



PAWANKA  
FUND | 10  
Years

## Narrative **report**

- Rockefeller Foundation •
- RSF Social Finance •
- Pawanka Fund •

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**a. Project name:**

Elevating Indigenous People's Regenerative Food System: Indigenous Food System Solution Lab (Pilot Project)

**b. Name and address of the institution requesting the fund:**

RSF Social Finance /Pawanka Fund , P.O. Box 2007, San Francisco, CA.94126.

**c. Name and address of local (regional) organizations that are engaged in the project:**

- Meli Bees Network gUG, Im Grund 26, 88416 Ochsenhausen, Germany/Rede Meli Brasil, Acampamento Frei Henri, PA275, Km 46, 68523-000 Curionopolis – PA, Brasil.
- Ocean Alive Foundation, Vipingo Beach, Vipingo – Kilifi County, Kenya.
- Village Farmers Initiative, Nmoutakwu Quarter, Umuonuora Mmiata – Anam, Anambra West LGA, Anambra State, Nigeria.
- Foundation of Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (Friend), P.O. Box D623, Lautoka, Fiji.
- Prairie Food System Vision Network, University of Manitoba, Natural System Agriculture Lab, Department of Plant Science , Faculty of Agricultural and Food Science, University of Manitoba, 66 Dafoe Road , University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 2N2.

**d. Mentor organization.**

Pawanka Fund is an Indigenous-Led striving to support and empower Indigenous peoples around the globe. It was created as the Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning Fund in September 2014 in the midst of the United Nations World Conference on Indigenous peoples. "Pawanka" is a Miskitu word meaning "growing and strengthening".

The Pawanka Fund promotes and protects traditional knowledge, well-being, rights and self-determined development. Pawanka awards grants to community-led organizations for the recovery and revitalization of indigenous knowledge and learning systems in seven sociocultural regions of the world: North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Arctic, Pacific, and Russia. In this partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, Pawanka Fund assumes the role of mentor to the five organizations that have made up the cohort.

**e. Amount of grant being requested from The Rockefeller Foundation in U.S. Dollars:**

**\$498,913.00**

# Narrative **report**

## 1. Executive summary

This grant provided funding for a pilot project that sought to find opportunities for the development of regenerative food system solutions emerging from indigenous peoples and local communities in 5 landscapes: Kenya, Brazil, Nigeria, Fiji, and Canada. In these countries, innovative ideas have emerged that challenge traditional food system models, mainly by incorporating elements of traditional governance, and indigenous ancestral knowledge.

For 18 months, the representatives of five members organizations referred to as Cohorts pursued innovation through "solutions labs/hubs" to improve indigenous and local food systems that focus on regenerative agriculture. Cohort members used indigenous knowledge and their local skills and experience to implement and adapt their solutions. The "solution labs" become living classrooms for peer-to-peer knowledge transfer, through effective methods of deep listening, trust, and consensus building, and the development of collective solutions in such a way that a participatory, equitable process guarantees fair and representative of the rich cultures and traditional ways of the communities.

The project itself intended to strengthen mechanisms for shared learning, which benefits the collective by testing solutions that allow expanding the capacity of each member of the cohort and thus reaching regenerative and climate-resilient agriculture options. The use of the media in each country to spread knowledge about food systems was relevant.

The element of spirituality facilitated the revitalization of indigenous food systems that restore physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health; strengthen intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge on holistic food systems; restore ecosystems with indigenous knowledge; closing the gap between supply and demand for affordable, sustainable, climate-smart and nutritious food; and re-imagine food systems to make them more resilient for the future.

Another interesting aspect of the pilot project is the organizational structure that was established for its implementation. In this project, we have the Rockefeller Foundation providing the financial resource, RSF Social Finance as an intermediary actor, Pawanka Fund as executor, and the five cohort organizations. All of them formed an important and innovative alliance that produced excellent results.

## 2. Time period that the report cover

The project covered 18 months from November 2022 to April 2024.

## 3. Activities carried out and lessons learned

Below are the lessons learned by each of the cohorts, in each of the target countries.

