



Indigenous
Reciprocity
Initiative
OF THE AMERICAS

Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative of the Americas Program

◆ 2023 End-of-Year Report

Fighting for land, water, food, medicine, and culture

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Chacruna's Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative of the Americas (IRI) is a biocultural conservation program of grassroots Indigenous and local organizations supporting plant medicine through land rights, ecological wellbeing, food security, and economic resilience. A decolonial network directed from the foundation upward by Indigenous community groups, IRI challenges conventional philanthropy by raising funds with no strings attached and addressing the profound gap between the material needs of local communities and the promises of "psychedelic science." IRI centers the political struggles of Indigenous peoples, because without Indigenous human rights there cannot be traditional knowledge.

Who IRI supports

The IRI Program recognizes that the fight for autonomy and sovereignty at the grassroots level is the basis for all traditional knowledge and natural medicines by giving back to the cultural regions that support Indigenous plant use and knowledge. IRI consists of **17 grantees supporting over 30 different Indigenous groups** in multiple communities across **Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico, and the United States.**

◆ Brazil

RAIN (Reforestation Agroforestry Impact Network) - Guarani, Tupiniquim, Quilombo Kalunga, Kaingang, Terena, Noke Koi/Katuquina; Yawanawa Sociocultural Association Yawanawa; Federation of the Huni Kuin People of the State of Acre (FEPHAC) Huni Kuin

◆ Colombia

The Land of Origins Project - Kamëntšá

◆ Ecuador

Sacha Warmi Foundation - Kichwa; Yakum - Shuar, Kichwa, Cofan, Siekopai; Amazon Frontlines - Siona, Secoya, Kofan, Waorani; De La Tierra - Kofan

◆ Peru

Alianza Arkana - Shipibo-Konibo; Xapiri Ground - Matsigenka, Iskonawa, Matsés, Awajún, Yine, Shipibo-Konibo, Wampis; The Seven Elements - Yanasha, Ashaninka

◆ Costa Rica

Stibrawpa Association - Bribri

◆ Mexico

Hablemos de Hikuri - Wixáritaari/Huichol; Wixárika Research Center (WRC) – Wixarika; El Consejo indígena pro-rescate del patrimonio cultural mazateco (CIPREPACMA) Mazatec A.C.

◆ United States

Buffalo Field Campaign Lakota, Sioux, Nez Perce/Nimiipuu; The Navajo Water Project -Diné

IRI is open-source: you can always donate directly to any of our partners online. Learn more about all the groups IRI supports, including grantees from past years, at www.chacruna-iri.org/regions

2023 Outcomes

Since IRI launched in mid-2021, the program has raised \$170,000 to support community -led, grassroots projects designed and implemented by local peoples to address their own self-determined needs, with full control over the use and management of their resources. IRI works towards a process of reciprocity between the psychedelic ecosystem of the Global North and the communities who continue to create the conditions for the current wealth of plant use and knowledge.

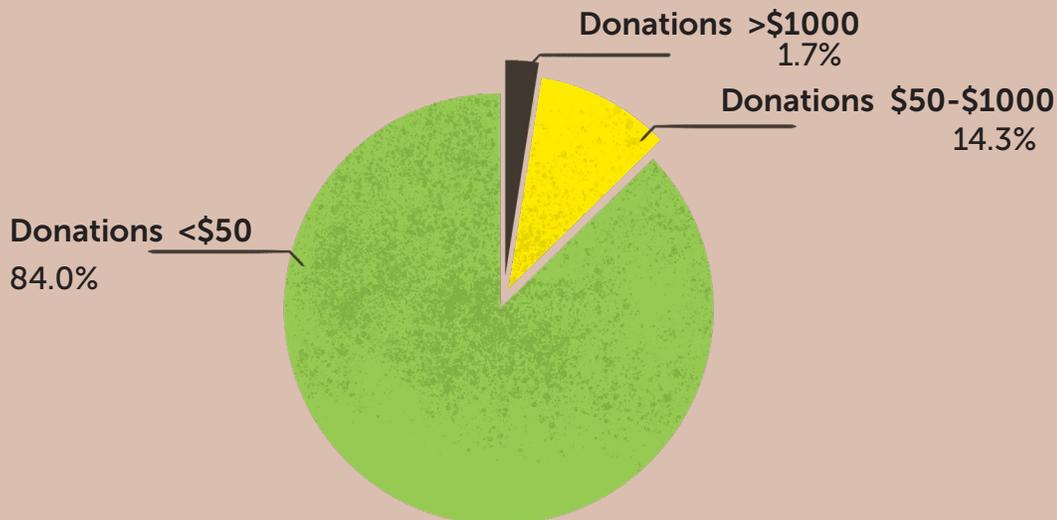
Although the trend of psychedelic medicines entering the mainstream continues at a breathless pace, investment has not kept up with interest; those who do invest do not seem interested in contributions to Indigenous communities. After a bleak 2022 and an uncertain 2023, philanthropic dollars are not making their way from the psychedelic stock market to grassroots organizations or initiatives.

