

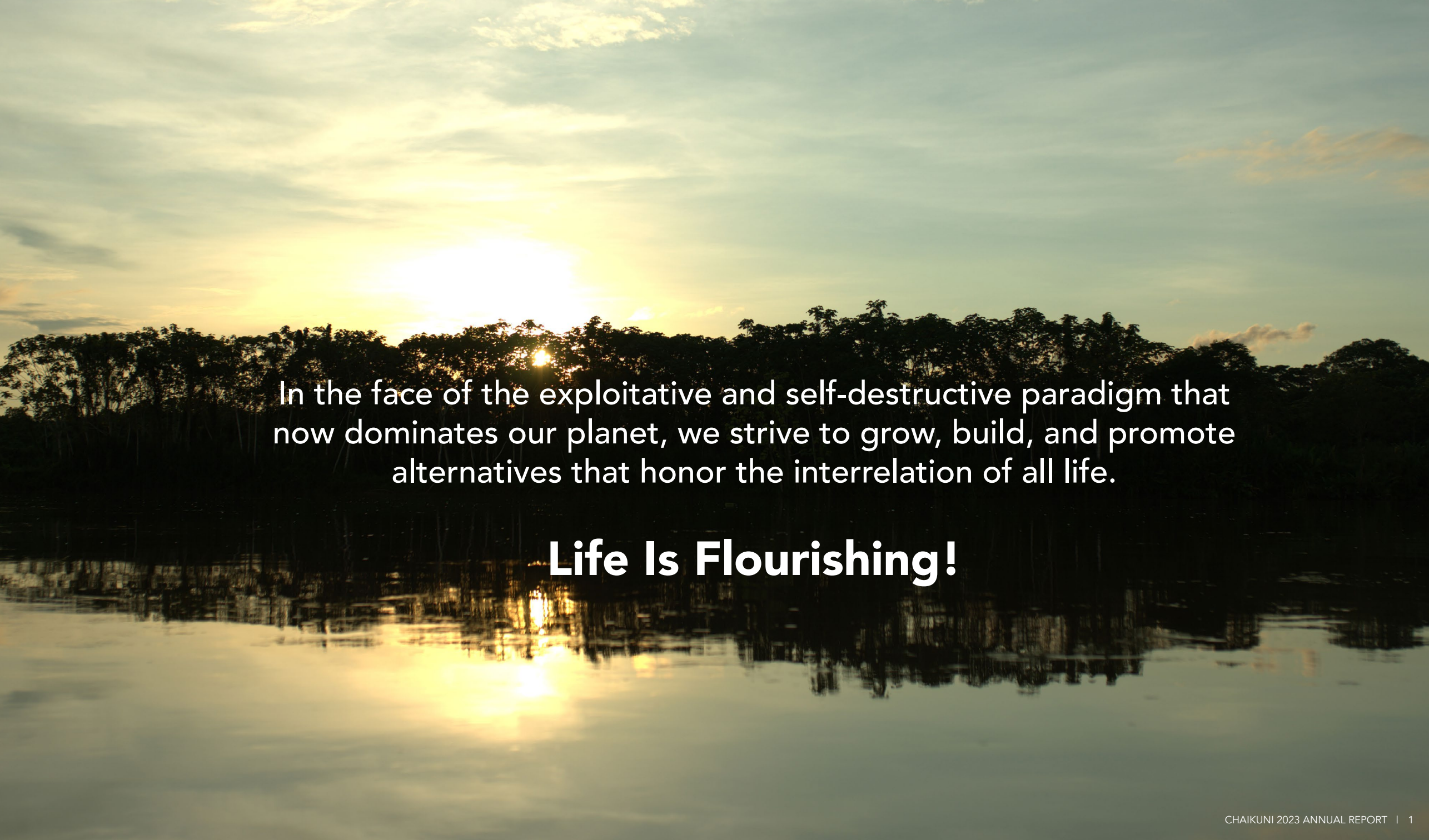
Annual Report

2023



CHAIKUNI
INSTITUTE





In the face of the exploitative and self-destructive paradigm that now dominates our planet, we strive to grow, build, and promote alternatives that honor the interrelation of all life.

Life Is Flourishing!

Letter from the Director

In our part of the world, in the heart of the world's largest tropical rainforest, governments, regional development agencies, international institutions and NGOs alike are putting their hopes in what has become known as bioeconomy. The urgency of a greener economy is also a great chance to rethink the current economic system. In this regard, learning from the value systems of indigenous peoples, putting wellbeing at the center instead of economic growth, is a formidable opportunity.

Today, most indigenous peoples and forest communities relate to the dominant society and the market economy in some way. They all have a certain need for monetary income, usually to cover necessities such as access to health services, education, or means of transport. Lacking such essentials, forest communities are more likely to resort to activities of resource extraction to generate income, with negative consequences for the rainforest. Supporting forest communities in their quest for sustainable livelihoods is vital.

For us at Chaikuni, this does not first and foremost have to mean monetary income. In our agroforestry work we emphasize food sovereignty for the wellbeing of the family, the revalorization of traditional knowledge, and the recovery of local agrobiodiversity. But earning an income from the surplus production, the

sale of valuable medicinal, fruit or timber species that were integrated in the agroforestry plot, and the transformation of produce into value-added products is also a fundamental element of our work.

