



INDIGENOUS-LED FUNDS

Financing Self-Determined Climate Solutions

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Direct funding to Indigenous Peoples is critical for conserving biodiversity and combating climate change because it strengthens the leadership and tenure security of the communities, who are the most effective stewards of the world's ecosystems.

Our territories include forests, grasslands, wetlands, and other ecosystems that act as major carbon sinks, storing massive amounts of carbon that would otherwise enter the atmosphere. Our communities have deep traditional knowledge about species interactions, water cycles, fire management, land restoration, among other. Climate adaptation and mitigation strategies rooted in this knowledge outperform other conservation models.

However, the little climate funding that is allocated for tenure rights (less than 1% of climate aid) is mostly channeled through indirect, complex and bureaucratic mechanisms that are not adapted to our realities on the ground. Hence, 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.

Therefore, Indigenous-led Funds have emerged in Africa, Asia and Latin America to transform the global funding landscape. We want to ensure that resources flow directly to our communities, and we channel funds in a manner that is direct, efficient, aligned with community priorities, and strengthening their rights and governance systems.

Support to our Indigenous-led Funds is not charity — it is a strategic, rights-based investment in the most effective guardians of our planet's life-support systems. Indigenous-led Funds constitute an indispensable element in enabling just, resilient, and effective climate and biodiversity solutions.

Access to financial and technical support is a right - not a privilege

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples highlights the right of Indigenous Peoples to ways and means for financing their self-government as well as their right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of their rights (see UNDRIP, articles 4 and 39).

¹See RRI and RFN: State of Funding for Tenure Rights, 2025, available here.

Who we are

Indigenous-led Funds are funding mechanisms, established by Indigenous communities and organizations to advance the realization of Indigenous Peoples' rights and well-being. Our shared goal is to channel flexible, predictable and sustained resources directly to initiatives developed by and for Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous-led Funds have emerged in many parts of the world. The Funds presented in this publication operate in the Global South, which presents a particular context for funding because of the eligibility for Official development Assistance.

Our diverse governance structures and working modalities reflect the uniqueness of the Indigenous organizations or networks that are behind us, as well as the different contexts in which we operate. Some of us operate at national or sub-national levels, others have a regional or global scope. Some focus on Indigenous women, and some have joined efforts with local communities. Our differences in scope and focus constitute a strength, as we can complement each other.

Transforming the funding landscape is a collective vision. We support each other, and exchange experiences, tools and approaches through the **Indigenous-led Funds' Learning Group**. We see a need for enhanced coordination, financial support, and technical investment to strengthen the visibility and impact of Indigenous-led Funds globally. Likewise, we seek strategic dialogue with donors and partners, including through engagement in the UNFCCC COPs and other climate-related processes and institutions, including the Green Climate Fund.

Indigenous Led Funds



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)

SUB-REGIONAL

- Ereto Solidarity Fund
- REPALEAC Fund

NATIONAL

- Nusanantara Fund (Indonesia)

TERRITORIAL

- Kipok Fund (Kenya)

TERRITORIAL

- Podáali Fund (Brazilian)

Our resources

We work with a range of donors and partners, including philanthropies, bilateral donors and multilateral agencies.

While many of us provide **small grants** to communities and organizations (USD 5,000-80,000), some also provide **medium-sized grants** to support territorial or national processes (USD 80,000-450,000).

Over the past years, the Indigenous-led Funds presented here have collectively supported over **2,000 Indigenous-led initiatives** in more than **80 countries**.

The Indigenous-led funds have disbursed over USD **30 million** and, by 2026, project to reach USD **50 million** in annual disbursements.

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

What we support

Indigenous-led Funds provide support to communities in a holistic manner that respond to the full range of their rights, needs and priorities. Key elements are:

Self-determined development and Indigenous governance

Empowering Indigenous Peoples to design, manage, and lead their own development paths, including through capacity-building and learning exchange.

Traditional knowledge, cultural revitalization, and heritage

Reviving languages, spiritual practices, and intergenerational knowledge systems that sustain community identity and resilience

Land rights and territorial governance

Supporting legal recognition, defense, and stewardship of lands and territories.

Climate resilience and biodiversity protection

Investing in Indigenous conservation practices that safeguard ecosystems and carbon sinks essential for planetary health.

Reducing inequalities and exclusion

Addressing systemic barriers to participation, access, and representation in decision-making processes.

Indigenous women's leadership and youth empowerment

Building the next generation of Indigenous leaders who will guide communities into a just and sustainable future.