### 3.1 Brazil - Meli Bees Network

**Based on the project report and information shared on the website for Meli Bees Network solution lab “Pollinating Regeneration” in Brazil..**

Meli Bees Network gUG (Baden-Württemberg, Germany)/ Associação Rede Meli Brasil (Maranhão/Pará, Brazil) is a collective of over 60 indigenous and local communities initiative by a new generation of Amazonian leaders collaborating to support regenerative practices and connect communities in endangered areas with the tools needed for land and people to flourish through impact network, a platform to engage and share knowledge. The intermediate monitoring report that the MBN are working with are the Indigenous and local communities in order to overcome barriers in accessing culturally tailored support and in generating sustainable income, limiting their engagement in capacity-building initiatives.

During 14 months, the project focused on strengthening technical knowledge in agroforestry, meliponiculture and project management while at the same time strengthening the culture and traditional knowledges.

#### **Work topics**

As a way of working with a positive attitude and in search of solutions, four topics were carried out:

- Fellowship: financial resources were delivered to encourage commitment and participation in project activities.
- Meliponiculture: The production and extraction of honey is a activity rooted in indigenous cosmology, which helps the practice of traditional medicine and maintains ecological balance.
- Agroforestry: As expert native agroforesters, they will claim food sovereignty while protecting biodiversity.
- Management: project leadership is promoted for its successful implementation, within the framework of self-determination, sustainable cooperation.

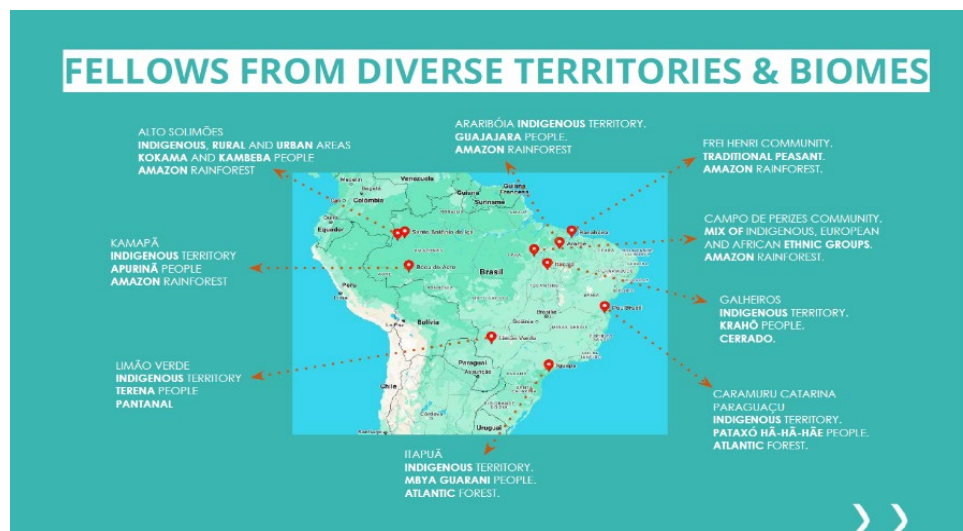
- Culture: The exchange of stories, tales, myths, legends is sought to strengthen languages, spirituality and promote ethnocultural appreciation and self-esteem.

### The facilitators

They were people who have solid scientific, technical and field experience, rooted in indigenous heritage, and they also have a deep cultural sensitivity, which allowed them to guide the fellows on this transformative journey.

### Participants

The participants came from nine representative locations in the country as shown on the map.



More than 60 indigenous communities and local communities participated, including 3,617 people actively participating, where 79% of spending was dedicated to paying for services to the communities and provided within the territories.

### Scalability

The adaptable online work format and its Pollinator Fellows have acted as multipliers, demonstrating the scalable potential of this program to other regions of Brazil. Additionally, we are expanding the reach of the program to Chiapas and the Huasteca region of Mexico, as well as the Puna region of Peru. Seven projects have already been awarded again, but the decision was made to grant smaller projects, so that a greater number of communities with little experience in development of projects could benefit from the opportunity.

## 3.2 Canada - The Prairie Food System Vision Network (Canada)

Based on the Mid-Term Reporting of the Prairie Food System Solution Hubs Project, they point out the following:

- They have organized a growing number of collaborators to transform food systems and are making a new narrative of these systems.

