



ONLINE EDITION & BLOG

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“Preserving indigenous languages is not just about words; it’s about preserving identities, safeguarding heritage, and acknowledging the intrinsic value of each linguistic heritage.”
Pawanka Fund Team

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Bridging Worlds: Paving the Way for Indigenous Voices at COP28 in Dubai

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Embracing Harmony: Pawanka Fund’s Impactful Presence at COP28

“Revitalizing indigenous languages is an act of empowerment and cultural resurgence.”



Nature and Indigenous Peoples Must Be Central in All Decisions, Processes, and Outcomes at

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Tara Bandu, a Tradition of Sustainability

Even when we die and when we are killed, we continue to communicate



Despite both its intrinsic and extrinsic value, we see a near absence of nature in recent COP decisions and on the COP28

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Bridging Worlds

Paving the Way for Indigenous Voices at COP28 in Dubai.



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In the shifting sands of Dubai, from November 30 to December 13, 2023, the global community convened for the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28). Amidst the towering structures of progress and innovation, the significance of this event resonated profoundly for indigenous communities worldwide. Pawanka Fund stands at the forefront, recognizing COP28 as a pivotal moment in the ongoing dialogue between traditional wisdom and contemporary climate action.

The conference marked a turning point, acknowledging the unique challenges faced by indigenous peoples in the face of climate change. Their intimate connection with the land and traditional knowledge systems position them as vital stakeholders in shaping global efforts towards sustainability. COP28, with its theme of inclusivity, brought indigenous voices to the forefront, offering a platform for dialogue that went beyond symbolic gestures.

A cornerstone of the discussions revolved around land rights – a fundamental concern for many indigenous communities. As custodians of some of the world's most biodiverse regions, indigenous peoples have borne the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation. COP28 provided an arena for addressing these concerns, calling for policies that respect and protect the ancestral lands of indigenous communities.

Crucially, COP28 sought not only to recognize the challenges but also to integrate



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indigenous perspectives into the broader discourse on climate solutions. The traditional knowledge held by indigenous peoples, honed through centuries of sustainable practices, became a valuable resource. The conference aimed to bridge the gap between scientific advancements and traditional wisdom, acknowledging that a harmonious future requires a fusion of both.

Pawanka Fund, dedicated to upholding the rights of indigenous peoples, played a crucial role in ensuring that the outcomes of COP28 translated into tangible actions. Advocating for the active involvement of indigenous communities in decision-making processes, the fund reinforced the importance of partnership and collaboration to foster a holistic approach to climate solutions.

As we reflect on COP28, it is evident that the dialogue initiated in Dubai must not end within the confines of conference rooms. The commitments made must translate into meaningful change at the grassroots level. Pawanka Fund, unwavering in its dedication, pledges to carry the momentum forward, amplifying indigenous voices, and fostering partnerships that honor the delicate balance between progress and preservation.

In the shifting sands of Dubai, a bridge was constructed – a bridge that connected worlds, united voices, and paved the way for a future where indigenous wisdom is not just acknowledged but integrated into the blueprint for a sustainable planet. The journey has just begun, and Pawanka Fund stands resolute in its commitment to walk this path hand in hand with indigenous communities, ensuring that no voice is left unheard in the pursuit of a harmonious coexistence with our planet.

Embracing Harmony

The Pawanka Fund's Impactful Presence at COP28

As the vibrant tapestry of cultures converged in Dubai for the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) from November 30 to December 13, 2023, Pawanka Fund stood at the forefront, weaving threads of indigenous wisdom into the global discourse on climate action. Pawanka Fund's commitment to championing the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples found resonance in the bustling halls of COP28. Our events during this pivotal gathering were not just moments; they were catalysts for change, sparking conversations that echoed the importance of indigenous

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voices in shaping sustainable solutions for our planet.

Join us on a journey through the events Pawanka Fund orchestrated during COP28, where dialogue, collaboration, and the celebration of indigenous perspectives merged to create a tapestry of hope for a harmonious future. Together, let's explore the impactful moments and initiatives that define Pawanka Fund's presence at COP28 – a beacon of advocacy, empowerment, and unity in the global pursuit of environmental stewardship.