Capacity strengthening, advocacy, and movement building

Supporting Indigenous organizations to engage in policy, governance, and global advocacy spaces with strong, unified voices.

Humanitarian response for displaced and crisis-affected Indigenous communities

Ensuring rapid, culturally grounded assistance for communities facing conflict, environmental disasters, or forced displacement.

Our impact

Across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the impact of Indigenous-Led Funds is visible in thousands of initiatives — from local community actions to global policy arenas. Their work is reflected in stronger climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, women's leadership, economic empowerment, the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge and languages, and the sustainable management of millions of hectares of Indigenous lands.

While it is impossible to fully capture the breadth and depth of the efforts led by thousands of Indigenous communities, the stories featured here offer a glimpse into how even modest, well-directed funding can deliver transformative and lasting results.

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 is 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."*



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 the plants,"* **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 only 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.



Photo: © Centre for Indigenous Persons with Disability, Research and Development (CIPDRD)

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".



Photo: © KALUMARAN

Kipok Fund, Kenya

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 semi circular 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.



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

Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, Costa Rica:

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 nature," 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 turning a resource into a multiplier for other opportunities, which generates a greater impact in the territories," Tatiana Martínez, coordinator of the Bribri and Cabécar Indigenous Network.



Photo: Randy Salazar. © Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano.

Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, Guatemala

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 haven't touched, 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 López, chairperson and legal representative of the Cooperative Unión Huista.

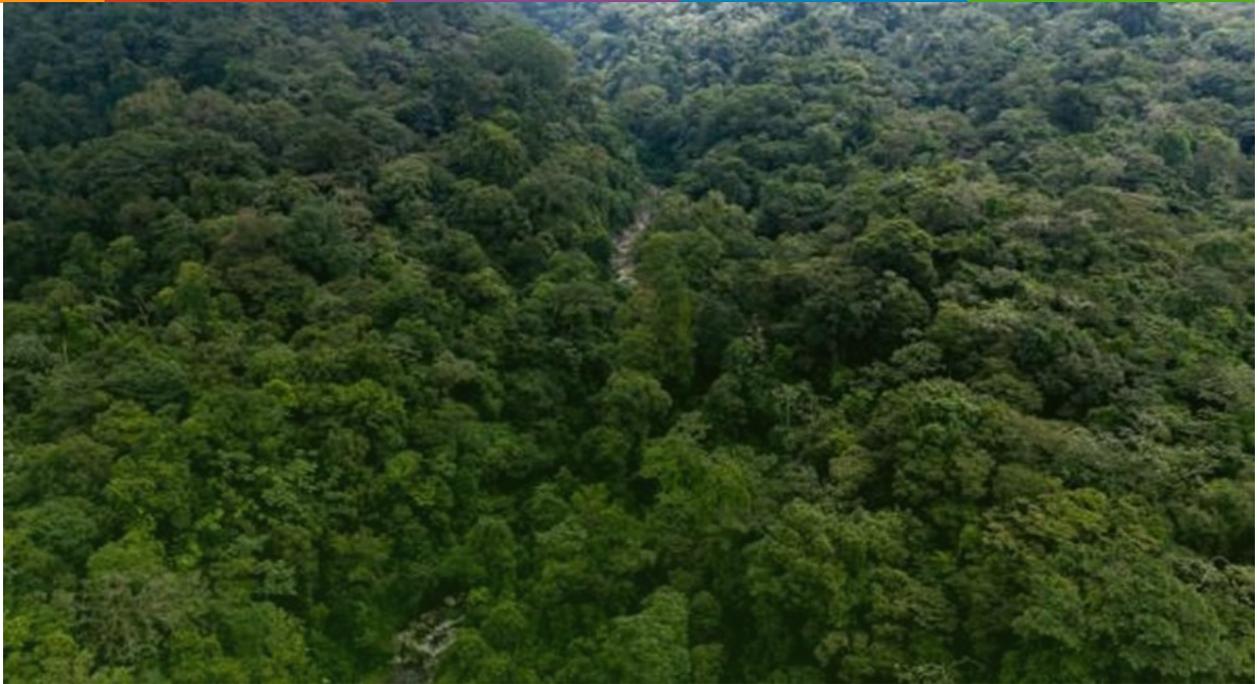


Photo: Cooperativa Unión Huista. © Fondo Territorial Mesoamericano.

