through the use of participatory appraisal and other instruments that allow conservation, transmission to new generations and intercultural communication of knowledge about the territory and its customary uses.

### **Knowing and recognizing that we know**

An issue connected with indigenous land and territories – with all the resources they contain and their generally very high levels of biodiversity – is the collective or individual knowledge of indigenous and tribal peoples, and the urgent need to know how to use it to safeguard the environment, whether for the good of humankind or to raise the self-respect of indigenous peoples. However, a problem of major relevance today is how to protect this knowledge from outside economic interests. Patents are very important here, because although the issue is considered correctly within some legal frameworks, it is still not clear how to apply norms that coincide with the interests of indigenous and tribal peoples.

### **Participating, sharing and exchanging, by building networks**

Working alone is not good and is less beneficial. It is extremely useful to discover that other people, who are different but similar ("all kin but all different"), in other countries of Asia or Latin America are facing similar problems, to which they have found (or have tried to find) solutions. The exchange of experience – "food" for thought – awakens new ideas and energies, stimulates open solidarity and allows the sharing of successes, failures, challenges and lessons learned. In this way, knowledge can be built up and strategies

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<sup>32</sup> These occasions for reflection on what has been done and what can be done in the future were made possible by financial support from the Government of Finland and the IFAD Initiative for Mainstreaming Innovation.

discovered that then can be adapted to each context and can become the basis for starting negotiations with agents outside the community or with governments.

## **The right to be different and to decide for themselves**

The holistic perspective of indigenous peoples reflects cultures that are in constant evolution, assimilating what they deem useful and compatible with their world view, and rejecting what is not. Indigenous peoples must be able to freely manage their economy, the natural resources and their own development. The support offered to indigenous and tribal peoples must focus on protecting their rights and the right to live their lives according to their cultural values, while aiming at involving them in fully participatory processes that include their free, prior and informed consent on issues affecting them.

In this context, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* plays an important role as an instrument for challenging the dominant development model. For indigenous peoples, poverty reduction is not some technocratic exercise; on the contrary, it



involves all of indigenous life and the indigenous world view. Their concept of poverty is not the one normally adopted in international cooperation. For them, poverty is not just economic, and material development can not be separated from spiritual development. Actions to combat poverty must focus on food sovereignty instead of food security, so that indigenous peoples can make decisions about their activities based on their own perspective. Development indicators must not be restricted to the economic sphere, but must also include cultural and spiritual aspects among other important non-economic and non-material aspects, in a way that

reflects indigenous peoples' holistic belief system.

Indigenous peoples must participate in all the decision-making processes that concern them, while support must be given to building indigenous leadership at all levels – local, national and international. Strong leadership is needed at the international level so that the world can hear the voices of indigenous and tribal peoples. However, such leadership must be backed up by equally strong local leaders who consult and coordinate with its base – indigenous and tribal communities. To this end, legal frameworks must be developed that will allow the inclusion of indigenous representatives and leaders in international debates and agreements regarding their peoples.

Work carried out in the framework of technical and financial cooperation should also be shared by indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. It is important to consult indigenous peoples and work with them instead of doing things in their name or on their behalf. Such a change in attitude is vital if programmes and projects based on the world view of indigenous peoples are to become a reality. According to indigenous organizations and organizations supporting them, this is also true for bodies that cooperate and work with indigenous peoples.

## **...not forgetting women...**

With regard to gender, discrimination against women is a generally recognized fact that must be addressed through traditional processes and institutions, inasmuch as the strengthening of women's position must be holistic rather than isolated and fragmented. In this regard, indigenous institutions must not be static, but must recognize women's rights within the community and promote their participation in decision-making processes. Women

need to acquire a political vision and express it in order to ensure that their concerns are reflected in the results.

### **Technologies from the wider world**

Many concepts, methodologies, practices and technologies brought in from outside have not in the past served the interests of indigenous peoples. Technology brings an outside world view with it, and must therefore be adapted carefully and with sensitivity. As in the case of biotechnology, some innovations can be used, so long as the indigenous and tribal peoples are in agreement. However, the distribution of biotechnological products must always be carried out under strict control to avoid the danger of indigenous peoples being exploited instead of benefiting from these products, or becoming dependent on the technologies adopted. This has happened, for example, with chemical pesticides and fertilizers that have gradually replaced traditional agro-ecological techniques based on indigenous and tribal peoples' local knowledge.



