

The Indigenous-Led Funds Network of the Global South

Financing Self-Determined Indigenous Peoples Solutions

Ips are Right-holders and key actors in addressing the climate & biodiversity crises and advancing sustainable development for all

Why Direct Funding to Indigenous Peoples Matters

Indigenous Peoples are the most effective stewards of the planet's ecosystems, safeguarding forests, wetlands, and grasslands that store vast amounts of carbon and sustain global biodiversity.

Yet, Indigenous Peoples receive less than 1% of global climate aid — and most of that is channelled through intermediaries using complex, top-down mechanisms that rarely reach communities on the ground, making positive contributions, but often control access and conditions. Most Indigenous Peoples live in poverty and struggle to access funding to defend their territories. If our communities are empowered, they stand stronger to resist pressures from deforestation, mining and industrial agriculture.

Ensuring direct, flexible and sustained funding to Indigenous Peoples is not an act of charity. It is a strategic investment in proven climate and biodiversity outcomes, rooted in justice and self-determination.



Indigenous-Led Funds (ILFs) are financing mechanisms created and governed by Indigenous Peoples. We channel resources directly to communities, in ways that are transparent, efficient and aligned with community priorities.

ILFs exist in Africa, Asia, Latin America and beyond, with diverse structures and scopes — some territorial or national, others regional or global. Some are focused on women; some have joined efforts with local communities. Our differences in scope and focus constitute a strength, as we can complement each other.

ILFs partner with philanthropies, bilateral donors, and multilateral agencies. Collectively, we have supported more than 2,000 Indigenous-led initiatives across 80 countries.

With donor partnerships, ILF is poised to scale rapidly, projecting USD 70 million in annual direct disbursements by 2026, scaling up by leveraging its positioning as a global network reaching over 1000 indigenous peoples, with contributions from all participating Funds. And are projected to reach $150 million in annual disbursements by 2030.

Together, ILFs form a growing movement that is transforming the global funding landscape, ensuring resources reach those who safeguard the Earth's critical ecosystems.

Indigenous-Led Funds Network of the Global South



GLOBAL
- Pawanka Fund
- Ayni Fund

INTER REGIONAL
- Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

REGIONAL
- NAAPU Indigenous Women Fund

REGIONAL
- Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS)

SUB-REGIONAL
- Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM)
- Ruk'u'x Ba'tam

SUB-REGIONAL
- Eneto Solidarity Fund
- REPALEAC Fund

NATIONAL
- Nusantara Fund (Indonesia)
- Nusi Indigenous Fund (Brazil)

TERRITORIAL
- Kipok Fund (Kenya)

TERRITORIAL
- Podaali Fund (Brazil)
- Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro (Brazil)

Guiding Principles:

ILFs are rooted in Indigenous values of reciprocity, solidarity and self-determination and guided by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Core principles include:

- **Direct access:** Removing barriers between funders and communities.
- **Indigenous governance:** Decisions made by and for Indigenous Peoples.
- **Flexibility and trust:** Adapted to local contexts and respecting cultural and linguistic diversity.
- **Participatory accountability:** Using storytelling, traditional knowledge and community-defined indicators.
- **Equity and inclusion:** : Centering Indigenous women and youth as leaders.
- **Alignment with local processes:** Reinforcing, not replacing, community initiatives.



Our common principles

Rooted in ancestral knowledge and guided by Indigenous Peoples' values of reciprocity, solidarity, and self-determination, our Indigenous-led Funds represent a movement toward equitable and inclusive finance:

We ensure communities' direct access to resources

We remove barriers between funders and communities. Resources are channeled directly to our communities, to work on priorities defined by their own realities, lands, and visions.

We guarantee Indigenous governance and decision-making

Funds are governed and managed by our communities — ensuring that power, accountability, and decision-making remain in their hands.

We are based on Indigenous Peoples' practices of reciprocity, complementarity, and sharing

Our funding approaches reflect the relational and collective values that sustain our societies.

We tailor grants and approaches to the specific needs of our communities

Each community is unique. We adapt to local realities and ensure resources meet real needs and aspirations.

We apply participatory and flexible grantmaking

Application format, requirements and processes are simple, accessible, community-driven and respectful of cultural and linguistic diversity.

We apply participatory assessment and monitoring tools

We are redefining accountability — using storytelling, narrative reporting, community-defined indicators and traditional knowledge systems to measure our impact.

We value communities' inputs and knowledge systems

Indigenous knowledge is not a supplement; it is the foundation of effective, sustainable solutions.

We prioritize women and youth

We center the voices of Indigenous women and youth, recognizing their vital role in sustaining cultural continuity, social innovation, and territorial governance.