In looking back at a remarkable session during COP28, Pawanka Fund is thrilled to share the insights garnered! Our Director, Myrna Cunningham, stood alongside Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, showcasing sustainable solutions tailored to their unique environments. Their invaluable wisdom and expertise played a pivotal role in discussions focused on integrating Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' leadership into effective climate action.

On December 2nd, Pawanka Fund provided backing for the Africa region deliberations at the Annual Indigenous Youth Roundtable, held within the framework of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples knowledge platform (LCIPP). This platform serves as a dedicated space for Indigenous youth and youth from local communities to exchange insights and contemplate on how their perspectives can be incorporated within UNFCCC processes and contribute to shaping national climate policies and actions.

During COP28, Pawanka Fund passionately addressed the pivotal role of land and cultural rights in climate solutions. Drawing insights from the experiences of the Indigenous Bunong and Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization, we highlighted the profound connection between indigenous perspectives and effective climate action. The Wayfinder Circle, an esteemed coalition of global Indigenous leaders dedicated to the Earth, was established by Pawanka Fund in collaboration with the Council of Elders of the World Union of Indigenous Spiritual Practitioners and Nia Tero.



Joan Carling, member of our Guiding Committee, addressed the 'Safeguarding Life, Rights, and Our Planet: Unmasking Global Crimes Against Land Defenders' event organized by IPRI and GATC. She emphasized that renewable energy initiatives predominantly impact Indigenous Peoples' lands, particularly with the increased demand for transition minerals. Joan highlighted the necessity of including Indigenous Peoples in these conversations to prevent violations. Additionally, she pointed out that only a small percentage of Indigenous Peoples' lands have secure tenure or titles, prompting collective action within this context.

Pawanka Fund stands shoulder to shoulder with Health In Harmony, leading the charge in championing the guidance of Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities to address the intertwined challenges of climate and biodiversity crises. In a collaborative effort at COP28, we proudly join forces with our esteemed partners in the Rainforest Exchange coalition, including Health In Harmony and Woodwell Climate Research Center. Our collective mission is to engage in Radical Listening, working alongside and financially supporting hundreds of communities as they contribute innovative solutions to safeguard and enhance Earth's tropical rainforests.

On December 9th, Pawanka Fund engaged in discussions with Health In Harmony under the theme 'Healing People, Ecosystems, and the Planet: Implementing Indigenous Knowledge and Planetary Health.' The dialogue spotlighted the knowledge systems and values of Indigenous Peoples, emphasizing their crucial role in sustaining ecosystems.

Nature and indigenous peoples must Be Central in All Decisions, Processes, and Outcomes at COP28

Dubai, Dec. 3, 2023— The following statement was issued by Sushil Raj of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Dr. Myrna Cunningham Kain of the Pawanka Fund, and Roberto Múkaro Agüeibaná Borrero of the Inclusive Conservation Academy

“We come from nature, depend on nature, and return to nature. Nature is central to our collective humanity, various cultures, identity, and future as human beings. Many Indigenous Peoples reflect this clearly through their ways of life, knowledge, and belief systems. We understand this deep link between biological and cultural diversity through our biological and social science, and through traditional ecological knowledge.

“Despite both its intrinsic and extrinsic value, we see a near absence of nature in recent COP decisions and on the COP28 negotiating agenda. Moreover, the rights of Indigenous Peoples under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other international human rights instruments have not seen significant reflection in past outcomes beyond cursory references.

“Healthy high-integrity ecosystems deliver critical services on which humanity depends, while the loss of ecological integrity is the primary driver of the three existential crises of climate, biodiversity and health. It is important to understand that Indigenous Peoples and high integrity ecosystems have deep reciprocal relationships. Their presence in and adjacent to high-integrity tropical, temperate, and boreal forests, high integrity peatlands, as well as marine areas, gives them a central role in climate regulation, prevention of biodiversity loss, and its rejuvenation. Conservation models that have people at the center, especially those with a strong cultural link to place are the most effective mechanisms by which we preserve high-integrity ecosystems.

“We cannot achieve our climate goals of keeping global warming at the 1.5-degree limit of the Paris Agreement without accelerating the phase out of fossil fuels, ensuring a just transition, and protecting nature through high integrity ecosystems for carbon capture. And we must secure the land and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples who contribute significantly to climate solutions. Even where these titles are secured there are multiple threats to their integrity and sustenance.