### **Change is not just social, cultural and economic, but also climatic**

The consequences of climate change have a disproportionate effect on indigenous peoples, who depend on the environment not only for their livelihood, but also to sustain their world view and their identity. Moreover, they suffer the consequences of a process to which they have not contributed and which is causing global warming, depletion of natural resources and loss of biodiversity and habitat. In order to prevent the disappearance of traditional knowledge, which is conserved by very few elders (but is fundamental in adaptation and mitigation activities), it must be recognized and used in national strategies to mitigate environmental damage. Emergency assistance and government funds allocated in response to emergencies have led to problems because they are often used as opportunities to promote technologies that are both harmful and contrary to indigenous aspirations, as is the case with genetically modified organisms.

The problems caused by climate change are linked to other negative effects of the cash economy. For example, interests connected with the development of biofuels and the resulting monocropping ignore indigenous peoples' livelihood needs and lead to conflicts over access to resources. If environmental catastrophes are not to become excuses for violating indigenous peoples' rights, networks for exchanging information must be created, compensation must be planned in cases where policies or practices affect them and, above all, indigenous peoples must always be consulted before megaprojects are carried out that may affect them – and of course nothing must go ahead without their consent.

### **3. Recommendations**

This section lists some of the recommendations made by indigenous organizations at the two workshops. They are addressed to the various actors involved in promoting the development of indigenous and tribal peoples, especially IFAD and other agencies and organizations of the large United Nations family.

- The contents of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* must be taken into account in all operations.



- In any programme or project that is to be implemented in indigenous areas, it is essential to carry out a prior appraisal of the potential impact on the indigenous and tribal peoples' society, culture and environment. Special mention is made of the potentially negative impacts of megaprojects, projects to promote tourism in indigenous areas and some projects on livelihoods that have – or could have – a negative impact on the self-sufficiency of these peoples, creating dependency on agents and inputs from outside the local society.
- Bottom-up participatory strategic planning should be promoted, based on a genuinely participatory process in full consultation with indigenous communities and organizations. Holistic indigenous world views must be reflected in the planning of all policies relating to indigenous peoples.
- Training activities to build leadership skills must be promoted, so that indigenous peoples can increase their participation in local government and other decision-making institutions. It would also be helpful to carry out technical assistance activities on issues related to new challenges, for example climate change. It is also important to support the consolidation of national, regional and international networks for the defence of indigenous and tribal peoples' rights.
- It is necessary to stress the role of indigenous peoples in seeking responses to climate change, increasing their participation in forums on this emerging topic, since they can contribute their knowledge and strategies.
- The concept of poverty must be reformulated for indigenous and tribal peoples, setting aside the exclusively economic perspective, and combining initiatives aimed at improving food security with actions focusing on food sovereignty.
- Alternative livelihood systems must be developed that are sustainable in social and cultural terms, sensitive to local contexts, in tune with indigenous cultures and developed from the bottom up, taking real local needs and possibilities into account. These systems should combine increased productivity with sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. If this is to be achieved, it is vital to recover, understand and use indigenous and tribal peoples' knowledge. In this context, it is extremely useful to recover local knowledge about flood- and drought-resistant seed varieties, establish seed banks, facilitate indigenous and tribal communities' access to these banks and recover and adapt indigenous systems of managing water resources, with a view to innovation.
- It is vital to guarantee respect for juridical pluralism, autonomous indigenous justice systems and indigenous self-government systems. With regard to land tenure, it is recommended that a territorial approach be adopted, where tangible and intangible resources coexist. Efforts must be made to consolidate guarantees for indigenous peoples within the legal frameworks governing laws on land tenure, forests and other areas of interest to them.
- Natural resource management in indigenous and tribal peoples' territories – whether or not they are demarcated and recognized – must reflect indigenous concepts concerning reforestation. This will entail the promotion of intercultural dialogue on forest management techniques and consolidation of community forest protection systems.
- It is important to develop market mechanisms that are favourable to indigenous peoples, incorporating the "distributive economy" typical of indigenous peoples, based on concepts of reciprocity and equality.
- It is vital to find the most effective ways of safeguarding indigenous peoples' knowledge from speculators who have the know-how and means to patent it. At the same time, indigenous and tribal peoples must be supported by facilitating their access to the national systems that grant patent rights.