Despite setbacks, IRI’s growing community of individual donors, therapists, clients, practitioners, small companies and nonprofits helped raise just under \$40,000 in 2023. After a 7.5% processing fee to cover bank transfers and operating expenses, we have been able to disburse over \$2,000 to each of our Indigenous and local partners (up 33% from last year), with 85% of our donations being from contributions of less than \$50.

Our core supporters are people giving what they can, understanding the impact of small grants when they are given unconditionally and directly to Indigenous-led initiatives. IRI donors honor the direct continuity between Indigenous traditions and psychedelic science, and the intimate relationship between biological and cultural diversity and traditional knowledge.

Beyond fundraising, the IRI Program remains dedicated to public outreach, building relationships, providing on-the-ground support, and producing high quality video content with our partners. Read more about Chacruna’s other work in 2023 here.

IRI Donations



Impact Report

IRI donations have an invaluable impact on the progress of the projects of our partners and the lives of the Indigenous and local peoples they represent. Here are just a few examples of what our partners achieved in 2023:

- ◆ With your support, our partners at CIPREPACMA held a gathering in the Sierra Mazateca for the recovery and conservation of the Mazatec language, bringing together Mazatec artists, writers, composers, singers, artisans, scholars, and healers, as well as the general public.
- ◆ Our partners at the Wixarika Research Center in San Luis Potosi were able to hold a third face-to-face meeting of the Alliance for the Regeneration of the Altiplano-Wirikuta, promoting a coalition of community associations supporting the ecological, economic, and social well-being of their sacred territory. These gatherings are essential as the Wixarika continue their 70+ year long struggle against illegal occupation, resistance from cattle ranchers, and institutional discrimination; the community of San Sebastián Teponahuxtán in Nayarit recovered 2,585 hectares of its ancestral lands last year.
- ◆ In Ecuador, Yakum have mapped 24,000 hectares of forest with the Siekopai and planted 6 family food forests, training youth to monitor their territory with GPS and GIS; Kichwa associations continue their 4.5 hectare food forest regeneration project; a Kofan womens' association as well as the Shuar of Pitirishka are reforesting their respective territories to recover valuable timber, handicraft, and ancient food species.
- ◆ Our partners at Amazon Frontlines united with the Ceibo Alliance and Indigenous organizations CONAIE, CONFENIAE, and Yasunidos collective in a successful campaign to ban oil drilling in Yasuni in a landmark referendum; they also launched a school for the training of Indigenous guards in defense of life and territory; their A'i Cofan partners continue their territory monitoring, defending land and human rights in the face of violence and murder at the hands of oil extraction interests.
- ◆ RAIN launched an initiative with the Quilombo Kalunga of Cerrado, one of Brazil's most biodiverse regions vital for water security, representing the largest population of Quilombola descendants in the country; they are at work restoring over 55 hectares of degraded land and planting over 1 million trees to improve biodiversity and revitalize another 200 hectares of land alongside the Santa Barbara waterfall. Since 2022, they have distributed tens of thousands of saplings of the endangered pernambuco (Brazilwood) tree, with participation from Indigenous leaders of both the Tupiniquim and Guarani in their efforts to recover sacred territory.
- ◆ Our partners at the Yawanawa Sociocultural Association (ASCY) celebrated the official demarcation of Yawanawa territory after years of struggle, with the support of IRI funding. Later in the year, IRI was also able to support weeks-long Yawanawa cultural and spiritual gatherings in the Mutum village, located in the Indigenous Land of Rio Gregorio.