Naapu Fund, Kenya:

We are in our agroecology demonstration center in Kipsing, an Indigenous women arboretum. Women are harvesting green kales, and plants of medicinal value are doing well,

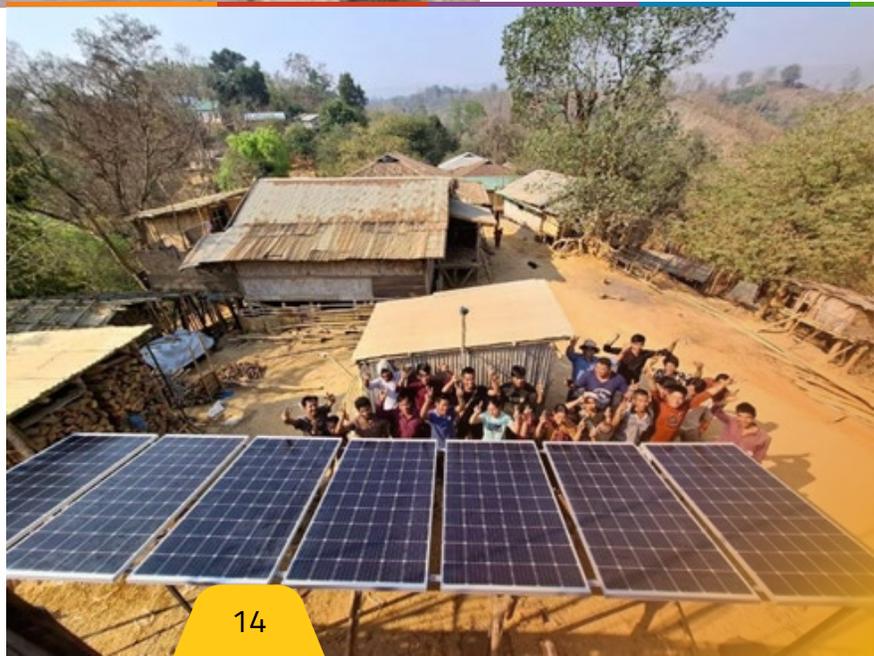


Nusantara Fund, Indonesia:

A modest grant of USD10,000 helped establish a school focused on traditional knowledge. This effort grew into more than 200 schools. During the pandemic, many young people returned home and became involved in enhancing food sovereignty, based on traditional knowledge. This shows how even small investments can lead to big, lasting changes.

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 future 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 corn cultivation. Through collective practices such as minga, they recover resilient seed varieties, including the Hualhuas 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 are as important as the final product"*, Sonia Astuhumán Pardavé (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. Thereby, 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.

What we have learned

Our work so far, has allowed us to draw important lessons learned for the future:

- **Local partnerships enhance impact.**
Our close collaboration with traditional institutions and community-based organizations increases the effectiveness and adaptability of strategies to meet the specific needs of each territory.
- **Long-term, institutional support builds strength.**
Sustained funding enables Indigenous Peoples to plan, implement, and manage their own priorities, leading to stronger capacities and more sustainable outcomes.
- **Investing in livelihoods and technology matters.**
Practical tools and technical support — such as drones, mapping, and digital technologies — enhance Indigenous Peoples' protection and conservation of ecosystems.
- **Support for advocacy amplifies Indigenous Peoples' voices.**
Continued financial and technical backing for local leaders strengthens advocacy, trickers solidarity, and brings greater visibility to Indigenous Peoples' issues.
- **Strategic communication drives awareness.**
Communication is a vital tool for raising public awareness, mobilizing allies, and influencing change.
- **Resource diversification increases resilience.**
Expanding and diversifying funding sources allows Indigenous organizations and movements to act strategically, reduce dependency, and strengthen institutional stability and resilience.
- **Traditional leadership ensures legitimacy.**
Our collaboration with traditional governance structures enhances community acceptance and the long-term effectiveness of initiatives.
- **Flexible, trust-based funding delivers results.**
Simplified procedures and solidarity-based relationships enable Indigenous communities to respond quickly and effectively to their most urgent needs.

What challenges remain

While we have made huge strides over the past years, some key challenges remain for our Indigenous-led Funds:

- **High demand, limited resources**
The need for financial assistance far exceeds available funding, reflecting the growing demand from Indigenous communities responding to climate, social, and territorial challenges.

- **Legal and political barriers**

Government restrictions on access to and management of funds — including shrinking democratic spaces— hinder direct funding to Indigenous Peoples in many regions.

- **Limited donor recognition**

Many donors still channel resources through intermediaries, often overlooking the added value and proven effectiveness of Indigenous-led Funds.