- It is recommended that gender discrimination be addressed through traditional institutions, which are changing their attitudes toward this important matter. This issue requires further in-depth study, including specific research-and-action activities based on the participation of both women and men.

#### **4. What lessons have been learned?**

Time is a variable that depends on the culture in question and influences consultation, discussion, participation, and implementation approaches and procedures. It must always be remembered that the concept of time for indigenous peoples is different from our own. There is no point in insisting on production times for women artisans when they see and know that working longer in their microenterprise means taking time away from their family, their children and other activities on which the family livelihood depends. Similarly, it is important to respect the times of collective and individual rituals.

In this connection, there is generally a difference in time management between NGOs and IPOs, in that the leaders of the latter usually have a host of other institutional commitments that sometimes take them far from their communities (much farther than might be imagined), while the coordinators of NGOs may be able to devote themselves full-time (or nearly) to project management.

However, time is also an independent variable, governed by nature and its times: times of rain and hurricanes, times of hunting, fishing and gathering, times of sowing and harvesting, after which another year has to pass before the same opportunities reoccur.

Moreover, indigenous and tribal peoples usually live in areas that are difficult to access, in widely spaced communities or homes, and without telecommunications, so that even calling a meeting can mean a week's delay.

Almost all the organizations have complained that one year is far too short a time to do all that they want to do and feel that they could do.

Changes in the leadership of indigenous organizations also involve the need for more time – time to re-establish communication and time for the new leaders to understand the situation and what must be done. A similar situation is seen with those in office at the local or national level when there is a change of government and things have to start from scratch. IFAD's large-scale programmes, which have government ministries as partners and executing agencies, are also affected by the spoils system of redistributing institutional and political positions.

The translation of terms used in international cooperation is a serious problem. If we want everyone to participate (which is of course the case), it is vital that everyone understand what they are participating in.. There are few indigenous peoples and communities with whom a non-literal translation has been found for such concepts as "project", "sustainability", "economic growth", "well-being" and "evaluation".<sup>33</sup> The leaders usually speak in their own language and introduce these strange words from the national language (be it Spanish, English or French), but how many will really understand? Means must be sought to translate the basic concepts of development into the languages of the indigenous and tribal peoples with whom work is being conducted.

The microprojects financed through the Facility and implemented by the proposing and executing organizations are basically of two types: those intended to strengthen aspects which are still weak or which are very important parts of larger ongoing programmes or processes in support of indigenous and tribal communities; and stand-alone initiatives that come to an end when their set duration is over (one year in the case of the two calls for proposals launched to date). However, if a microproject contributes to strengthening a

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<sup>33</sup> A. Colajanni, Report of Project Monitoring Mission (2009).

process already under way, it will have a much greater possibility of being sustainable. This is a straightforward concept and the IPAF Board has, in fact, taken the resulting criterion into consideration in some cases, applying it to the selection of microprojects proposed for its approval. This ensures relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in using grant resources, provided that the process under way is local in origin, demand-driven and in line with the principles adopted by the Facility. However, with larger projects that include initiatives financed under the IPAF, special care must be taken to avoid any possible overlap of activities. This is because, regardless of our intentions, corruption has sometimes been transferred from our world into the world of indigenous and tribal peoples, together with other changes (e.g. goods, technologies, customs).

Lastly, there is the question of reducing the budget of the initial proposal, which should always be avoided in grants of this type, or should at least be reflected in a reformulation of the microproject. In order to approve a higher number of microprojects, as directed by the IPAF Board, a reduction had to be made in the budgets of microprojects supported within the framework of the 2007 call for proposals. However, fewer resources should have meant correspondingly fewer activities, or a smaller target group. On the other hand, sometimes because of imprecise planning or because of protests from villagers who have been left out, those in charge of coordinating a microproject have had to expand the target group. The Facility needs to have a reserve and a certain flexibility to meet such cases, after carefully evaluating any proposal along these lines.