We often observe that decades of largely unsuccessful state projects and interventions by private actors have led communities to expect that the state or other outsiders should "pay", "do the project" or "give something", installing a certain passivity in local people. But the rich traditions and knowledge of Amazonian peoples has historically equipped them to live well as part of the rainforest ecosystem. At Chaikuni, we believe that a key in any of our projects and interactions with Amazonian families is to focus on their agency, (re)empowering them, leading them to find new confidence in their knowledge systems and believing that they themselves can do the most to improve their lives, even with limited outside support.

This past year, one of the most encouraging aspects of our work has been to engage with, train and empower four Kukama women to become agroforestry promoters. Adilia, Celia, Gilda, and Juanita have blossomed in their new roles in their communities. The women have facilitated our work visits and have been the focal points for agroforestry activities in their communities, supporting several families. They also started to see

the work as a small business opportunity for themselves, producing seedlings and organic fertilizers, which not only improve the productivity in their gardens and chacras, but also lets them earn a small extra income.

Throughout the following pages of this Annual Report, you may read more about the inspiring stories of the four promotaras as well as other women, young indigenous students, leaders, and Amazonian families that worked with Chaikuni in 2023.

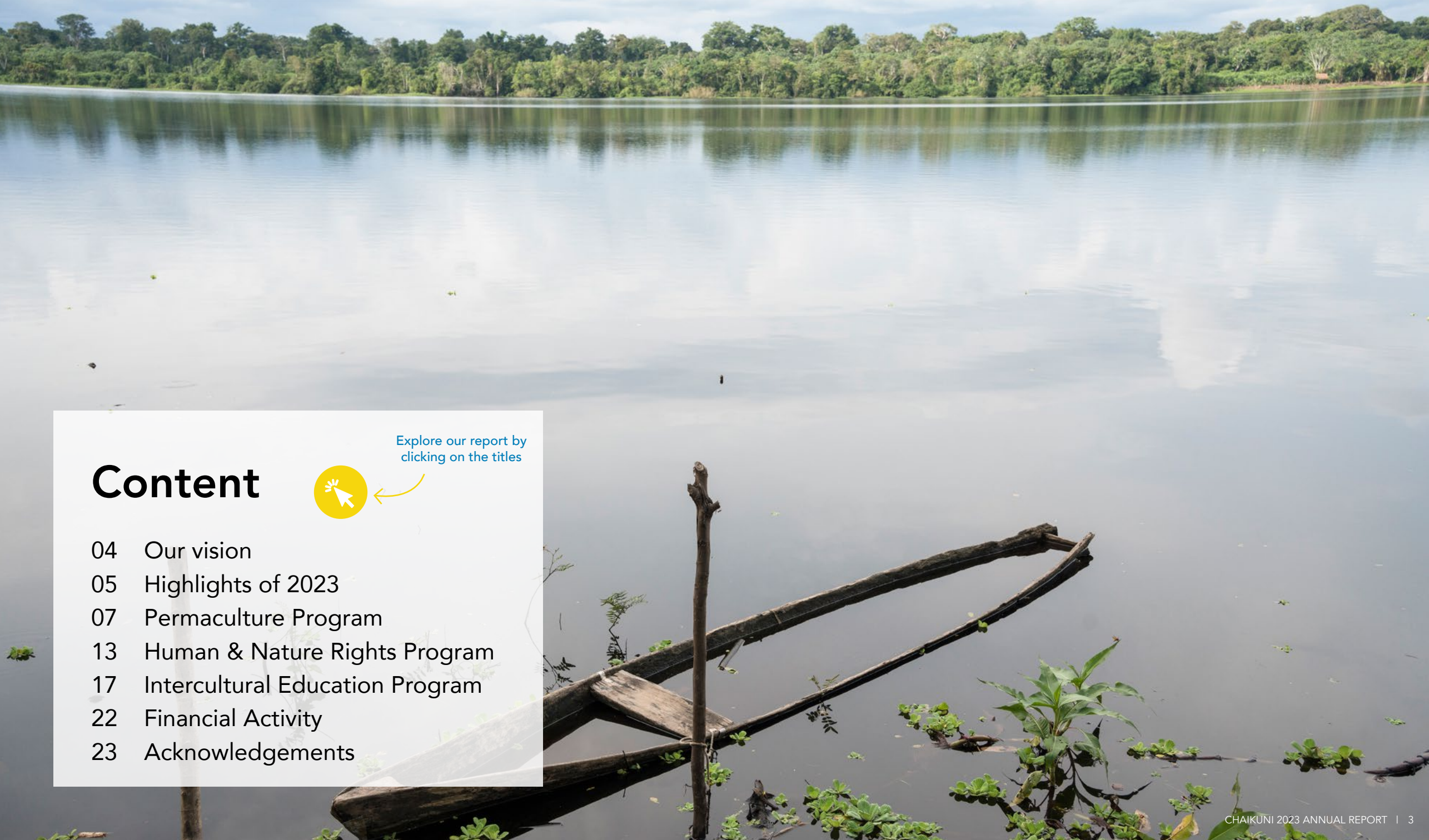
As the interest in diverse amazonian agroforestry systems as a climate solution and source for local wellbeing is growing, along with a sense of urgency to protect the Amazon, its rivers, peoples, and rich traditions is gaining more recognition, we thank you for your continued support over the years and invite you to keep being part of the movement for a thriving Amazon and a flourishing life.