- They have prepared a map with a system approach in which they reflect 140 lines of action with the participation of 40 stakeholders and six (6) action areas.
- The 140 lines of action among which have nodes on advanced mechanized agriculture, conservation measures, carbon sequestration, regenerative agroecological agriculture, layers of land tenure, environment, decolonization, governance, education and preventive health.
- The six areas of action are:
  - Economy: "Sustainable agriculture means maintenance first: attending to the health of the soil, water, plants and animals, before paying attention to yield and production."
  - Culture: The landscapes we create match and reflect the cultural landscapes of society.
  - Diets: Eating is an act of agriculture.
  - Politics: The central place in every culture should be occupied by agriculture.
  - Technology: The global vision of technology cannot come from the technology itself; it must be informed by essential ideals, spiritual vision, and participatory practices that promote the common good.
  - Environment: The proper use of land does not pose a technical or economic problem, but mainly a metaphysical problem.

The network hopes to realize a vision over a 30-year period, to strengthen the network's structures; identify signals and trends; start a social innovation center.

They have also created a social innovation laboratory, where they combine multisector resources to solve "wicked" social problems. These spaces allow multiple stakeholders to work together over longer periods of time to find solutions, test and evaluate progress, so that together they are protagonists of building better communities.

They also have "Solution Centers", with the aim of solving complex challenges such as the transformation of food systems that requires more than occasional consultations to focus and maintain creative attention on the identification of challenges and solutions.

For now they have organized three solution centers.

### 3.3 Fiji Island - Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND)

Based on the mid-term report of the Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot Project, it is indicated that its activities are:

- **Organic Farming Practices using traditional methods.** The trainings were focused on: the benefits of organic farming, how to make organic fertilizer at home, the importance of mulching, basics of organic farming practices, soil improvement practices, pest management, negative effects of using chemical fertilizer on human and environmental health. A backyard garden demonstration using a 9 x 9 model of farming will be conducted in the next quarter. A total, of 108 farmers from the Abaca & Vatutavui villages attended the training.

- **Training on Food Security & Food Preservation methods.** This demonstration training showed how the communities could make use of the available natural resources when in season and abundance or season. The methods of drying fruits such as banana, pawpaw, and pineapple for snacks, use of all root crops to make gluten-free flours, making spices such as dried ginger powder, curry leaves, and turmeric powder, making herbal teas such as lemongrass, tamale, cinnamon tea, layaway (another example of local ginger) and herbal powders such as pawpaw, moringa and neem. The team also demonstrated the use of left-over root crops to make roti, biscuits, noodles, and other healthy nutritious snacks. A total of 70 participants attended food processing training.
- **Access to Clean Water for Traditional Food System Setup – Water Tanks.** The team conducted participatory Learning Action training with both of the communities where they both identified the possible solutions to their water issue. For the community in Abaca, the team has been working with the Water Authority of Fiji in trying to set up water filters and piping for clean drinking water. For the community in Vatutavui, the team has been liaising closely with solar companies to see the possibilities of installing solar pumps and water tanks.
- **Set up solar panels.** Solar streetlights have been set up already for two communities.

### 3.4 Kenya - Oceans Alive Foundation

The following notes are based on the progress report of the **Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot** - Sustainable, Climate Resilient Traditional Marine Fish Food Systems, Established in Kilifi, Kenya project, executed by Oceans Alive, during the period November 8, 2022 to September 15, 2023.

The summary of the activities carried out and the achievements achieved are:

- Various activities have been carried out within the framework of the “Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot Project” in Kilifi, Kenya. This includes the revitalization of traditional marine conservation practices and the promotion of ecotourism, through which significant progress has been made in areas such as baseline analysis, executive assistance for updating constitutions, and demarcating jurisdictions.
- In addition, the capacity to patrol Tengefu areas has been developed and signage and storytelling materials have been prepared to encourage ecotourism.

### 3.5 Nigeria - Village Farmers Initiative (VFI)

Project: Saving Lost Landraces Within Community Biodiversity Management CBM

The VFI in its progress report indicates that:

- Nigeria's Village Farmers Initiative (VFI) is working with smallholder farmers to generate crop varieties that adapt to their local microclimates.



