



©IFAD/Petterik Wiggers

## Introduction

IFAD's comparative advantage in working with indigenous peoples lies in its core mission to empower poor rural people, of whom indigenous peoples are often among the poorest. It also lies in its targeting and people-centred approach, which takes into account the differentiated and context-specific conditions of poor rural people, as well as the Fund's particular ability to reach marginalized and vulnerable people. The involvement of indigenous peoples is also key to achieving the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals; their exclusion and marginalization threatens the central tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – to leave no one behind.

In 2009, IFAD adopted its [Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#), which aims to enhance the Fund's development effectiveness with indigenous peoples' communities in rural areas. The policy clarifies IFAD's approach to working with indigenous peoples, including addressing the need for free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), which has been maintained since that time.

Through the creation of the [Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD](#) and the [Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility \(IPAF\)](#), strong partnerships, built on trust, have been established between the Fund and indigenous peoples' organizations, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and other like-minded organizations that support indigenous peoples.

## KEY FACTS

Indigenous peoples play a crucial role as custodians of the natural world, and their lands and territories are considered to be home to 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity. Their traditional knowledge, food systems and holistic approach support sustainable management of resources and ensure that biodiversity is maintained for future generations.

However, they are nearly three times as likely to be living in extreme poverty as their non-indigenous counterparts. Indigenous groups often live in marginal areas in many countries, ranging from remote uplands to tropical forest areas, with complex environmental issues. They may face economic, social, political and cultural marginalization at the same time. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change disproportionately affect indigenous peoples and further exacerbate their vulnerabilities and underlying structural inequalities.

## METHODOLOGY

The good practices are organized in short project files that cover different areas of engagement. The following areas have been identified according to the IFAD Policy and the experience and lessons arising from the portfolio of IFAD- and IPAF-funded projects: FPIC; Partnership; Indigenous peoples' knowledge; Indigenous women; Indigenous youth; Environment and climate change; Land, territories and resources; Food security and nutrition; Policy dialogue; Access to markets; Appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and IPAF-IFAD synergies.

As this is a living publication, the files are updated as soon as project implementation proceeds and additional information is available. The digital format also allows for relevant good practices published in other IFAD knowledge products to be linked, as well as for new files to be added.

The project files are available here. They are listed under the project name (IFAD-funded projects) or the sub-grantee name (IPAF-funded projects), and colour-coded according to engagement area.

This publication shares good practices in IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples in its investment projects as well as in the small projects financed through the IPAF. The publication is conceived as a tool to capitalize on the experience that IFAD has gained in more than 30 years of engagement with indigenous peoples and contribute to build on appropriate approaches in the design and implementation of new projects. In working closely with indigenous communities, IFAD has learned that effective and sustainable development must be tailored to their identities, values and cultures while protecting and promoting their rights.

For example, enabling indigenous peoples to secure rights to their land and territories is one of IFAD's best practices. Land is not only crucial to the survival of indigenous peoples, as it is for most poor rural people – it is central to their identities. They have a deep spiritual relationship to their ancestral territories. Moreover, when they have secure access to land, they also have a firm base from which to improve their livelihoods. Good practices also emerged from the policy dialogues that IFAD organizes at the local and national levels to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in determining their own priorities.

This publication also contributes to a better understanding of indigenous peoples as a central pillar of IFAD's approach to mainstreaming the issues of nutrition, gender, youth, and climate change and the environment. The perspectives of indigenous peoples, including indigenous women and youth, on how best to support their traditional food systems to improve nutrition and promote biodiversity for sustainable agriculture are included and supported in project design.

## Areas of engagement

- FPIC
- Partnership
- Indigenous peoples' knowledge
- Indigenous women
- Indigenous youth
- Environment and climate change
- Land, territories and resources
- Food security and nutrition
- Policy dialogue
- Access to markets
- Appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- IPAF-IFAD synergies

## IFAD-funded projects

### Africa

[Burundi - PIPARV-B](#)



[Chad - PROHYPA](#)



[Cameroon - AEP-Youth](#)



### Asia and the Pacific

[Cambodia - ASPIRE](#)



[India - FOCUS](#)



[Indonesia - TEKAD](#)



[Laos - SSFSNP](#)



[Philippines - CHARMP2](#)



### Latin America and the Caribbean

[Bolivia - ACCESOS](#)



[Colombia - TOP](#)



[El Salvador - Rural Adelante](#)



[Peru - PDTS](#)



IFAD projects, which are country-led and country-owned, support rural poverty reduction and agricultural development. IFAD's approach with indigenous peoples aims to ensure that their rights are fully respected in the development and implementation of IFAD-supported projects. IFAD-funded projects that target indigenous peoples do not only enhance their livelihoods, but activities are also designed to: (i) secure ownership of and/or access to ancestral land and territories by indigenous peoples; (ii) strengthen their institutions; (iii) ensure FPIC; (iv) value indigenous knowledge systems; and (v) document and report the outcomes of the consultations with indigenous peoples.