Warmly,



Stefan Kistler
Executive Director





Explore our report by
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Our Vision

By 2030, the indigenous understanding of “buen vivir” (good living) is recognized as a guiding principle for well-being and is widely adopted by institutions, organizations, businesses, and individuals alike.

Regenerative ways of living and production systems based on permaculture ethics and ancestral wisdom are widely embraced throughout the Amazon and beyond. Soils are restored and ecosystems regenerated, producing abundance for everyone.

A society which values cultural diversity and honors indigenous wisdom, generates equitable, reciprocal, and thriving living systems.

Governments legally recognize and uphold Indigenous Nation’s Rights with integrity, in particular the autonomy over their territories and the rights to their culture and identity.

Indigenous Peoples, stewards of their territories, are powerfully connected to their ancestral traditions, celebrating their language, knowledge, and identity, giving rise to the realization of an inclusive, intercultural, and equitable world.

People are (re)connected with themselves, their communities, and all other beings, forming a healthy and harmonious coexistence between all beings.

Highlights

JANUARY:

With our support, Kukama women from the Marañón river visit women water and rights defenders in the Andean region of Cajamarca, to share experiences about water and territorial defense and renew their commitment to defend the Marañón River.

MARCH

We conduct the first workshop of our “Promoters of Good Living” program with young indigenous students. Over three days, the students critically reflect on interculturality, diverse concepts of development, and the role they can play in promoting the “buen vivir” (good living) within their communities.

MAY

The improved plant nursery at our Permaculture Center becomes fully operational, producing seedlings for our demonstration plots and our allied local communities. This month we also recorded the largest harvest of the year at our Center: 720 kg of a variety of 57 species, including vegetables, fruits, and medicinal plants.

FEBRUARY:

We visit the Kukama communities of Nuevo San Juan, Shapajilla, Parinari, and Tangarana to present and kickstart our new agroforestry project. Each community selects one woman to be the local agroforestry promoter leading the project in their community.

APRIL

The ancestral Shipibo healers of Asomashk travel to 19 remote communities in the Ucayali Region attending 619 patients. This marks the tenth and final intercultural health brigade, delivering health services to areas which lack public health provision. With our support, Asomashk was able to reach 98% of the designated Shipibo communities and attend over 5,000 patients throughout this campaign.

JUNE

As part of an initiative led by the Iquitos-based regional indigenous organization ORPIO to protect the territories of indigenous peoples living in isolation and initial contact, we provide a week-long agroforestry and beekeeping training to ten indigenous representatives from the Matsés, Kapanawa, and Awajún peoples.





Highlights

JULY

We conduct the last of a series of four training sessions for families from neighboring communities, during which we covered topics such as pruning, natural fertilization, grafting, management of citrus trees, family nurseries, and various agroecological techniques. These training sessions not only strengthen their skills but also foster knowledge exchange and consolidate our relationships.



SEPTEMBER

We sign a cooperation agreement with the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation (GTANW) to strengthen the implementation of strategies for forest regeneration in the Wampis territory. A few weeks later we receive two young Wampis for a month-long internship at our Center.



NOVEMBER

The local court in Nauta holds the hearing for the lawsuit presented by the women of Huaynakana Kamatahuara Kana, against Petroperú and other state entities, demanding recognition of the Marañón River as a legal entity, with an inherent right to be free of contamination.

AUGUST

We teach our very first and new course, "Traditional Knowledge for Self-Sufficiency," providing participants with skills and knowledge to design and implement regenerative projects based on the indigenous concept of Sumaq Kawsay (good living).

OCTOBER

Joining over 20 organizations, we take part in a large protest against the mining concession granted in the Nanay River basin, which is the source of drinking water for the city of Iquitos. We also participate in the media campaign "the Marañón River is a Living Being" alongside local, national, and international organizations, leading up to the court hearing for the rights of the Marañón River.

DECEMBER

Our Chaikuni organic products line ends the year on a high note, achieving a record-breaking month in sales. The improvement and growth of our organic products is significant both for our work with communities and our own financial sustainability.

PERMACULTURE PROGRAM

A group of people, including men and women, are gathered in a lush, green garden setting. They are working with large, vibrant green leaves, possibly banana leaves, which are being used to create a structure or barrier. The scene is outdoors, with trees and a wooden building visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation and learning in a natural environment.

Since its inception in 2012, our Permaculture Program has been recovering and investigating healthy and regenerative ways to interact with our environment. We bridge traditional indigenous land-management techniques with more recent insights from the fields of permaculture and agroecology to develop sustainable and integrated land-use alternatives.

Today our main focus is the promotion of diverse non-burning Amazonian agroforestry systems and native beekeeping, as viable alternatives for food sovereignty and income generation for Amazonian communities, all the while contributing to the mitigation of climate change.

In 2023, we were able to expand our agroforestry work with Kukama women and their communities. This expansion included consolidating the agroforestry plots of families around our Permaculture Center, forging new alliances with important indigenous organizations, strengthening our educational programs, and further developing our ecological product line.