What needs to happen at this COP28?

“COP28 President Dr. Sultan Al Jaber emphasized with urgency the importance of a Global Stocktake (GST) with the highest ambition and concrete outcomes. Negotiations at the COP must therefore center human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the rights of nature to be transformative in protecting and sustaining our planetary health without which we cannot achieve the Paris Agreement.

“More specifically we need the full recognition and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

and other international human rights instruments. Countries must make their Nationally Determined Contributions processes fully inclusive at the national level. Nature’s diverse values which include non-market approaches have to be reflected in negotiations in order to achieve shared objectives for our common humanity.

“Simultaneously, the global community must mobilize significant funding to protect high integrity ecosystems with Indigenous Peoples as part of decision making on climate solutions.”

“On financing, there has to be stepped up and simplified funding modalities for Indigenous Peoples through their established

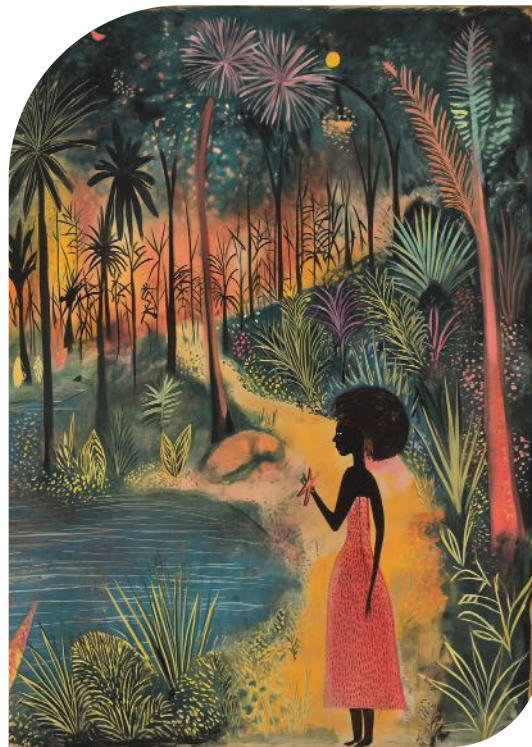
institutions and mechanisms, and self-determined priorities as they receive less than 1% of biodiversity and climate finance. There should also be direct access to adequate and sustainable funding for adaptation and mitigation through simplified mechanisms.

“On the issue of global equity we need to see commitments and the mobilization of the \$100 billion in finance to developing countries with a specific focus on Indigenous Peoples who are paying the price for the climate crisis but not getting adequate funding.

“And for the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy to be just and equitable, renewable energy projects must specifically respect the Indigenous Peoples’ right to free, prior and informed consent enshrined in UNDRIP and consider the obligations of parties under international human rights law.

“Following the recent agreement and looking ahead, the active participation of Indigenous Peoples in the decision making of the loss and damage fund, as well as direct and simplified funding structures are key. The mechanism for loss and damage should actively prevent loss and damage as a first priority, including the loss of culture and identity. Provisions should also include rapid response mechanisms for emergency situations.

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contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation but to the protection of the world’s biodiversity, the health of ecosystems, the delivery of support and ecosystem services, and lead to a more stable and equitable world. Otherwise all of us will lose.”

Inclusive Conservation Academy

The ICA seeks to build capacity in the areas of inclusive conservation, Indigenous-led conservation, and community-led conservation amongst Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as with conservation NGOs, government representatives, donors, academia, and the private sector.

Pawanka Fund

Pawanka is a global indigenous led fund that responds to the needs of indigenous peoples based on relationships of trust, networking and articulation between local and global processes. Pawanka strengthens indigenous peoples’ self-determined development through effective and strategic grant making by revitalizing traditional knowledge and learning systems, management investment at scale and advocacy to promote intercultural philanthropy that transforms power relations, and ancestral and spiritual values and practices of relationship between all beings.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

WCS combines the power of its zoos and an aquarium in New York City and a Global Conservation Program in more than 50 countries to achieve its mission to save wildlife and wild places. WCS runs the world’s largest conservation field program, protecting more than 50 percent of Earth’s known biodiversity; in partnership with governments, Indigenous People, Local Communities, and the private sector.