We complement and strengthen local processes

Our work amplifies existing community initiatives and movements, ensuring alignment and mutual reinforcement rather than duplication or imposition.

We ensure adherence to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

We ensure meaningful participation and free, prior and informed consent of communities in all the steps and phases of collaboration

Our approach ensures funding is effective, culturally grounded and sustainable.

What Indigenous-led Funds Support:

ILFs provide holistic support in response to communities' rights, needs and priorities. Key elements are:

- Self-determined development and governance
- Land and territorial rights
- Climate resilience and biodiversity protection
- Cultural revitalization and traditional knowledge
- Women's and youth leadership
- Advocacy, capacity building, and movement strengthening
- Crisis and humanitarian response for displaced communities

Key Challenges:

Despite our legitimacy and proven record of delivering impact on the ground, ILFs face systemic barriers:

- Limited resources: Demand far exceeds available funding.
- Restrictive donor systems: Complex eligibility and compliance processes exclude many Indigenous organizations.
- Insufficient flexible and emergency funding: Few mechanisms support rapid responses to crises.
- Limited recognition: Donors often overlook ILFs' proven track record in favor of external intermediaries.
- Legal and political obstacles: Shrinking civic space and restrictive regulations hinder Indigenous access to finance.

Our impact

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES VOICES

Ayni Fund, Nepal:

Indigenous Women in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Nepal, implemented by the National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF). "Before NIWF's activities, most women in our community were not aware of climate change issues. Some younger women had heard about it but couldn't relate. Through the trainings, we started connecting what we learned with the changes we saw in our surroundings. We also realized the importance of passing on our Indigenous knowledge to the younger generation. Seeing Indigenous women leading trainings and dialogues with government inspired us to believe in ourselves," Kamala Jimi, Yakkha community, Dharmadevi Municipality, Nepal.



Ayni Fund, Kenya:



Contribution of Indigenous Women, Traditional Knowledge and the conservation and customary use of biodiversity: "Indigenous Women from remote areas are using their traditional knowledge to protect biodiversity, preserving food, medicinal plants, and water, and ensuring the well-being of their families and communities. Biodiversity is life for us; it's our language, our medicine, and our identity. This project helped us connect those values to global policy and made us proud to see our practices recognized and respected."mi, Yakkha community, Dharmadevi Municipality, Nepal.

Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, India

Empowering Tribal Youth for Nutritional Food Security and Income Enhancement in Koraput District of South Odisha by Pragati Koraput. After various awareness-raising campaigns, people started collecting traditional seeds and storing them for future use. Pragati's efforts have engaged the youth of Koraput, and as a result, more people are choosing farming as a way to support their families. "We used to buy seeds from the market and spend money, but now we do traditional seeding ourselves, taking care of theplants", Jema Thalia, youth from Paraja tribe in Jhollaguda, Koraput.



Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, Vietnam



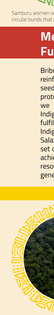
"...I am old but I will not give up my traditional occupation", Trieu Tho Chung, a Dao embroidery expert in Bac Kan, Vietnam. Behind her is her mother who she learned from. They are part of an IPAF-supported embroidery group. Together, they continue to embroider as they diversify their products with intricate Dao embroidery patterns and designs while advancing skills and other knowledge.

Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility, Suriname



Wayana Indigenous Biocultural Guardianship and Conservation of the Wayana Territory. The Mulokot Foundation, established by the leaders of the Wayana community, developed a map of their territory, showcasing its rich biodiversity, freshwater resources and cultural heritage. Building on the mapping exercise, the project support Indigenous land use management and biocultural monitoring to manage and protect the territory.

Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund, Nepal



The Raute are the only nomadic communities among the Indigenous Nationalities in Nepal. The Raute are on the verge of extinction and will not be able to sustain their identity without a dedicated policy or program to ensure their self-determination and preservation of their habitats and settlements within their specific geography. In solidarity with the nomadic Indigenous Raute community, the Centre for Indigenous Persons with Disability, Research and Development (CIPDRD) mobilized support from IPAS to equip 45 Raute households with high-quality tents, as shelter from the cold. The Emergency Tent Distribution Program was not about physical relief but also symbolic. It demonstrated how Indigenous persons with disabilities, often sidelined, can lead, coordinate, and deliver aid in times of crisis. "This is more than aid; it is recognition of our dignity. Our families now have a place to rest and recover", Raute woman.

Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund, Philippines



In Mindanao, the Lumad schools had been closed for months, as an act of repression by the government. Through a national advocacy and solidarity campaign, opening of alternative learning spaces and provision of pencils, books and culturally grounded learning materials, more than 50'000 individuals got involved in defending the Lumad's right to education. Storytelling, rituals and traditional songs inspired participation, by grounding the struggle in identity and heritage. As expressed by one elder: "Our culture is our weapon, our shield and our compass".

Kipok Fund, Kenya



Samburu women work to restore their land through re-seeding and semi circular bunds that assist to hold water when it rains. © Kipok Fund

The Twala Cultural Manyatta collectively steward 40 acres of community land, fostering progress and livelihoods. At the Twala agro-ecology farm, Samburu women work to restore their land through re-seeding and semicircular bunds that assist to hold water when it rains. This improves soil health. With 20 beehives and financial literacy training, we transformed sustainable beekeeping into a model for uplifting lives and protecting nature", Twala Women's Group.

Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, Costa Rica

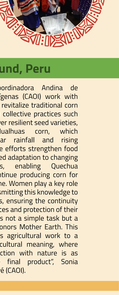


Photo: Randy Salazar.
© Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano.

Bribri Indigenous communities are strengthening and reinforcing food security through the promotion of ancestral seed production. "Within our history, Sibö God left us as protectors of nature, as the first line of defense for everything we have here. So that is our main objective as Bribri Indigenous people; if one protects the culture, one is also fulfilling a duty or an obligation, we could say that we have as Indigenous people, which is to take care of our territory", Randy Salazar. "We have even done much more work than what we set out in the projects, and I believe that is one of the great achievements of Indigenous peoples: always leaving a resource into a multiplier for other opportunities, which generates a greater impact in the territories"

Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, Guatemala

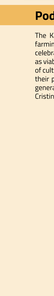


Photo: Cooperativa Unión Huista.
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Training to produce organic fertilizers and construction of a biofactory for organic fertilizers in the community of Nueva Trinidad, which work on 452 hectares of coffee plantations and protect around 860 hectares of forest. "We are safeguarding more than 12 'caballerías' (860 hectares) that we have to protect, which is what the government of this country should truly value. It benefits the whole world because these mountains are the lungs of the world, providing the air we breathe", Damian Lopez, chairperson and legal representative of the Cooperative Unión Huista.

Naapu Indigenous Women Fund, Kenya



A trust-based fund that directly resources Indigenous women-led initiatives across Kenya. It strengthens women's leadership, climate resilience, economic empowerment, protection of women and girls, biodiversity conservation, and community wellbeing. By providing flexible funding, the Fund enables grassroots women to drive sustainable, locally led solutions and transformative change.

Nusantara Fund, Indonesia

In the last 2 years, Nusantara Fund has delivered USD 3.3 million for 545 initiatives (per initiative: USD 6,000) spread across 35 provinces in Indonesia, and has impacted 6 million hectares of land, with 1 million hectares mapped, 1.3 million rights secured, and 3.7 million hectares restored. Also impacted more than 5 million people.

One of them is the initiative that was led by the Indigenous Tinonda community in Banggai Islands, Central Sulawesi, which mapped 7,474 hectares of customary territory, providing a basis to challenge spatial planning policies that marginalize Indigenous rights and support their application for formal recognition by local government.

Pawanka Fund, Bangladesh

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, climate change directly undermines traditional agricultural practices and food systems of Indigenous Peoples, leading to critical impacts on food security and livelihoods. These impacts are countered, using profound traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that forms the bedrock of their resilience. Initiatives on water and watershed management, sustainable crop diversity, seed preservation and organic farming builds sustainable solutions that respect traditional knowledge and local ecosystems.

Pawanka Fund, Honduras

The Lenca women of Asociación Flores de Café are revitalizing their traditional farming practices, which improve the food production systems on their farms, enhance biodiversity conservation, and increase family income through community-based sales. This initiative strengthens community resilience and autonomy, while placing women at the forefront of climate adaptation.

Pawanka Fund, Tanzania

The Women and Youth Rising project, implemented by PINGO's Forum facilitated our youth in mapping their own future—using new technology to protect ancient lands, proving that progress and tradition can walk hand in hand". When the youth stand with the elders and women stand with the men, our unity becomes unbreakable and our voice unstoppable. "Sharing our story with the world through PAWANKA taught us we are not alone—many hearts across the globe beat with the same hope and determination". "From the savannas of Tanzania to faraway forests, our voices join a global chorus of Indigenous peoples rising as one."

