

Africa
Asia
Arctic
North America
Latin America and the Caribbean
Pacific



INTERNATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN'S
FORUM

*Innovation and Empowerment
in the Face of the **Pandemic***



SEMESTRAL REVIEW 1



JANUARY – JUNE 2020



Introduction

For the Global Movement of Indigenous Women and the **International Indigenous Women's Forum (IIWF)**, the year 2020 invites us to reflect on and discuss where we are and where we are headed regarding the exercise of our individual and collective rights. We have organized ourselves as an increasingly strong community driven by a common dream: a world free from discrimination and violence against **indigenous girls, youth and women**.

At the beginning of 2020, **indigenous women** had developed a clear proposal to analyze the priorities, progress, challenges and future processes for the achievement of the full exercise of our rights. This proposal was part of the framework of an international agenda that included the review and evaluation of the implementation of the **Beijing Platform for Action** and the **IIWF's 20th anniversary celebrations**.

However, the spread of COVID-19 across the world made us rethink our annual advocacy and organizational strategy, so as not to undermine the programs underway across the different territories. In this review, **Innovation and Empowerment in the Face of the Pandemic**, we report on the implementation of *our advocacy programs, of the Global Leadership School of Indigenous Women, of our research programs and of the AYNÍ Indigenous Women's Fund*.

Over the first half of 2020, through our interconnected programming including the projected programs and new activities for the year, we responded to a global crisis that deepened the hardships experienced by indigenous communities. We wish to use these few lines to extend our gratitude for the solidarity shown by our regional networks, allies and donor community, the international cooperation community, and friends and supporters of the **Indigenous Women's Movement**.



INNOVATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE FACE OF THE PANDEMIC



Indigenous Women's Strategic Path to the Beijing +25 Review

Indigenous Women join the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, recognizing and identifying the progress achieved. However, we must highlight the fact that we still face significant challenges in our work against violence, inequality and social exclusion throughout the world.

Within the framework of the **2020 Strategic Road Map**, we held regional preparatory consultative meetings in Asia, Africa and the Americas, with the participation of a total of 299 Indigenous Women Leaders. The last meeting, held at the beginning of this semester, was that of the Americas.



In these meetings, we evaluated the progress made with regard to the **Beijing +25 platform** and drafted a political document with recommendations to establish our political position. We have continued to advance within the framework of our strategic road map, producing five regional studies and one global study on the current situation of the **Rights of Indigenous Women** in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Arctic and the Pacific.

These instruments are key to our advocacy work and political participation. They cover the issues that we consider most critical to monitor: human rights, violence, climate change, poverty, economy, food sovereignty, health, education and identities, organizational processes, and advocacy in inter-governmental spaces.

Our position as **Indigenous Women** was presented at the 64th virtual session of the *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64)* and can be read at <http://www.fimi-iiwf.org/> All studies will be published over the second half of 2020. We invite you to keep an eye on our calendar in order not to miss the virtual launch events.



Regional Networks: The Strength of Our Spirit

The exchange of knowledge for collective construction among the **IWIF's regional networks** is the strength of the **Global Indigenous Women's Movement**, as it reinforces the sisterhood and strategic organization of the network we constitute.

We have launched a permanent process of virtual quarterly meetings of the regional networks. We began this process of recurring meetings at the beginning of April with the **regional networks that are members of the IWIF**. It was our way of innovating to keep exchanges going through our networks despite the pandemic.

In our first virtual meeting of regional networks, participants included *the African Indigenous Women's Organization (AIWO), the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas (ECMIA), the Alianza Mujeres Indígenas de Centroamérica y México (AMICAM), the Asian Indigenous Women's Network (AIWN), the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA) of the Pacific.*

In this instance, we shared what each representative was experiencing in their respective regions, communities and families with regard to COVID-19. In addition, support was offered for local actions planned to raise funds and for the implementation of sanitary or organizational measures within the communities.

We will continue this virtual best practice next semester, maintaining contact and promoting exchange and learning among **Indigenous Women's networks** as a strategy against the lack of face-to-face meetings due to the prohibition of mobility and global sanitary measures.