Monitoring of microinitiatives must also be stepped up, not simply in order to exercise control over project execution, but also to collect material in various forms (including living testimonies of indigenous thinking on these processes) and to establish closer and more effective communication, which encourages critical local-level dynamics. In this way, the exchanges acquire greater value, and they should perhaps last longer and be based more closely on common experience.

## **5. A few words about the future**

The IPAF directly finances indigenous and tribal peoples' organizations in order to advance their empowerment and self-government. In this context, there was a marked difference in the proposing organizations between microprojects approved in response to the first call for proposals and those approved in response to the second call. In the first call, the proportion between IPOs and NGOs was equal, whereas in the second, the ratio changed: 26 approved microprojects were submitted by IPOs and 17 by NGOs.

When the reports of the supervision missions were analysed, it gradually became clear that sustainability was more probable when the project was part of a larger programme or a permanent support process already under way, presupposing a relationship of mutual trust between the beneficiary communities and the executing agencies, both indigenous and non-indigenous. This finding would indicate the advisability of considering an operational link between IPAF microprojects and national programmes financed by IFAD.

Taking full advantage of the potential of the IPAF, the heritage of accumulated knowledge and the innovations tested, the future of the Facility lies in its capacity to become a solid long-term financing instrument to support small development initiatives coming from indigenous and tribal peoples. With this goal, IFAD has been seeking to add to its own resources by mobilizing resources from donor countries and international organizations. At the same time, and on the basis of a specific recommendation of the IPAF Board, the funding limit for each approved project is to be increased from the current USD 30 000 to USD 50 000, while the duration is being increased from one year to two.



The IPAF's role within IFAD is also important in facilitating the negotiation and building of strategic partnerships among indigenous peoples, national organizations and civil society – partnerships that are fundamental for supporting indigenous movements in their demands. In this context, special note should be taken of the close partnership developed with UNPFII, which will continue in the future.

This is what we have harvested in these two years of activity: the fruit of mutual knowledge and the exchange of words, experiences, opinions and viewpoints. This ongoing exchange has taken place among IFAD, its partners and many indigenous and tribal groups from 24 countries. In this document, we have sought to show this multicultural wealth, derived from a heritage of ancient knowledge and constant innovation.

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## ANNEX I: THE IPAF IN NUMBERS

### 2007–2008

In 2007 and 2008, the IPAF, besides financing projects, carried out the following activities: two regional workshops, one in Asia and one in Latin America, and the study *Custodians of Culture and Biodiversity. Indigenous Peoples Take Charge of Their Challenges and Opportunities*, which dealt with the 1 095 proposals submitted by indigenous communities and organizations in 2007. The cost of the 30 projects approved in 2007 was USD 603 700.

### 2008–2009

Following the second call for proposals in 2008, the IPAF Board approved 43 projects for a total of approximately USD 900 000, which represented an increase of 50 per cent over the previous year's total.

The IPAF's projects and activities in 2007 and 2008 were financed by IFAD, the World Bank, Canada, Finland, Italy and Norway, for a total of USD 2 120 000.

### Outlook for the future

For the future, the IPAF Board recommended that IFAD should raise the ceiling for projects to USD 50 000 and increase the maximum length from one year to two. It is calculated that an annual sum of USD 2 million to USD 3 million will be needed if the IPAF is to continue to grow.