STRENGTHENING AGROFORESTRY CAPACITIES

A vital aspect of our work is to help the people we work with to build new capacities, and empower them to be leaders of change in control of their own lives. The agroforestry work we promote is largely based on knowledge that indigenous and local forest people already possess. This makes it easy for them to relate to what we promote and increases the success and sustainability of our interventions. Introducing a few new elements from the fields of permaculture and agroecology, we continued delivering a series of technical workshops and “escuelas de campo” (field schools) throughout 2023, helping the families improve their chacras and ultimately their livelihoods. The training we provided included simple techniques that families can apply to recover scarce and high-value forest species, as well as enhance and diversify their agricultural production with native or adapted fruit tree species, medicinal plants, vegetables, and honey production.



As has been a longstanding tradition for us, our workshops bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Indigenous peoples, local families, as well as indigenous students, engineers, and international visitors come together in a space where they not only learn but also exchange and appreciate a wide range of diverse knowledge.

The five main pillars of our Permaculture Program are:



Demonstration of permaculture principles, practices, and technologies at our center



Outreach work to strengthen food sovereignty with local communities



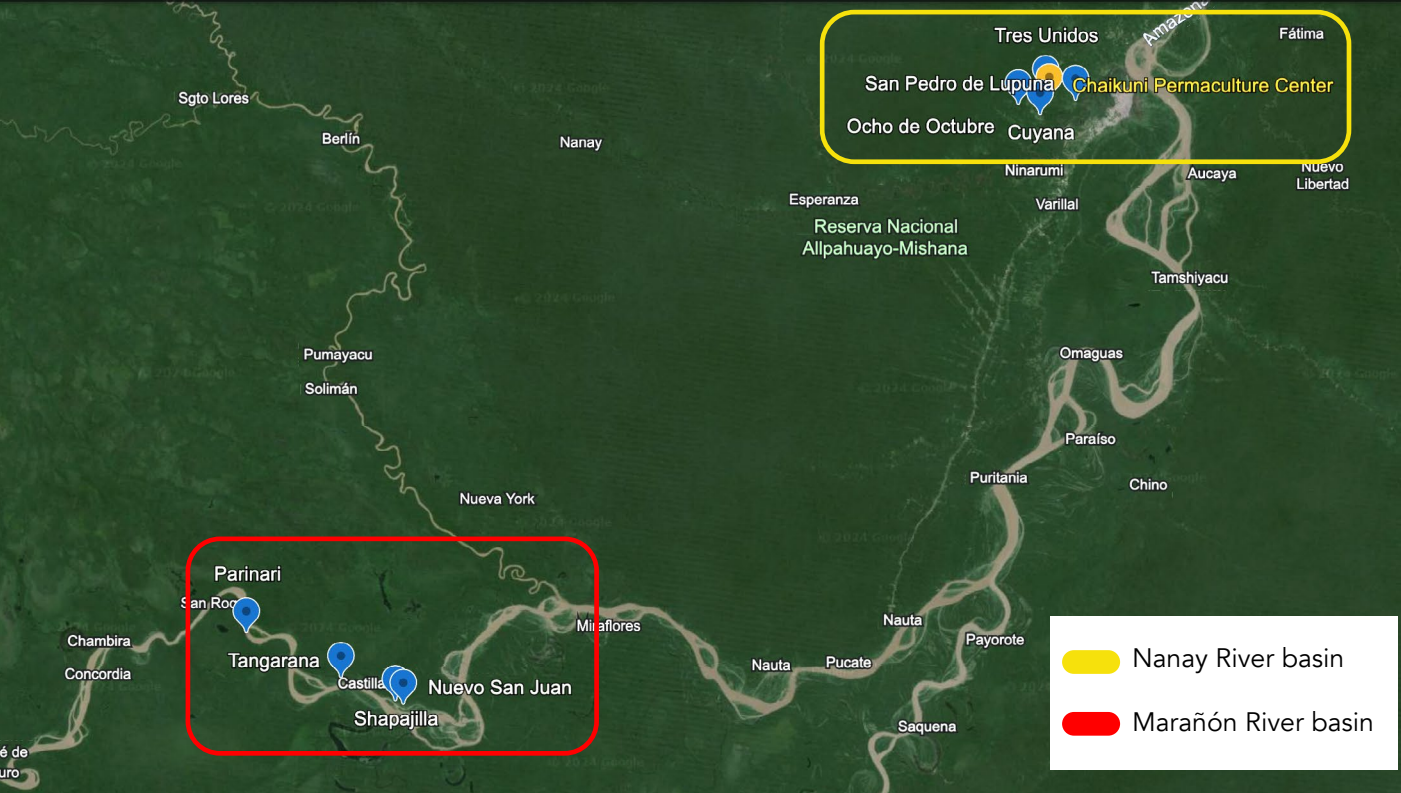
Supporting market access to local families



Research to generate knowledge and recover traditional wisdom



Environmental education



Consolidating Bonds with Committed Families in the Nanay River Basin

Since the foundation of Chaikuni we have maintained a special relationship with the communities living around our Permaculture Center in the Nanay River basin, supporting them in various ways. Throughout 2023 we worked with a group of 16 particularly committed and motivated families from Tres Unidos, San Pedro de Lupuna, Cuyana, and Ocho de Octubre. We organized a series of technical workshops, paid personalized field visits to the families' farms and brought them along on two guided exchange visits to productive farms in the Iquitos area.

A crucial aspect of our approach involves challenging the notion that Western systems and knowledge inherently surpass traditional cultures. Instead, we strive to reshape the dynamics between participants and Chaikuni. Our work is envisioned as a supportive platform that facilitates learning, fosters exchange, and empowers individuals to implement their own initiatives.