- VFI, in collaboration with crop improvement institutes of NASC and IITA centers in the country, has helped organize farmers for participatory varietal selection (PVS).
- Small farmers received released lines of preferred crops, in this case peanuts, yams and cassava, for evaluation on their farms and in indigenous communities.

### 3.6 Pawanka fund (Nicaragua)

Throughout this initiative, Pawanka Fund developed a mentoring role in which a reciprocal and co-laborative relationship was established to accompany the members of the cohort, with the purpose of growing and developing joint learning for strengthening and development of capabilities. The basis of the mentoring was the applicability of the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically on the right to: self-determination in the identification and assignment of priorities for economic, social, cultural and environmental development in their territories and communities; the right to prior, free and informed consultation, which must be taken into account by partners; as well as the right to full and effective participation.

Pawanka used his mentoring model and has held several mentorship sessions including participating in the monthly meeting with the Cohorts and accompanying them in the development of their proposals and in meeting the deliverables. As well it coordinated their engagement with the Regen10 team with the small grants to develop stories from participating solution labs.

Pawanka facilitated the timely submission of deliverables including additional products that have all been approved by the Rockefeller Foundation.

The result of the mentoring was the development of a guide for micro-grants and the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan by Pawanka to guide the use of the cohorts. The Pawanka team provided guidance, including the development of a PowerPoint platform for the Regen 10 Secretariat. A workshop organized by the Pawanka Fund generated a concept note, a digital platform outline, the definition and establishment of the Cohort network "LIFT Network (Local and Indigenous Food Systems Transformation)", a dedicated group of organizations deeply connected to indigenous and local communities in Nigeria, Brazil, Kenya, Canada and Fiji.

These organizations have a mission to strengthen indigenous and regenerative food systems while building a pipeline for future investable solutions and ensuring processes are equitable, fair, and representative of the rich cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, Pawanka Fund points out that the importance of this partnership offers opportunities for mutual learning that allows future initiatives to be visualized and strengthened.

## 4. Challenges and how they were addressed

### 4.1 Brazil - Meli Bees Network (Brazil)

This project shows an important advance and great impact on the issue of honey bees production and collection, but also within the framework of traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

### 4.2 Canada - The Prairie Food System Vision Network (Canada)

Do not report inconveniences in the development of your activities.

### 4.3 Fiji - Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND) (Fiji)

It seems to be progressing well and they continue with the implementation of the project.

### 4.4 Kenya - Oceans Alive Foundation (Kenya)

Despite progress, the project has faced challenges such as internal political disputes and delays due to the need for diplomatic consultations and collaborative strategies. Problems related to beach administration management and regulations have also been mentioned.

The Oceans Alive organization has proposed working more closely with beach management units and the county government to establish closed areas that protect fish and turtle habitats. Additionally, they will document experiences to promote best practices and share with the global community.

### 4.5. Nigeria - Village Farmers Initiative VFI

During the first planting season, there was an interruption in the movement of people and goods caused by the political situation in Nigeria, however this was overcome as inputs were found and stored within the locality and legumes and ripening grains were grown early, which also helped farmers sustain their livelihoods during the three-month period. Another situation we faced was the evacuation of agricultural products during the peak of the rainy season, under which we provided logistical support by providing ships to mitigate the risks of loss and damage during floods and to transport agricultural products from the farms to the collection centers and markets.

## 5. Compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement

In all cases, the implementing partners are complying with the agreed terms. Some advance faster than others, however, everyone tries to achieve their goals in the allotted time.

## 6. Annex 1

Country	Name of Organization	Project title
Brazil	Meli Bees Network	Pollinating Regeneration
Canada	Treaty People Prairie Food System Vision Network Inc.	Prairie Food System Solution Hub
Fiji	Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND)	Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot Project
Kenya	Oceans Alive Foundation	Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot Project. <i>Sustainable, Climate Resilient Traditional Marine Fish Food Systems, Established in Kilifi, Kenya.</i>
Nigeria	Village Farmers Initiative	Saving Lost Landraces within Community Biodiversity Management CBM
Nicaragua	Pawanka fund	Indigenous Food System Solution Lab Pilot Project



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