“**Healthy high-integrity ecosystems deliver critical services on which humanity depends, while the loss of ecological integrity is the primary driver of the three existential crises of climate, biodiversity and health.**”

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Tara Bandu, A tradition of sustainability

The Tara Bandu is waning, but with this project, the practice was revived to remind the community that it is integral to the control and management of their resources.

The opening ceremony had village chiefs, local authorities, forestry officers, and community leaders in attendance. The highest clan "Rai Oan" or Son of the Land led the ritual, assisted by "Uma Dato" or House of the Leader who implements the customary law, and "Lia Na'in" or Owner of the Words who, as a judicial body, maintains justice.

Mr. Filomino, the sub-district administrator was accompanied by elders and chief of villages in receiving a sacred hammer with which he rang the sacred bell to signify the opening of the ritual at the sacred place, the center of "sadanlulik." This is open only to the Rai Oan Clan during the ritual and taking video and photos is not allowed.

After the ritual, the community leaders signed the Tara Bandu regulations to legalize these. It was the community's first time to discuss the first written community regulations before adoption. The Makle'at or Forest man nominated six people to represent each village. He is tasked to look after the needs of the community and to report any violation to the Lia Na'in Clan elders who lead the process of investigation and mete out penalty or sanction to the violator



Tara Bandu regulations which include the list of prohibited materials are distributed to each clan leader, with a parcel of meat and rice. The hanging of lists at public places is a sign that prohibition started on the day of the ritual. Makle'at informs each clan leader when to publicly announce the end of the prohibition and Makle'at himself shall remove the hangings at public places. This will be the harvest season when the community can freely take anything from the forest.



The Tara Bandu is waning, but with this project, the practice was revived to remind the community that it is integral to the control and management of their resources. Tara Bandu reinforces and strengthens state laws that prevent degradation and encourages reforestation and sustainability. Additionally, it defines roles, responsibilities and ownership of the community for their own benefits. The Tara Bandu as a practice and traditional knowledge is transmitted to the younger generation for continuity. This intergenerational transfer of knowledge is an educational experience for the entire community and awareness raising for the youth and the general public. The active participation of the communities to secure and sustainably manage their resources was enhanced.



The next generation's voices are to be heard, such as Armando's who said, "As the young generation, we are now aware that we do have our own traditions that can be used to manage our resources without intervention from outsiders or government. The presence of state regulation is just to strengthen our tradition

and government officials should recognize and involve the existing traditional governance system for the same purpose." The Forestry officer acknowledged the clan's role when he said that "...every clan has a clear role and responsibility in carrying out and ensuring implementation of Tara Bandu regulation. This indicates the existence of a traditional government system and sense of ownership for their own benefits." The elders' views were expressed by Raimundo who stated that, "We have an obligation to share our culture and practices to the young generation although most young people are not really keen to know such traditions. We have the video documentation as an alternative to share these to them."

The rains, distance, and bad road condition may have prevented other communities from attending, but they know they have the Tara Bandu tradition to hold onto for the protection of their resources



The Tara Bandu ceremony as the focal activity of the Documentation and Preservation of Indigenous Peoples' Culture and Practices Project was successfully implemented by Centro Juventud Covalima in Fatumea sub-district, Covalima in Timor Leste. A media team produced a video documentary which was one output of the project. The project was implemented on February 11, 2017 with the support of PAWANKA Fund.

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Everyday Actions, Lasting Impact: Empowering Individuals post-COP28

In the wake of the transformative discussions and agreements at COP28, the question resonating in our minds is, "How can we, as individuals, contribute to the realization of these global commitments in our daily lives?" Pawanka Fund encourages everyone to recognize the power within each person to drive change, advocating for a sustainable and harmonious future.



1. Cultivate Conscious Consumption:

One impactful way to contribute is by adopting a mindset of conscious consumption. Be mindful of your choices in daily purchases, opting for sustainable and locally sourced products. Supporting businesses committed to environmental responsibility creates a ripple effect that aligns with the goals set at COP28.

2. Embrace Eco-Friendly Practices:

Incorporating eco-friendly practices into your routine is key. Reduce, reuse, and recycle to minimize waste. Consider sustainable transportation options, such as walking, cycling, or using public transit. Small choices collectively contribute to a significant reduction in our carbon footprint.