“

We learned that permaculture is the way to work the land, to grow plants without destroying the most important thing, which is the organic matter. That is, without burning the soil.

Javier, local community of Tres Unidos

4 full-day technical workshops at our Permaculture Center for over 20 people from nearby communities.

2 exchange visits for participating families, one to a farm specialized in citrus fruits and another to the native plant nursery “Mi Amazonas” specializing in diverse fruit production in agroforestry systems.

27 monitoring and personalized technical assistance visits to the agroforestry plots of 16 families.

Kukama Women Leading Agroforestry Efforts in their Communities in the Marañon

In 2023 we expanded our agroforestry work with Kukama women along the Marañon River thanks to a newly approved project by one of our main donors. Throughout the year we worked with over 20 families from the communities of Nuevo San Juan, Shapajilla, Parinari, and Tangarana to strengthen their agroforestry and beekeeping capacities. Each community chose one woman as their local agroforestry promoter who led the project, closely coordinating with our technical staff.

These women serve as a direct link between families and Chaikuni, playing a pivotal role in the implementation of our agroforestry project with the Kukama families. With the technical training they received at our Center by our staff in March, they were able to offer assistance to families in their communities. Our own technical staff carried out four field visits to the communities, advising the promoters and assisting the participating families.

Both the promotoras and the families demonstrated significant progress, successfully producing seedlings, organic fertilizers, and grafting citrus trees. They not only gained greater autonomy but also began identifying new opportunities to leverage the knowledge acquired, such as selling citrus seedlings and biol (organic fertilizer). The close collaboration with the promotoras and families also provided us with deeper insights into the different realities in the Kukama communities, which allowed us to better orient and adjust our interventions to meet the families' needs and expectations.

Rather than just promoting the installation of agroforestry systems, our "chacras integrales" are tailored to the specific needs and interests of each family



26 families planted **568 seedlings** of various native forest and fruit tree species.

20 families established family nurseries.

Our technical staff conducted **4 trips** to the Marañon River basin, offering **63 personalized technical assistance** and monitoring visits.

“

I would have liked to learn this when I was younger, but I am not yet so old. There's still time [...] Someday my grandchildren will harvest and be able to say 'this was planted by my grandmother'.

Juanita, Agroforestry Promoter



NATIVE BEEKEEPING

As part of our “chacras integrales” initiative, we continued to offer technical guidance on beekeeping and sustainable honey production, focusing on Amazonian stingless bees, known as Melipona bees.

In local communities, the traditional approach to harvesting honey typically starts with felling trees and ends with honey extraction. However, through the technical assistance we provided, families learnt to take care of the bees, harvest honey, and subsequently split the hives, leading to increased production over time without having to get more from the forest.

As pollinators, bees play a crucial role in the natural regeneration of the forest and contribute to enhanced crop productivity. Additionally, honey production serves as an additional source of economic income for families and serves medicinal purposes. This aspect consistently generates significant interest and is warmly welcomed by the communities.

In 2023, a total of 11 families engaged in meliponiculture with our support, leading to the installation of 18 beehives.



New Agroforestry Alliances

In 2023, we entered into new and important partnerships while deepening our relationships and engagement with existing partners, all aimed at advancing regenerative agroforestry practices in the Peruvian Amazon. Our proposal garnered interest from local and indigenous organizations, as well as professionals, resulting in promising collaborative opportunities. Our shared goal is to promote sustainable economic alternatives for Amazonian communities.

In September, we signed a collaboration agreement with the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation (GTANW). The Wampis seek to regenerate and “enrich” (replanting of valuable and threatened tree species) their degraded forest areas, and also look for sustainable economic alternatives for their people. Having learned about our work, they approached us and visited us in June, which resulted in the signing of this important agreement a few months later. As the first action under the new collaboration, we hosted two young Wampis interns at our Center for a month-long training program. Guided by our staff, the interns designed their own projects to address important issues in their communities, such as building a native fruit and timber plant nursery and promoting Wampis traditions and culture in schools.

Earlier in the year, the representative indigenous organization of our Loreto region (ORPIO) reached out to us. They asked us to offer a week-long training on sustainable productive activities, such as agroforestry and native beekeeping, to ten indigenous representatives from remote communities in the Peru-Brazil border region. The training was held in June at our Center. The program to develop sustainable income-generating activities and strengthen food security for communities living in remote areas, is part of ORPIO’s initiative to protect the territories of indigenous peoples in isolation.

We also continued our close collaboration with our local allies, the NGO Camino Verde and the plant nursery “Mi Amazonas”. We share the same aspiration to empower more individuals with the knowledge and skills to implement agroforestry techniques, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient Amazonian ecosystem. We held several coordination meetings with our allies, and “Mi Amazonas” participated and offered technical support in a multitude of our activities with local communities.



Noé initiated the design of a project aimed at constructing and installing a nursery for native fruit and timber plants, with the goal of reforesting his community. On the other hand, Leydi embarked on a project focused on promoting the recovery of Wampis traditions and culture within the school.

CHAIKUNI ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Our local expert, Teresa, and Mirjam, our staff, continued to develop and improve our organic Chaikuni product line. Not only did we expand the range of products, but we also experienced an increase in sales, boosting our motivation to further expand this initiative. We have started exploring alternatives to broaden our market and make our products available in other locations, such as in Iquitos. Our commitment is to demonstrate that it is possible to produce without causing harm to the world around us.