Still from a video co-produced with our Mazatec and Wixarika partners, depicting an ofrenda to a local spring in Santa Maria Chilchotla as part of their struggle for linguistic conservation, religious rights, and environmental remediation. Full video, "What does 'reciprocity' mean?" [here](#)

We premiered **new footage** from our Mazatec and Wixarika partners at the MAPS Psychedelic Science 2023 conference in Denver, Colorado, where our director also presented on Plant Medicines and Reciprocity in a **collaboration** with Diné researcher Marlena Robbins (UCB) looking at the use of "reciprocity" in response to increasingly globalized plant medicine spaces and their alienation from the needs of Indigenous communities. We also participated in a **panel** on Right Relationship and Plant Medicine at South by Southwest (SXSW) alongside Indigenous leaders Steven Benally (IPCI) and Lucy Benally (IMCF), moderated by Sutton King MPH.

IRI launched its own social media ([@indigenous.reciprocity](#)) which has now surpassed 500 followers.

Chacruna launched a new decolonization workshop with IRI Program Director Joseph Mays, Chacruna Executive Director Bia Labate, and Chacruna Latinoamerica Associate Director Glauber Loures de Assis. We also developed a new series, **The Reciprocity Dialogues**, a series of conversations launching in 2024 between non-profit organizers, legal experts, Indigenous leaders, scholars, activists, researchers and advocates at various intersections with the psychedelic renaissance.

Members of the IRI team co-authored a new article, **Ten Tips for Standing in Solidarity with Indigenous People and Plant Medicines** (originally published in **MAPS Bulletin**; Spanish and Portuguese text [here](#)).

IRI Program Director, Joseph Mays, participated in 27 speaking engagements this year, including a panel on **Restoring balance with Indigenous benefit sharing** (Nectara) as well as numerous

other panels, presentations and lectures for SXSW, MAPS, Cannadelic, Benzina, Esalen Institute, and Wonderland, among others.. He also toured the northeast US with the producers of Eskawata Kayawai: Spirit of Transformation, campaigning in support of our Huni Kuin, Wixarika, and Mazatec partners at over 13 local psychedelic societies and community centers.

Other members of the IRI team, Nicholas Spiers and Glauber Loures de Assis, authored several papers and participated in over 20 speaking engagements.



“Let us wake up, humankind... Let us build societies that are able to coexist in a dignified way, in way that protects life. Let us come together and remain hopeful as we defend and care for the blood of this Earth and of its spirits.

-Berta Caceres, Honduran Indigenous land rights activist, quoted in “4 Big Reasons Why Land Rights Matter” by Nicholas Tagliarino.

In 2024, we look forward to doing more to strengthen the Indigenous Reciprocity Initiative and distribute more funding to grassroots Indigenous groups. Slowly but surely, we are building something more sustainable, more impactful, that can be self-managed and continue to put more and more resources where they are most needed, on the terms of the recipients. Thank you for all your support!

Special Thank Yous: Dr. Bronner’s, Heroic Hearts Project, Church of Munay, Dr. Wendy Feng

IRI's Theory of Change

IRI recognizes that a 100% ground-up structure emphasizing local agency that challenges conventional philanthropic models is the most meaningful way to support Indigenous and local community autonomy and the most impactful way to support biocultural diversity. IRI serves as a platform for reciprocity, education and collaboration:

- ◆ Raising unconditional funding: Accepting donations with strict adherence to the terms set by IRI partners, distributing funds evenly (no strings attached). This flexible funding is used to address the immediate and constantly changing needs of community projects.
- ◆ Providing a platform for education: Presenting at conferences & universities, co-producing publications exploring reciprocity, biocultural conservation, plant medicine, and Indigenous rights.
- ◆ Providing support through research and audio-visual services: Engaging with Indigenous and local stakeholders on their terms to support existing initiatives by providing relevant ethnographic and audiovisual materials as needed and when possible.



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<https://www.chacruna-iri.org>

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[@indigenous.reciprocity](https://www.instagram.com/indigenous.reciprocity)

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