Virtual Strategic Actions to Consolidate **Alliances**

In this first half of 2020, we held an important meeting with the **Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)**. This international feminist organization with 35 years of experience provides financial support to movements that work for gender justice and women's rights around the world. **AWID** will participate as an observer in our upcoming second World Conference of Indigenous Women, in 2021.

As a result of the collaboration agreement between the **IWF** and **MADRE**, a feminist human rights organization, we are developing the campaign for **indigenous women** in relation to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. You can learn more about this process or join at



<https://www.madre.org/CEDAW4IWG>



Strengthening Leadership for Change: Global Leadership School of Indigenous Women

In the context of the **IIWF's 20th anniversary**, we are currently celebrating the School's seventh edition, with the participation of 22 **indigenous women leaders** from the Pacific, Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Arctic. On this occasion, due to restrictions, the program could not offer in-person classes at the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and at Columbia University in New York. However, the lectures were given through the virtual platform with the same quality and participation.

The **Global Leadership School** is being implemented as part of a global action plan through the *Human Rights and International Strategies Advocacy Skills Program* from 2013 to 2020. **Indigenous Women** from the world's seven sociocultural regions participate in the program.

Learn More About This Program

Next semester, we will present the first 20-minute mini-documentary of the **Global Leadership School** on our *YouTube* channel. The film recounts the experiences of indigenous women leaders such as Indira Vargas, a young Amazonian woman from Ecuador, and Sandra Creamer, a Wan-

nyi/Kalkadoon woman from Australia who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the **IIWF**.

We will also publish a book about the six previous editions of the **Global School** in a document that delves into the life stories of some of the indigenous women leaders of the world who participated in the program.



Community Case Studies – Call for Submissions: Describing and Writing About my Community

In recent years, the issue of environmental or ecological violence against **Indigenous Women** has gained visibility at the international level, recognizing the strong link between the culture, the traditional knowledge and the territories of Indigenous Peoples. When community territories are lost, traditional knowledge and wisdom are extinguished. For this reason, the research program on *issues of significance for the lives of indigenous women* launched “Describing and Writing About my Community”, an initiative targeted at **indigenous women** and their organizations.

The call was answered by
62 Indigenous Women’s organizations:

- 37 from Latin America,
- 12 from Asia and
- 13 from Africa.

After a review and evaluation process,
9 organizations were selected and granted
an economic support of **US\$3,550**.



Intercultural Research a Non-Extractivist Way of Learning With Indigenous Communities: **Myrna Cunningham**

As part of the empowerment process for the organizations selected for the “Describing and Writing About my Community” program, we facilitated an intercultural research webinar. For the occasion, Dr. Myrna Cunningham described intercultural research as a different way for communities to learn and gather knowledge. Learning by doing, oral storytelling, dreams, embroidery and other cultural expressions embedded within the indigenous



worldview are thus used as sources of knowledge by the indigenous researcher. In addition, she explained that intercultural research is a theoretical and methodological position that seeks to defend collective rights.

The nine research projects of the “Describing and Writing About my Community” program are currently in their documentation phase, when participants can benefit from technical advice. We will be publishing the results of each project at the end of the second semester. They will serve as local advocacy tools.

Visit our **YouTube** channel to listen to the full audio of this presentation, or head to our news blog to read the summary at

www.fimi-iiwf.org

Our Global Survey: Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Women and Best Practices (Article 7)

We recognize that the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV2 deepened the inequalities that impact the lives of **indigenous women and peoples**. Urgent action had to be taken in order to face this situation of crisis, and **indigenous communities and indigenous women** are implementing collective initiatives to do so.

Through the research program, we launched a global survey from May 15 to June 6 targeted mainly at **indigenous women’s organizations** to document the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and communities, as well as to start recording the best practices used by **indigenous women** against the pandemic at a global level. We received and analyzed over 120 responses to the survey. The results are now being processed and will serve as a political tool for advocacy. We are currently preparing a webinar to present the results of the report at the end of July.