The good practices demonstrate that, whether it is preserving biocultural heritage or ensuring that FPIC is included in development projects, IFAD promotes community-driven development throughout the project cycle and in policy dialogues.

The implementation of FPIC is particularly relevant, as it is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that brings multiple benefits (e.g. it improves the relevance and quality of investments and minimizes reputational, operational and fiduciary risks). FPIC is not merely the right to say "yes or no" to externally initiated actions, but it is intimately linked to the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own priorities for development, to fully participate in and shape development initiatives, and to avoid adverse impacts.

A highly relevant and recurrent area of engagement within IFAD-funded projects is indigenous peoples' knowledge, which provides important insights into the processes of observation, adaptation and mitigation of the consequences of climate change. Strengthening indigenous peoples' knowledge systems and blending them with appropriate modern technology have proved to enhance livelihood options, revitalize agriculture, increase food security and improve health.

The good practices include projects that support and strengthen indigenous peoples' food systems, building on local food-based strategies that value indigenous peoples' traditional foods and agricultural systems. Other relevant initiatives include incorporating local and traditional practices such as the use of indigenous seeds and breeds, non forest-timber products and medicinal herbs, neglected and underutilized species, and valuing the biodiversity inherent in these practices.

The good practices also capture the importance of engaging in partnerships with indigenous peoples' organizations to design and deliver appropriate and tailored interventions.

Successful experiences also enable indigenous peoples' communities to value their products and engage in markets on more profitable terms.

In terms of appropriate M&E, in addition to IFAD's requirement of disaggregating data by indigenous peoples where appropriate, project M&E systems also include indicators relevant to the socio-cultural specificities of indigenous peoples. IFAD has learned that socially disaggregated data and monitoring on specific indicators relevant to indigenous peoples' well-being are required to continuously track outreach and outcomes, understand the effectiveness of project strategies for different social groups and adjust those strategies as necessary.

## IPAF-funded projects

The IPAF is an innovative funding instrument administered by IFAD that enables indigenous communities to invest in solutions to the challenges they face. The objective of the Facility is to strengthen indigenous peoples' communities and their organizations. It finances small projects that foster self-driven development within the framework of the UNDRIP. The Facility supports projects designed and implemented by indigenous peoples' communities and their organizations through small grants of up to US\$50,000. Supported projects build on indigenous peoples' culture, identity, knowledge and natural resources.

The Facility is co-managed at the regional level by indigenous peoples' organizations – the regional partners for the fifth IPAF cycle are: Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas in Latin America and the Caribbean; Samburu Women Trust in Africa; and Tebtebba Foundation in Asia and the Pacific – and is governed by a board made up of indigenous peoples' representatives. With their leading role in the governance and management of the Facility, indigenous peoples assume a key decision-making role in its operations. The three regional partners have also played an important role in building and strengthening networking among indigenous peoples' communities and organizations and linking them to regional and international platforms and forums.

Over the years, IFAD has learned that capacity-building and self-determined development can be considerably improved by entrusting indigenous communities with the direct management of resources and funds. Small amounts for small communities can make a big difference, particularly in building capacities and strengthening institutions and organizations.

IPAF project approaches are broad and inclusive, multisectoral and integrated. In fact, projects are guided by a holistic vision in which approaches encompass, combine and connect various issues and dimensions. For example, projects that promote livelihood opportunities, economic development and food security also aim to protect indigenous rights, biodiversity, natural resources, the environment and climate, as well as to facilitate participation in decision-making processes and social inclusion.

The IPAF also supports innovative solutions to strengthen indigenous peoples' communities and their organizations. IPAF experiences enable IFAD to sharpen its sensitivity to the issues faced by indigenous peoples and to learn lessons on what works in other projects. The good practices include examples of how IPAF-IFAD synergies are created to improve mutual knowledge, ensure the complementarity of different interventions and explore opportunities for collaboration.

## Africa

### Congo - ADFAC



### DR Congo - PIFEVA



### Ethiopia - DID



## Asia and the Pacific

### India - Pragati Koraput



### Nepal - INWYN



### Solomon Islands - SIDT



## Latin America and the Caribbean

### Guatemala - UVOC



### Guyana - SCPDA



Investing in rural people

International Fund for  
Agricultural Development  
Via Paolo di Dono, 44  
00142 Rome, Italy  
Tel: +39 06 54591  
Fax: +39 06 5043463  
Email: [ifad@ifad.org](mailto:ifad@ifad.org)  
[www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

[facebook.com/ifad](https://facebook.com/ifad)

[instagram.com/ifadnews](https://instagram.com/ifadnews)

[linkedin.com/company/ifad](https://linkedin.com/company/ifad)  
[twitter.com/ifad](https://twitter.com/ifad)

[youtube.com/user/ifadTV](https://youtube.com/user/ifadTV)

February 2021