Pawanka Fund, Peru

In Peru, the Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI) work with Quechua women to revitalize traditional roun cultivation. Through collective practices such as mingas, they recover resilient seed varieties, including the Huallhuas corn, which withstands irregular rainfall and rising temperatures. These efforts strengthen food security and improved adaptation to changing climate conditions, enabling Quechua communities to continue producing corn for both food and income. Women play a key role in applying and transmitting this knowledge to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of Indigenous practices and protection of their rights. "Agriculture is not a simple task but a sacred ritual that honors Mother Earth. This perspective elevates agricultural work to a level of profound cultural meaning, where respect and connection with nature is important as the final product", Sonia Astuhuamán Paradavé (CAOI).

Podáali Fund, Brazil

The Kamanaus Digital Ancestral Memory House is transforming ancestral knowledge about farming, fishing, and healing technologies into digital memory that can be shared, relearned, and celebrated. Through the House fosters identity pride and continuity of the traditional ways of life as viable and necessary paths for the present and future. It is a tool to combat isolation and the loss of cultural references among Indigenous youth. "We listen to the elders who heard the stories from their parents and grandparents and now pass on what they've learned from life to the younger generation. It's a way to record something that was never written down and long forgotten," Cristina Oliveira, project leader.

ANNEX 1
Indigenous-Led Funds Network of the Global South
List of Indigenous Funds in the Network

n°	Fund Name Institution Website	Region/s	Founding/Hosting organization	Description	Website
1	Ayni Fund	Global	International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)	Supports Indigenous women globally to strengthen leadership, rights, and cultural resilience.	http://www.fimi-iwf.org/
2	Pawanka Fund	Global	Indigenous-led, cross-multiple regions	A participatory funding mechanism supporting Indigenous-led mobilization worldwide.	https://pawankafund.org
3	Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with Indigenous Peoples' organizations and Tebtebba and Tambuli Women Fund	Provides small grants to Indigenous Peoples' projects through regional implementing partners.	https://www.ifad.org/en/indigenous-tribal-peoples-assistance-facility
4	Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPSF)	Regional (Asia)	Indigenous organizations and networks in Asia, led by Asian countries	Strengthens Indigenous-led movements in Asia.	https://ipasofund.org
5	TAMWOU Indigenous Women Fund	Regional (Africa)	Tamburu Women's Trust	Supports Indigenous women's leadership and sustainable development in Africa.	https://tamburuwomenstrust.org/
6	Icaiko Solidarity Fund	Sub-regional (Mesoamerica)	ARPAC, Tebtebba, Cipriaa Community Fund, Tuun, The Federal Women Fund, Alliance for Traditional Ecosystems and Cultures, Cerona	A collaborative initiative by Indigenous organizations in Mexico, Central and supporting Indigenous Peoples by embracing their traditional knowledge and Governance Systems	https://arevosolidarityfund.org/en/
7	Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM)	Sub-regional (Central America)	Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB)	Strengthens territorial governance and forest protection in Mesoamerica	https://fondomesoamericano.org
8	NEPALENC Fund	Sub-regional (Central Africa)	Dynamics Indigenous Organizations and Local Communities for Sustainable Development (DOMLOD)	The NEPALENC Fund supports Indigenous and local communities in the Congo Basin rainforest and responds to an urgent need to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are not only	www.nepalesc.org
9	Nusantara Fund	National (Indonesia)	Rimbawan Muda Indonesia (RMI) with 25 other organizations	Supports Indigenous, peasant, and local community initiatives in Indonesia.	https://nusantarafund.org/en/
10	Kipok Fund	Territorial (Kenya)	IMPACT	Supports pastoralist and marginalized Indigenous communities in Kenya.	https://impactkenya.org/mingo/kipokfund/
11	Podáali Fund	Territorial (Brazil)	Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB)	Indigenous-led fund supporting Amazonian Indigenous communities.	https://fundopodaali.org.br
12	Rutʉ'ax Baktʉn	Mesoamerican (Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica y Panamá)	None.	Indigenous-led mechanism focused on Indigenous People's territorial governance, management and advocacy related to biodiversity, climate change and marine agendas.	In process
13	Yuil Indigenous Fund	Sub-national (Nicaragua, Bosawas, Río Wawa)	Paraima Indigenous Council (CIR)	Promote and strengthen communities, their way of live and the economic sustainability of Indigenous territories in Nicaragua	https://cir.org.ni/
14	Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Rio Negro (FOIRN)	Territorial (Middle and Lower Rio Negro, located in the Brazilian Amazon)	23 Federation of Indigenous Associations of the Rio Negro (FOIRN)	Is an environmental and territorial management tool that supports Indigenous initiatives through training, technical assistance and to promote food living in the Rio Negro Region.	https://foirn.org.br/