AYNI, The Indigenous Women's Fund: Lessons and Challenges of the Virtual World



In the current context, the access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) have come to occupy an essential and strategic space for **indigenous women** due to the reduced mobility within their communities. The use of ICTs strengthens communication between different indigenous organizations and networks, while facilitating the exchange of information on the sanitary, economic and social situation brought about by COVID-19.

The **IWF**, together with **International Funders for Indigenous People (IFIP)**, organized an event called “Lessons and Challenges of the Virtual World” to analyze the possible teachings, achievements and challenges for **indigenous women** related to the access to and use of ICTs in their work as agents of change to raise awareness and defend their rights through the current world crisis. The **IWF** and **IFIP** are natural allies and work together in co-investment for **indigenous women**.

Rachel Smith, a Lakota Sicangu woman and IFIP's Programs Coordinator, explained that the pandemic has increased the need for funds. These funds allow us to create the platform to drive social change for indigenous peoples.

Lucy Mulenki, Vice-President of the **IWF** and a Masai Woman from Kenya, described that the mobility ban in Africa has increased communication by mobile phone. Women leaders and organizations have created WhatsApp groups where they discuss their concerns and where they can feel close and interconnected. The challenges they face in the region is the difficulty of access to education for children and youth due to a lack of Internet connection and computers.

Rojieka Mahin, a Dusun Woman from Malaysia, participated in the **IWF's Global Leadership School of Indigenous Women (GLSIW)**, a program with three phases including one that is organized virtually. She shared with us that despite language barriers and difficulty of access to Internet in remote areas, her participation in the **GLSIW** allowed her to learn about new technological tools, as well as instruments and mechanisms for the defence of their rights.



Together With Our Members in the Midst of the Crisis

As the pandemic progressed, the first action of the **Ayni Fund** was to ask all partner organizations about their situation, the measures they were adopting and their priorities.

Challenges abound: lack of access to health services, lack of information about the virus, military patrols, lack of information in indigenous languages and curfews, all of which have brought uncertainty and insecurity causing psychological harm for indigenous peoples. The mobility restrictions are hindering access to water, food, social services and other basic resources. The death of youth and adults is the result of the lack of culturally appropriate strategies to protect the health of indigenous communities.

Through the **Ayni Fund** and thanks to the sensitivity of our donor community, we were able to use a portion of the available funds for urgent needs that appeared with the pandemic. Contributions received from the **Pawanka Fund** and from **Tamalpaís** made it possible for the IIFW to provide further resources to the **indigenous women's organizations** and networks so they could attend to

their most urgent needs in the regions and countries most affected by the pandemic across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The **IIFW** also participated in the *Call for Emergency Funds for Girls, Teenagers and Youth* from the **Resilience Fund**, which is delivering emergency grants in all regions of the world.

With these resources, the communities developed campaigns in native languages in the local media to create awareness and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The availability of supplies for health care within the communities was temporarily covered. Kits including face masks, information in native languages, traditional and allopathic medicines were also distributed, while monitoring and surveillance teams of volunteers were established for local security. Some organizations prioritized the purchase of seeds for fast-germinating crops.

This initial contact has been maintained, with the organizations working together to adapt their work plans and move forward with possible actions.