## ANNEX II: PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2007–2008

LATIN AMERICA			
COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	EXECUTING AGENCY	AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )
ARGENTINA Territorial Management by the Indigenous Communities of North-eastern Salta, Argentine Republic	Wichí	Foundation for Development in Justice and Peace - FUNDAPAZ Benefiting organization: Council of Wichí Organizations	16 500
BOLIVIA Dissemination of International Agreements and Conventions Supporting Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Protection of Women's Rights	Indigenous peoples of La Paz Department	National Network of Information and Communication Workers RED ADA	15 000
BOLIVIA Improving the Livelihoods of Aymara Women in Los Andes Province by Rearing Native Chickens	Aymara	Bartolina Sisa Training and Promotion Centre for Andean Women "Bartolina Sisa" – CEPROMA B.S.	20 000
CHILE Agrosociocultural Diagnosis of the Indigenous Communities of the Río Negro Commune and Prefeasibility Study for Declaration of an Area of Indigenous Development	Mapuche	Newen Trawun indigenous community	15 000
COLOMBIA Strengthening Social Control for Land Appropriation among the Nasa People of Sa'th Tama Kiwe	Nasa	Association of Indigenous Councils Ukawe'sx Nasa Cxhab ASOCABILDOS	12 400
ECUADOR ÑUKANCHIK KAUSAY, Our Life	Kichwa	Federation of Kichwa Peoples of the Sierra Norte of Ecuador, Chijalta, Fici, Chinchaysuyu Jatun Ayllu Llaktakunapak Tantariy	20 000
EL SALVADOR Waking Woman, a Goddess on the Basis of Ancestral Textiles	Nahua, Maya, Nonualco	Institute for Salvadorian Indigenous Ancestral Recovery – RAIS	16 200
GUATEMALA Control and Monitoring of Agricultural Tribunals and Cadastral Survey. A Step in Building up Agrarian Institutions	Q'eqchi', Poqomchi', Achi (Mayan peoples)	Permanent National Coordination on Rights Relating to Indigenous Peoples' Land - CNP-TIERRA	20 000

<p>GUATEMALA Plantation of Agroforestry Systems, with Community Representatives of Microregional Associations in the Ixcán Municipality of El Quiché Department</p>	<p>Various Mayan peoples</p>	<p>Intermicroregional Coordinating Association of Ixcán – ASCIMI</p>	<p>20 000</p>
<p>GUYANA Indigenous Rights Capacity-Building for Indigenous Communities in Guyana</p>	<p>Amerindian peoples</p>	<p>Amerindian Peoples Association (APA)</p>	<p>20 000</p>
<p>HONDURAS Incorporating Lenca Women into the Process of Enterprise Development by Promoting Rural Banks, Agricultural Businesses and Rural Microenterprises</p>	<p>Lenca</p>	<p>Foundation for the Development of Rural Enterprises – FUNDER, which provides technical support to the National Council of Indigenous Lenca Women of Honduras – CONMILH</p>	<p>15 000</p>
<p>MEXICO Consolidation of the RITA Tour Operator “Constitution, Promotion, Dissemination and Marketing”. An Alternative for the Sale or Marketing of Entrance to National Parks in the 24 Communal Holdings of RITA Ltd.</p>	<p>Indigenous peoples of Quintana Roo State</p>	<p>Indigenous Network of Alternative Tourism – RITA SC</p>	<p>20 000</p>
<p>NICARAGUA Productive Rehabilitation of Basic Grains in Nine Communities of the Mayangna Sauni Arung Ka Territory</p>	<p>Mayangna (Sumo)</p>	<p>Alistar-Nicaragua Foundation</p>	<p>22 800</p>
<p>PANAMA Reviving the Traditional Knowledge of Panama’s Kuna Women</p>	<p>Kuna</p>	<p>Foundation for the Promotion of Traditional Knowledge – FPCI</p>	<p>20 000</p>
<p>PERU Strengthening the Indigenous Rights of Awajun Women: Enhancing Their Cultural Identity Rights through the Rehabilitation and Production of Their Handicrafts</p>	<p>Awajun</p>	<p>Regional Indigenous Awajun Federation of the Alto Mayo FERIAAM</p>	<p>22 400</p>
<p>PERU Recovery of Traditional Knowledge on Dietary and Medicinal Biodiversity in Quechua and Asháninka Communities of Peru</p>	<p>Quechua, Asháninka</p>	<p>Centre for the Indigenous Cultures of Peru – CHIRAPAQ</p>	<p>20 000</p>