3. Advocate for Change:

Raise your voice in support of sustainable policies. Engage with local communities, or-

ganizations, and governments to advocate for the implementation of COP28 agreements at a grassroots level. Collective advocacy has the power to bring about policy changes that align with global environmental goals.

4. Educate and Inspire:

Knowledge is a catalyst for change. Educate yourself and others about the implications of climate change and the importance of the COP28 agreements. Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to adopt sustainable practices and be part of the solution.

5. Foster Biodiversity in Your Space:

Even in urban environments, individuals can contribute to biodiversity. Plant native species, create green spaces, and support initiatives that focus on preserving and enhancing local biodiversity. These actions mirror the commitments made at COP28 to protect our planet's rich ecosystems.

6. Support Indigenous Initiatives:

Recognize and support the rights and initiatives of Indigenous Peoples. Learn about their traditions, support Indigenous-owned businesses, and engage with organizations like Pawanka Fund that work towards preserving indigenous knowledge and fostering sustainable practices.

7. Foster Resilience in Your Community:

Build resilience in your community by fostering a sense of interconnectedness. Encourage collaboration on local climate initiatives, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development projects. Community resilience is a cornerstone of global environmental sustainability.

By embracing these everyday actions, we can collectively amplify the impact of the agreements made at COP28. Pawanka Fund believes that every individual has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change. Together, let us turn the commitments of COP28 into a living reality, weaving a sustainable and harmonious future for generations to come.

Know the initiatives we support

The Pacific

Network for the Indigenous Peoples Solomon (NIPS)

Promoting Traditional knowledge of food Preservation-Temotu Traditional Food (Nambo)—Threats and opportunities

We have previously with good results carry out project activities; documentation and experimental workshop where men, women, girls, underrepresented and diverse groups gained traditional knowledge transfer from elderly to inherit the traditional knowledge of preservation methods for food security. Now we want to spread the knowledge of the results internally and to the outside world, as well as to make a supplementary survey where we, analyzes, and interviews, look mainly at: raw materials, food sovereignty, health, women, traditional knowledge, gender equality, climate change, quality work and development potential. It will form the basis of the grassroots plan for Temotu traditional Food called “Nambo.”



North America

Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance - NAFSA

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The Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA) is dedicated to restoring the Indigenous food systems that support Indigenous self-determination, wellness, cultures, values, communities, economies, languages, families, and rebuild relationships with the land, water, plants and animals that sustain us.



Africa

Rupa Farmers Self Help Group

Improved food security and enhanced livelihood for Oromo people in Northern Kenya

The proposed project aims to identify and bring together local farmers (men and women) in the Merti region of Isiolo County, Northern Kenya in order to support their modern and traditional farming initiatives and techniques, which will consequently promote food security and enhance the livelihood of the community and Rupa Farmers Self Help Group as well. It will also promote knowledge exchange between farmers in the region and outside, and as a result enhance cohesion and co-existence. School children will participate to learn the practice of both traditional and modern farming techniques from elders and farmers, an activity that also will enhance knowledge transmission.



Asia

Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand

Promotion and extension of traditional plant species for food security and income generation to sustain indigenous communities in Thailand

By exploring the indigenous knowledge and identity, we can gain lessons-learned and build trust; along with a wider network, to enhance mutual understanding and goals for the sustainability of our future. Especially in Haruku Island, Central Maluku, we believe that Eliza Marthen Kissya widely known as “OmEli”, an inspiring eco-leader, trailblazer, yet a poem writer and occasional singer, can develop and further generate public awareness and interests toward ethnic-conservation and recently his role in fighting high tides as negative impact of climate change. We are thus committed to cover its finding and information that ensure high-quality insight throughout capacity development programs and documentary film production.



The Arctic

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia

Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia

The National Indigenous Organization of Colombia is an organization representing the Indigenous peoples of Colombia, who, according to the 2018 census, comprise some 1,905,617 people or approximately 3.7% of the population. The organization was founded at the first National Indigenous Congress in 1982.

Their mission is to strengthen and support the Self-Governance of indigenous peoples and their exercise of authority in order to assume the management of their territories with unity, autonomy and dignity, as well as the awareness and defence of their human and collective rights.