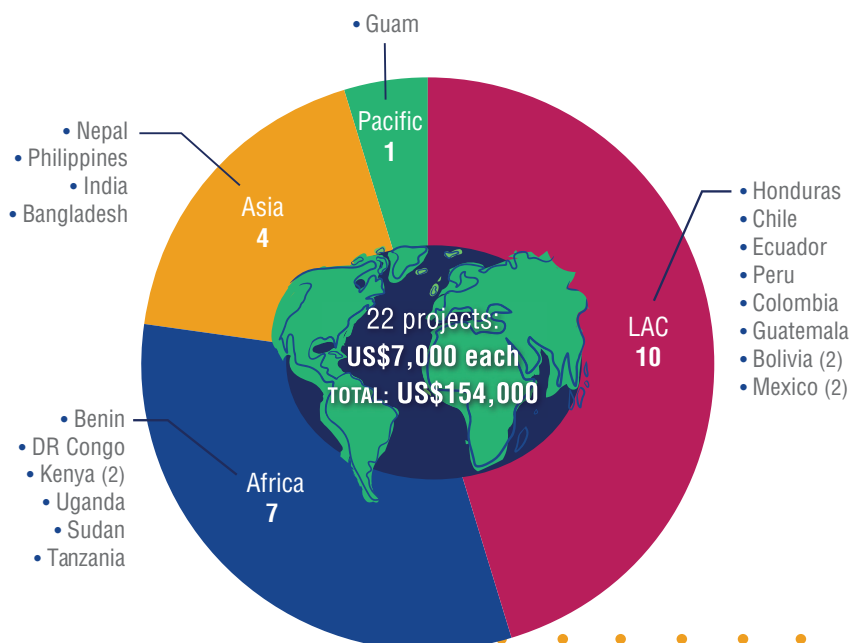
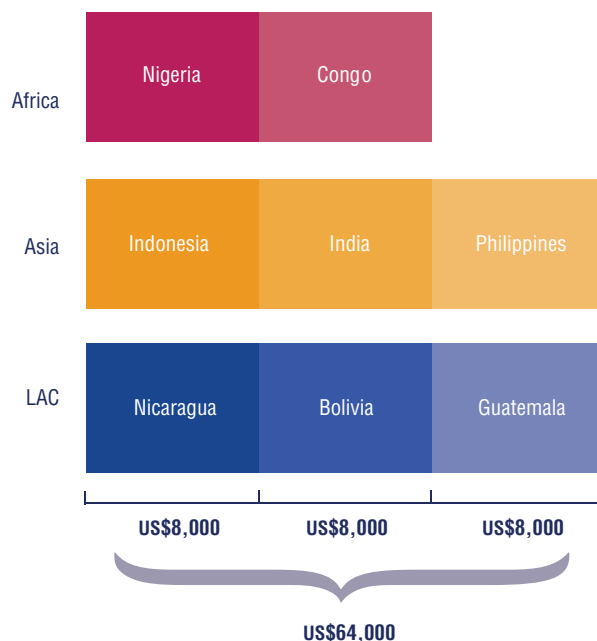
☞ Meanwhile, Seeds Projects Being Sown...

Despite the pandemic forcing a hiatus in the implementation of the projects in the field, the organizations remain standing. The fifth call of the **AYNI Fund's "Seeds Projects"**, in the first half of the year, opened for the participation of 22 projects: ten from Latin America (Honduras, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Guatemala, Bolivia [2] and Mexico [2]); seven from Africa (Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya [2], Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania); four from Asia (Nepal, Philippines, India and Bangladesh); and, for the first time, one from the Pacific (Guam). Each selected project was awarded financial resources in the form of a co-investment worth seven thousand US dollars (US\$7,000). The current projects' thematic areas include economic empowerment, education, institutional strengthening and access to political power for **indigenous women**. The projects are now in the execution phase. A total of US\$154,000 was awarded in this fifth call. The **"Seeds Projects"** are a contribution to the strengthening of local organizations and their leaderships as agents of change.

☞ Upscaling Projects

Launched at the end of 2019, this process consists of the renewal of the first Seed grant received, as a contribution to the strengthening of the organizations to ensure successful implementations.

Upscaling grants worth \$8,000 each were awarded to eight organizations in Africa, Asia and the Americas, in the countries of the Philippines, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Indonesia, India, Guatemala, Congo and Bolivia. The projects' focus include environmental justice and the rights of **indigenous women**. The **Upscaling grants for Seeds Projects** amounted to a total of \$64,000.



Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)

The **Ayni Fund** administers resources from the **Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)** in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The implementation of the third cycle began with the selection of 11 projects in as many countries across the region. Collective exchanges and learning sessions on the implementation of the projects were organized in the mark of the first meeting between all the projects of the LAC region, held in Mexico City in January 2020 under the headline “Sharing Experiences, Lessons Learned and Challenges”.

In June, the **Ayni Fund** participated in a webinar organized by the IFAD, where it was able to share the challenges faced by **indigenous women** through the pandemic as well as lessons learned.