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At the end of my 3 months of immersion in the jungle, I actually couldn't leave [...] I can comfortably say I gained all I had hoped for and so much more.

Laura, volunteer from Australia

Permaculture Inspiration in the Amazon Rainforest

Permaculture, rooted in ancestral traditions and sustainable ways of living worldwide, finds inspiration in traditional Amazonian agricultural practices at our Permaculture Center. Serving local and indigenous Amazonian communities and international visitors alike, our Center aims to demonstrate and promote these practices.

In 2023, we established a new agroforestry plot and continued maintaining and diversifying existing ones, including our sustainable ayahuasca production area. These plots showcase various techniques and illustrate agroforestry systems at different stages of development. Furthermore, we enhanced our vegetable garden around the main building and improved our plant nursery to provide seedlings and plants to our allies and their family chacras. We also created a new area to produce organic fertilizer.

Our volunteer program underwent restructuring to offer a better experience to visitors with diverse skills. We introduced the 2-week Trainee Program for those who do not speak Spanish and/or without prior permaculture knowledge, but have a keen interest in learning about traditional and sustainable Amazonian ways of living. Our Volunteer Program, on the other hand, requires a minimum one-month stay and proficiency in Spanish, offering volunteers the opportunity to play a significant role in our projects. Our courses also took on a new focus, aiming to convey the essence of our work in the Amazon. Thus, our “Traditional Knowledge for Self Sufficiency” course was born, providing participants with a transformational perspective on nature and strategies for creating a thriving environment based on the indigenous concept of Buen Vivir (good living).

7 agroforestry demonstration plots at our Permaculture Center totaling an area of **3.1 hectares**.

3,649 kg of food and **934 kg of medicinal plants** of over 50 different species harvested.

HUMAN & NATURE RIGHTS PROGRAM



Indigenous and traditional societies across the world know and teach us that we are not separate from, but a part of nature. Caring for nature is also caring for ourselves. Not only as humans should we have our basic rights guaranteed, but an increasing community of scholars and organizations are promoting that also rivers, mountains, and other natural entities should have their rights to a healthy existence that is recognized. This will ultimately benefit ourselves.

In 2023, we continued to advocate for human and nature rights, providing support to local and indigenous organizations defending their basic rights to a safe environment free of contamination, and the rights of rivers as living beings.

We supported the Kukama women of Huaynakana Kamatahuara Kana in strengthening their organization, and accompanied them in their lawsuit to demand legal personhood rights for the Marañón River. In Iquitos we joined over 20 local organizations in demanding protection of the Nanay River in the face of new and threatening alluvial gold mining activities. Furthermore, we continued supporting the campaign of the ancestral Shipibo healers of ASOMASHK to bring intercultural health to remote communities and unity to the Shipibo-Konibo people.

SAVING OUR SACRED RIVERS

The lives of Amazonian communities are intrinsically linked to the rivers and bodies of water that surround them. They hold significance beyond their utilitarian value—they are part of their traditional way of life and spirituality. Yet, extractive activities and new projects continuously threaten their integrity. Initiatives and attempts to protect them are obstructed or ignored. In our Loreto region, indigenous and local organizations united to confront these threats and save these vital life-giving rivers. At the Chaikuni Institute, we helped amplify these voices with unwavering commitment.



Kukama Women Protecting the Marañón River

Since 2018 we've been collaborating with the Kukama women from Huaynakana Kamatahuara Kana with the aim to strengthen their organization and help them achieve their goals. We've worked on topics like gender, empowerment, oil contamination, territorial protection, and for the last couple of years on agroforestry. In 2023, besides the agroforestry work, the main focus has been on strengthening their organizational capacities to continue defending their Marañón River.

Earlier in the year we were able to organize and accompany an exchange visit of three Kukama leaders to other female human rights defenders and socio-environmental leaders in the Cajamarca highland region of Peru. During this event, the Kukama women engaged with counterparts from organizations such as "Women Defenders of Life

Despite its importance, the Marañón has been adversely affected by infrastructure projects and oil extraction for decades.

Our Human & Nature Rights Program focuses on:



Female leadership



Right to clean water



Practical and ecological community solutions

and Pachamama” and the “Cooperative of Women Defenders and Entrepreneurs of the Condebamba Valley,” sharing experiences in water defense action and territorial protection. The Marañón River quite literally connects the representatives that participated in the encounter. In 2021, Huaynakana filed a lawsuit seeking rights for the Marañón River and its tributaries in order to protect it, as well as the communities living along its shores, from continuous oil contamination and detrimental infrastructure projects. The lawsuit also includes a strong intercultural component, emphasizing the spiritual significance that rivers hold for the Kukama people, highlighting the importance of recognizing and respecting the customary land rights and the ways of life of indigenous peoples. Finally, this year, the long-awaited court hearing took place in November. The Kukama women were well prepared to state their case, supported by national and international legal experts.

Besides contributing with important logistical support, we also collaborated on the communication campaign

“The Marañón River is a Living Being” to help raise awareness about the rights of nature and the ongoing lawsuit, in alliance with other local and international organizations. As we await the legal outcome next year, regardless of the result, we are convinced that the lawsuit has already set an important precedent in our country.