- **Insufficient flexible and emergency funding**

There is a critical lack of adaptable funds to respond quickly to crises — including climate impacts, displacement, conflict, and violence — where Indigenous communities are often on the frontlines.

- **Unequal capacities and language barriers**

Indigenous organizations operate with diverse capacity levels, and many face linguistic and literacy barriers. The complex legal, technical, and financial requirements of donors make access to conventional funding mechanisms difficult.

Call to Action: Scale up direct climate finance for Indigenous Peoples

At COP30, Indigenous-Led Funds call on all partners and donors to take bold, concrete steps to ensure climate finance truly reaches our communities:

- **Commit to direct access:** Set ambitious targets to allocate at least 20% of pledges and other climate finance commitments as direct funding for Indigenous Peoples.

- **Simplify and support:** Harmonize reporting requirements and pair them with capacity strengthening for Indigenous organizations and funds.

- **Ensure transparency:** Disclose donor origins, publish grant data, and disaggregate data by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth.

- **Adopt rights-based partnerships:** Develop clear protocols for partners and intermediaries to overcome power imbalances and reinforce Indigenous governance.

- **Engage meaningfully:** Establish joint technical working groups for funding modalities monitoring, reporting, and policy advocacy.

- **Build trust:** Foster open, respectful, and accountable relationships between donors and Indigenous Peoples.

- **Provide flexible and long-term funding:** Move beyond short-term project cycles to sustained, unrestricted support.

- **Clarify direct access pathways:** Define clear criteria and mechanisms for Indigenous-led management of funds.

- **Strengthen accountability systems:** Invest in Indigenous-led monitoring, evaluation, and communication.

- **Empower women and youth:** Ensure their active leadership and inclusion in all funding mechanisms.

Partnering with us

Reach out for more information and join us in building a new model of climate finance — led by the Peoples who are in the frontline of combating climate change.

Fund Name	Region/s	Founding/Hosting Organization	Description	Website
Ayni Fund	Global	International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)	Supports Indigenous women globally to strengthen leadership, rights, and community resilience.	https://fimihiwf.org/en/our-programs/theayni-indigenous-womens-fund-program/
Pawanka Fund	Global	Indigenous leaders from multiple regions	A participatory funding mechanism supporting Indigenous-led initiatives worldwide.	https://pawankafund.org
Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF)	Inter-regional (Africa, Asia, Latin America)	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with regional Indigenous organizations (FIMI, Tebtebba and Samburu Women Trust).	Provides small grants to Indigenous Peoples' projects through regional implementing partners.	https://www.ifad.org/en/initiatives/indigenous-peoples-assistancefacility
Indigenous Peoples of Asia Solidarity Fund (IPAS)	Regional (Asia)	Indigenous organizations and networks across 14 Asian countries	Strengthens Indigenous-led movements in Asia.	https://ipasfund.org
NAAPU Indigenous Women Fund	Regional (Africa)	Samburu Women's Trust	Supports Indigenous women's leadership and community projects in Kenya.	https://samburuwomentrust.org/what-we-do/grant-making/

Ereto Solidarity Fund	Sub-regional (East Africa)	IMPACT, PINGOs Forum, Ujamaa Community Resource Team, The Pastoral Women Council and the Traditional Ecosystems and Survival Tanzania	A collaborative initiative by Indigenous organizations in East Africa, aimed at supporting Indigenous Peoples by embracing their Traditional Knowledge and governance systems.	https://eretosolidarityfund.org/#
Mesoamerican Territorial Fund (FTM)	Sub-regional (Mesoamerica)	Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB)	Strengthens territorial governance and forest protection in Mesoamerica.	https://fondomesoamericano.org
REPALEAC Fund	Sub-regional (Central Africa)	Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC)	The REPALEAC Fund supports Indigenous and local communities across the Central African region. It responds to an urgent need: to ensure that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are not only consulted, but truly empowered with resources to drive their own development	https://n9.cl/nhflv
Nusantara Fund	National (Indonesia)	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) with KPA and WALHI.	Supports Indigenous, peasant, and local community initiatives in Indonesia.	https://nusantarafund.org/en/
Kipok Fund	Territorial (Kenya)	IMPACT	Supports pastoralist and marginalized Indigenous communities in Kenya.	https://impactkenya.org/impact/kipokfund/

Podáali Fund	Territorial (Brazilian Amazon region)	Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB)	Indigenous-led fund supporting Amazonian Indigenous communities.	https://fundopodaali.org.br
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