<b>ASIA</b>			
<b>COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS PEOPLES</b>	<b>EXECUTING AGENCY</b>	<b>AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )</b>
BANGLADESH Livelihood Security of Jumia (Swidden People) Bringing Diversification in Cultivation	Jumia (swidden people)	Community Advancement Forum (CAF)	26 900
CAMBODIA District-level Networking of Communities in Northern Cambodia for Livelihoods Development	Kui	Organization to Promote Kui Culture (OPKC)	21 800
INDIA Indigenous Jenukuruba Community Empowerment and Natural Farming for Sustainable Livelihood	Jenukuruba community in Mysore District	Nisarga Foundation	22 000
INDIA Participatory Learning, Institutional Design and Collective Action	Oraon	Raigarh Ambikapur Health Association (RAHA)	25 000
INDIA Revival and Revitalization of the Historical Heritage and Cultural Identity of the Santals in Jharkhand and Adjacent State of West Bengal	Santal	All India Santal Welfare and Cultural Society (AISWACS)	25 500
MONGOLIA Improved Livelihood of Tsaatan through Biotechnological Method	Tsaatan	Thenkhleg Khugjil Organization	17 900
PHILIPPINES A Study on the Giant Earthworm and its Impact on the Survival of the Cordillera Rice Terraces	Indigenous peoples of the Cordillera region	Montañosa Research and Development Center (MRDC)	22 800
PHILIPPINES Capacity-Building for Indigenous Communities through Alternative Health Care Delivery Systems	Kalanguya, Ifugao, Ibaloi	Dapon Indigenous Peoples Centre	25 000
SOLOMON ISLANDS Increasing Community Resilience to Natural Disasters through the Use of Traditional Coping Strategies on the Weather Coast Guadalcanal Communities in the Solomon Islands	Babanakira, Kolina	Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT)	19 000



<p>VIET NAM  Improving Household Income  through Development and  Conservation of the Seedless  Persimmon of Bac Kan</p>	<p>Tay, Nung, Dao</p>	<p>Viet Nam Rural Development  Association – PHANO  Benefiting organization:  Seedless Persimmon  Producers’ Association – APK</p>	<p>20 000</p>
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<b>AFRICA</b>			
<b>COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS PEOPLES</b>	<b>EXECUTING AGENCY</b>	<b>AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )</b>
CAMEROON Reduction of Food Dependency and Improvement in the Income of Five Baka Groups in the Yokadouma Area	Baka	Support for Self-Promotion of Boumba and Ngoko Women (AAFEBEN)	20 000
KENYA Rehabilitation and Protection of Kireita Forest	Local communities	Kireita Forest and Wildlife Conservation Association (KFWCA)	19 300
NIGER Strengthening the Capacities and Affirming the Cultural Values of Woodabee Peul Pastoral Communities	Woodabee (Fulbe)	National Federation of Niger Herders (FNEN Daddo)	24 000
UGANDA Local Chicken Rearing and Multiplication	Acholi	Northern Uganda Women and Children Initiatives (NUWECHI)	19 200

### ANNEX III: PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2008

LATIN AMERICA			
COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	EXECUTING AGENCY	AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )
ARGENTINA Training Young People in Carpentry and the Sustainable Management of Natural Forests	Wichí	Silataj Foundation	10 236
BELIZE Preservation and Promotion of Local Varieties of Traditional Crops	Maya Q'eqchi, Mopan, Yucateco	Tumul K'in Center of Learning	29 000
BOLIVIA Strengthening Indigenous Organizations: for Climate Change Mitigation through Water Management and Use	Aymara, Uru	Aymara Centre of Multidisciplinary Studies	18 500
CHILE Construction of Andean Terraces to Prevent Erosion, and Plantation of Prickly Pear, a Highly Sustainable and Multi-Purpose Product	Mapuche, Aymara (immigrants)	Santiago Indigenous Culture Centre	24 000
COLOMBIA Cultural Uses of the Misak Territory as a Strategy for the Misak (Guambiano) People's Cultural and Environmental Sustainability	Misak	Indigenous Council of Guambía	30 000
ECUADOR Seed Fund for Local Productive Initiatives and Training for Six Kichwa Women's Organizations of the Alto Nepe Region in the Ecuadorian Amazon	Kichwa	Sacha Causai Foundation – FSC	29 500
ECUADOR Recovering and Raising Awareness about the Sacred Ancestral Sites of the Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador	Awa, Chachi, Epera, Tsachila, Kichwa, Siona, Secoya, Cofán, Huaorani, Shuar, Achuar, Andoa, Shiwiar, Zapara, Manta, Wancawilcas	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador – CONAIE	29 500
GUATEMALA Training in Natural Medicine for Women Leaders of the Rural Communities of the Sololá Municipality	Maya Cakchiquel	Health without Limits Association – SSL	29 000