Additionally, this year we provided organizational guidance to the leadership of Huaynakana on project management, funding, budgeting, and reporting of funds. We offered specialized advice on crucial topics, including carbon credit mechanisms, and supported their participation in the management and decision-making processes within the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, the ancestral territory of the Kukama people. We also supported their annual congress, a pivotal event where they gather federation members and allies to present their progress and discuss key issues related to the protection of their rights and the Marañón.



© Miguel Araoz/Quisca

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We want rivers to be respected. They want to live peacefully, just as we desire tranquility in our lives. [...] Thanks to them, we have what we do. Without rivers, we wouldn't have our mountains, our rainforests. What we are asking for is not only for the Kukama people, not just for the Amazonians, but for the country and the world.

Mariluz, president of Huaynakana Kamatahuara Kana



A Battle Against Mining to Save the Nanay River

The Nanay River provides 95% of Iquitos' water supply and is vital for sustaining the forest communities along its course. For years, illegal alluvial gold mining has detrimentally impacted this Amazon tributary, yet the government has only made weak attempts to address the issue. As if this wasn't grave enough, in August, the central government granted an alarming 1000-hectare mining concession in the upper Nanay, which ignited outrage among local organizations, compelling urgent action to address this problem.

Under the leadership of the Water Defense Committee, a local civil society collective with whom we've been collaborating sporadically throughout the years, together we joined over 20 local organizations in demanding the annulment of the concession and action against the numerous illegal gold mining dredges. Ini-

tiatives included a forum, two mass protests, numerous appearances in local media, and advocacy meetings with authorities. However, by year-end, despite some statements made by local authorities in favor of protecting the Nanay, there was no significant progress or any indication from the government to revoke the concession. We will continue our advocacy for the preservation of this vital river and against all legal and illegal alluvial gold mining with renewed vigor and new actions next year.

For a United Shipibo Nation

In 2023 we continued our fundraising efforts for the Shipibo healers of Asomashk and their "Onanyabo in Action" initiative, which started in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic. Our support helped to send intercultural health

brigades to distant Shipibo communities, where they offered intercultural medical attention to almost 2500 patients who otherwise completely lack access to health services. The four brigades in 2023, which each spent two to three weeks in the field, found abandoned health posts and the lack of access to clean water in many communities, the latter contributing to a large number of cases of intestinal parasites and malnutrition, especially among children. The Onanyabo healers further addressed psychosocial and mental health challenges which arose from the pandemic.

After 10 brigades had reached 120 Shipibo communities or 98% of the targeted population since the campaign started in 2022, Asomashk was able to redirect its focus from community visits to a more concealed but central purpose of their initiative: to work on consolidating the unity of the Shipibo-Konibo indigenous people through the recovery, reevaluation and strengthening of their unique cultural and medical tradition. With that purpose, in the second half of the year, Asomashk organized monthly gatherings for representatives from different Shipibo organizations, including key political Shipibo leaders. These spiritual retreats, which included ayahuasca ceremonies, were held with the objective to generate a space for reflection on the use and practice of their ancestral medicine, their cultural knowledge, cosmovision, and spirituality in the current context, aiming for cultural

empowerment and seeking to create a balance among Shipibo-Konibo leaders. Increasingly more Shipibo leaders and organizations participated in the gatherings, and Asomashk reported to us that they managed to resolve several differences between the leaders of different indigenous organizations.

In 2023, Asomashk's successful initiative also managed to attract additional attention and funding from another important international donor, allowing them to expand the impact of the initiative and significantly strengthen their organization.

Since the start of the campaign last year, **10 brigades** reached **120 communities**, and attended over **5000 patients**.



INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

For nearly a decade, we have been contributing to breaking down barriers to higher education for indigenous youth in the Loreto region through our Intercultural Education Program Sui Sui. In 2023, we started a three-year project supported by a new partner, the German aid agency Misereor. The project allows us to continue our longstanding work with the indigenous student organization OEPIAP, supporting their advocacy efforts and demands for greater interculturality and equal opportunities for indigenous students in higher education.



We continued to offer academic tutoring classes, psychological support, guidance on thesis writing, internships at our Permaculture Center, and a range of workshops for personal development to support the indigenous students. At the same time, at the heart of the project lies a newly designed training program for the students to become advocates for the indigenous vision of good or harmonious living or Buen Vivir. The initiative aims at strengthening the identity, intercultural skills and critical thinking of a group of dedicated indigenous students, supporting them in their endeavor to complete higher education and ultimately, as the future leaders of the Amazon, to contribute to the well being of their communities.



The Dream of Higher Education

In Peru, indigenous youth that pursue higher education are confronted with a set of great challenges and barriers. These include a lack of economic resources, educational gaps between rural and urban areas, cultural shocks, discrimination, the lack of family support networks when moving to the cities, and a lack of intercultural awareness and adequate measures in all educational institutions. Despite these adversities, many young individuals demonstrate great resilience and perseverance.