Strengthening Women’s Leadership in the South

Over the first semester of 2020, the **Leading from the South** program awarded grants to organizations, groups and networks of **indigenous women** from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The program also organized virtual meetings to support members in the strengthening of their capacities and the adaptation of their projects in the context of the crisis. Those partner organizations that were most affected by the pandemic were supported in the process of adapting their activities so that they could conclude their projects and use their funds by December 2020.

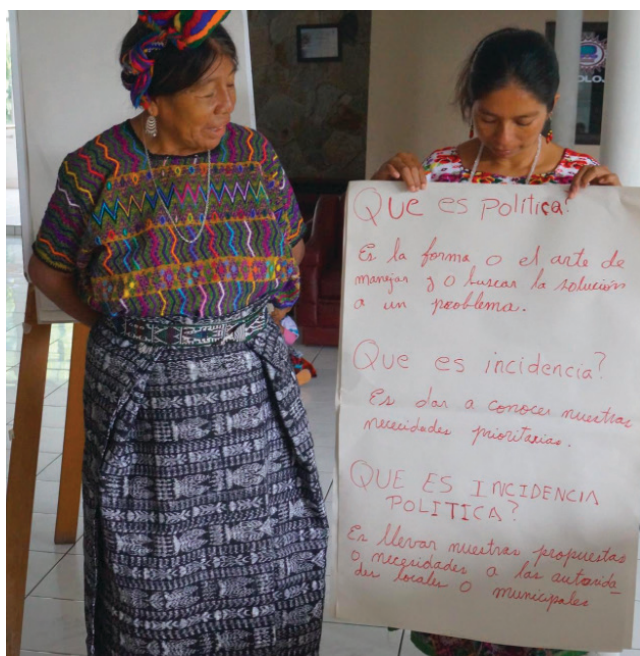
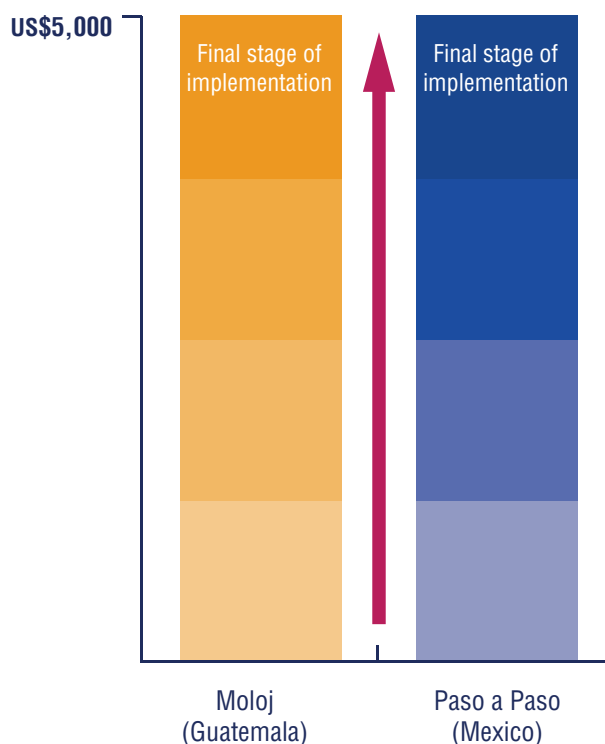
A total of 48 organizations are executing projects for a total amount of US\$1,217,900.



Resources for Research and Advocacy Grants

The **Research Program** on issues of significance for the lives of indigenous women established a collaboration agreement with the **Indigenous Peoples' Centre for Documentation, Research and Information (DOCIP)** for the implementation and execution of two grassroots projects regarding **human rights and indigenous women**, with the participation of the organizations **Moloj** from Guatemala (Maya) and **Paso a Paso** from Mexico (Nahuatl). The topics encompassed include political participation and the prevention and management of natural disasters. A grant of US\$5,000 was awarded for each project, now in the final stage of implementation.

In coordination with the **Pawanka Fund**, the **Global Leadership School (GLS) of Indigenous Women** is supporting the implementation of six advocacy plans on food security, for a total value of US\$27,370. The projects are currently being implemented. The **GLS** also provided funding for other advocacy plans and is expecting to finance 20 additional plans, for a total of \$60,000.



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