<p>GUATEMALA Boosting the Participation of Young Maya from the K'iche' and Q'eqchi' Linguistic Regions in El Quiché, Totonicapán and Alta Verapaz Departments in the Training and Capacity-building Process so as to Become Effective Actors at Local, Regional and National Levels</p>	<p>Maya</p>	<p>Mayan Youth Movement of the National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows MOJOMAYAS de CONAVIGUA</p>	<p>30 000</p>
<p>GUYANA Building the Capacity of Wapichan People to Secure Traditional Lands and Sustainably Manage their Resources</p>	<p>Wapichan</p>	<p>South Central People Development Association (SCPDA)</p>	<p>24 000</p>
<p>HONDURAS Territorial and Cultural Rights and Food Sovereignty</p>	<p>Lenca</p>	<p>Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras – COPINH</p>	<p>25 000</p>
<p>MEXICO Strategy for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases with Indigenous Women from Six Nahua Municipalities with a Low Human Development Index in the Zongolica Region</p>	<p>Nahua</p>	<p>National Foundation of Women for Community Health</p>	<p>22 700</p>
<p>PANAMA A Matter of Human Rights: Ratification by the Republic of Panama of <i>Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Rights in Independent Countries</i> of the International Labour Organization (ILO)</p>	<p>Kuna, Emberá, Wounaan, Ngobe, Bugle, Naso-Teribe</p>	<p>Conservation, Nature and Life Foundation – CONAVI</p>	<p>15 000</p>
<p>PERU Where Our Ancestors Walked: Recovery, Preservation and Dissemination of the Oral Tradition of the Yánesha People, final phase</p>	<p>Yánesha</p>	<p>Institute of the Common Good (Instituto del Bien Común)</p>	<p>30 000</p>
<p>PERU Project to Develop the Organizational Capacities of Alto Andino Communities in order to Improve Social Management and Play an Effective Role in Regional Development</p>	<p>Cayramayo, Minas Corral, Patahuasi and Churia Rosaspampa communities, Ccarhuaccocco, Iglesia Huasi, Santa Fe, and the Tuco community</p>	<p>Council of the Camelid Herding People of North Ayacucho – COPUCNA</p>	<p>18 500</p>

<b>ASIA</b>			
<b>COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS PEOPLES</b>	<b>EXECUTING AGENCY</b>	<b>AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )</b>
BANGLADESH Integrated Sustainable Hill Farming Technology Project for Indigenous Women	Chakma, Tripura, Marma	Assistance for the Livelihood of the Origin (ALO)	15 000
BANGLADESH Mainstreaming Education through Mother Tongue and Culture	Garo	Centre for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRAD)	16 000
CHINA The Visualization Way of Naxi Language Transmission	Naxi	Yulong Culture and Gender Research Center	19 000
INDIA Building the Capacity of Indigenous Peoples to Cope, Adapt or Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change on Their Livelihoods and Environments	Kisan, Kharia Birhor	Centre for Development Action (CDA)	15 000
INDIA Ensuring Secured Livelihoods for Tribal Communities through Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	Kolha, Santal	Liberal Association for Movement of People (LAMP)	16 000
INDIA Building the Capacity of the Tribal Community to Use the Right to Information Act for Solving Issues related to the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006	Bonda, Didai	YOJANA	16 000
INDONESIA Mapping and Spatial Planning of the Management Area of Tana Ai Traditional Community Located in and around Egon Ilimedo and Wuko Lewoloro Forest Areas, Sikka District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia	Tana Ai	Indonesian Community Mapping Network (Jaringan Kerja Pemetaan Partisipatif – JKPP)	25 000
LAOS Indigenous Knowledge Conservation and Promotion Project	Akha	Community Knowledge Support Association (CKSA)	21 000
MALAYSIA Bario Radio	Kelabit, Penan, Lun Bawan, Sa'ban	E-Bario Sdn Bhd	20 000
NEPAL Chepang Community Incentives for Sustainable Livelihoods	Chepang	Centre for Rural Resource Promotion (CRP Nepal)	15 500

NEPAL Promotion of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Constitution-Making Process	Limbu	Kirat Yakthung Chumlung	16 000
PAKISTAN Indigenous Peoples' On-Farm Livelihoods through Entrepreneurial Development of Honey Beekeeping for Household Structures in Kalash	Kalash	Hashoo Foundation	15 000
PAKISTAN Sustainable Livelihoods and Indigenous Cultural Preservation Project for Brahui Tribes	Brahui	Participatory Development Initiatives (PDI)	15 000
PHILIPPINES A Capacity-Building Programme to Advance Indigenous People's Human Rights	Tumanduk	TUMANDUK Indigenous Farmers in Defense of Land and Life	20 000
PHILIPPINES Live and Let Live: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Mobile Theatre-Forum	Kankana-ey, Ibaloi, Bontoc, Kalinga	Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera (DKK)	17 652
PHILIPPINES Training Indigenous Peoples' Organizations in the Promotion and Implementation of Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Mandaya, Mansaka, Dibabawon, Mangguangan, Ata-Manobo tribes	Silangang Dapit sa Sidlakang (SILDAP), Southeastern Mindanao	23 000

<b>AFRICA</b>			
<b>COUNTRY AND PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS PEOPLES</b>	<b>EXECUTING AGENCY</b>	<b>AMOUNT OF GRANT (IN USD )</b>
BOTSWANA Preservation and Promotion of Ikalanga Language and Cultural Heritage in Changate	BaKalanga	Changate Conservation and Development Trust (CCDT)	20 000
BURUNDI Collection of Data on Batwa Children's Education in Six Provinces of Burundi	Batwa	Let Us Unite for Promoting the Batwa - UNIPROBA	20 000
CAMEROON Development of Food and Cash Crop Agriculture on Lands Occupied by the Baka Pygmies of Messok District	Baka	Young Peoples' Association for Sustainable Resource Management - AJDUR	25 000
CAMEROON Promotion and Preservation of Indigenous Ethno-Veterinary Practices among the Mbororos	Mbororo	Society for the Protection of Animal Life and the Environment - SPALE	10 000
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Project for Processing and Enhancement of Agricultural Products by the Indigenous Women of Bunyakiri	Pygmy	Union for the Emancipation of Indigenous (Pygmy) Women - UEFA	25 000
ETHIOPIA Ethno-Veterinary Conservation and Botanical Site	Gamo Chenchas	Gamo Chenchas Culture and Natural Resource Conservation and Development Organization	20 000
KENYA Raising El-molo Living Standards with Modern Fishing Techniques, Improved Marketing Systems, and an Effective and Efficient El-molo Fishermen's Cooperative Society	El-molo	Gurapau Community-Based Organization	20 000
NIGER Support for the Local Strategy of Social Reconstruction of Livestock for the Benefit of Two Hundred Vulnerable Women in Tchintabaraden Department, Republic of Niger	Touareg	Children of the Azawak	20 000
RWANDA Support for the Cultural Diversity and Development of the Batwa Displaced from Forests, National Volcano Parks, and Nyungwe Forest, and Their Participation and Involvement in the Country's Development Programmes	Batwa	Community of Rwandese Potters - COPORWA ASBL	20 000

TANZANIA Indigenous Maasai Cultural Centre (IMCC)	Maasai	Indigenous Heartland Organization (IHO)	20 000
UGANDA Improvement of Health Services through the Integration of Traditional Knowledge	Karimjong, Tepeth	Women Environmental Conservation Project (WECOP)	20 000
ZIMBABWE Improving the Food and Income Security of Indigenous Smallholder Farmers and People Living with HIV/AIDS in Fragile Communal Areas of Changazi, Chimanimani District, Zimbabwe	Shona-Nduwu	Family-In-Need Trust	20 000





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