2023 was marked by moments of uncertainty regarding the academic calendar of the local university, UNAP. Delays in the start of classes and a national strike of public universities from September to the end of the year did little to catch up on the

delay caused by the pandemic. We tried to turn this difficulty into an opportunity. During this time, our program staff intensified its support to the students, advising and accompanying several students in planning their thesis work and pre-professional internships. We also continued offering academic tutoring, which becomes more specialized as students advance in their studies. The continuity of women's circles, a longstanding and important activity since the program's inception, provided young women with spaces for reflection. Furthermore, we conducted personalized psychological sessions and engaged the students in artistic activities, fostering self-discovery and deepening emotional connections. We also advised a few students and their small business ventures (see text box on the next page)

This program has defined the following lines of work:



Improvement of living and study conditions of indigenous students in Iquitos



Strengthening OEPIAP's organizational and advocacy capacities



Raising awareness about the challenges for indigenous students



Academic tutoring and personal development



Advocacy and network building with regards to intercultural education and indigenous peoples



SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS

Felicino, Euner, and Ronal are the three young Awajún students who created Yaas – an initiative that arose from the necessity to pay their study expenses. This small business of making and selling necklaces, bracelets, and earrings inspired by the Awajún culture, has grown much beyond to generate benefits for the women of their communities who provide supplies for the handicrafts, and for other indigenous students that take part in making the jewelry. With the guidance and technical assistance from Chaikuni, they were able to obtain a small grant from the state program Turismo Emprende to keep promoting and growing their business venture. Their products have drawn the attention of ethnic-inspired designers and fashion stores in Lima, opening market access opportunities in Peru’s capital.

Felicino, Euner, and Ronal now envision rescuing and strengthening the use of traditional materials such as huayruro (*Ormosia coccinea*) and huitillo (*Renealmia alpinia*) seeds by propagating their own plants and reforesting areas in their communities with these species.

Accompanying these young individuals is a long-term process we’ve been committed to since 2014. Witnessing their personal growth and seeing them succeed against all odds is great motivation and a true delight for us. Over the years, we’ve seen an increasing number of students that have successfully completed their studies. In 2023, 13 new indigenous youth belonging to OEPIAP managed to get into university or a technical college. They belong to six indigenous peoples; Wampis, Awajún, Shawi, Kichwa, Arabela and Ticuna. Unfortunately only two of the 13 are women. Excitingly enough, eight indigenous students belonging to OEPIAP finished their studies in 2023. This is one more than last year. If we look back three years, this yearly average was close to five, and 15 years back only two students per year finished their studies. The trend is thus pointing in the right direction, although no female student finished her studies in 2023. Given the obstacles indigenous youth face along the way, as depicted above, in a society that refuses to embrace cultural diversity beyond rhetoric, these achievements are significant.

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Women's circles, for me, are like a space for girls, where there are many moments in which you feel free to express yourself, to share what you feel, what you have lived, what you dream of.

Gimena, indigenous Achuar student

13 new indigenous youth got into a university or a technical college.

8 indigenous students finished their studies in 2023.

Promoters of Good Living

Indigenous students enter an academic system that seriously lacks interculturality. Higher education institutions don't take into account or prepare indigenous students to address the specific needs of their communities. They largely sideline traditional knowledge, emphasizing western development models and Peruvian mainstream society. Indigenous students are faced with navigating a reality that consists of what they know from their upbringing in their communities and mainstream life in the city.

The objective of the "Promoters of Good Living" course that we initiated in 2023 is to support the indigenous students in Iquitos with developing skills, values, and attitudes for critical interculturality, which should allow them to strengthen their identity and equip them with tools to better orientate themselves in a westernized society and education system. Ultimately, strongly rooted, confident and empowered indigenous youth will contribute

to the well-being of Amazonian indigenous peoples and their communities.

In the first year of this initiative, we had the students engage in discussions where they critically reflected on interculturality, different visions of development, development projects implemented, and changes that they observe in their communities. Through exchanges, debates, cultural activities, and different practices, they began to reflect on the roles they themselves can play for their communities. The students also started to brainstorm and formulate personal projects that they would like to implement in their villages.

The Buen Vivir or Good Living of indigenous peoples is not based on growth and material accumulation but on the balance between humans and the other beings that make up nature as a whole.

Critical interculturality aims for fairness in cultural interactions, ensuring that everyone can equally exercise their fundamental rights. As a result, new shared values and ways of identity, citizenship, and forms of relationship may develop.

It challenges attempts to force specific purposes and values as the only valid ones and questions social and political structures.



More Indigenous Interns at Our Permaculture Center

Thanks to the agreement signed in 2022 with the Faculty of Forestry of the local university UNAP, we continued to host students at our Permaculture Center for their pre-professional internships. The agreement allows the students to get their internships with us formally recognized as part of their studies. For us, they provide valuable research and learning opportunities. In 2023, four indigenous students completed internships at our Center.

Jeyter, a Kukama student in his final semester, conducted a study on species diversity and economic valuation of a non-burning agroforestry system. Ronal, an Awajún student, evaluated the quantity and growth of the medicinal plant Ayahuasca (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) planted on the land of our Permaculture Center. Lorena, also from the Awajún people, conducted a census of seed-dispersing timber species to reproduce them later in nurseries as part of her second and final internship period. By the end of the year, José Pacunda, also Awajún, began his internship, eager to learn new forms of community organization and “development” while seeking to strengthen territorial sovereignty.



“

I chose to study Environmental Management because I was passionate about conservation and the environment. At that time, there was an oil spill in a community near mine and it was a huge problem. There wasn't a person to lead, to provide a good solution, to help the company and the community understand how to solve that problem.

Jose, indigenous Awajún intern

Environmental Education for Indigenous Teachers

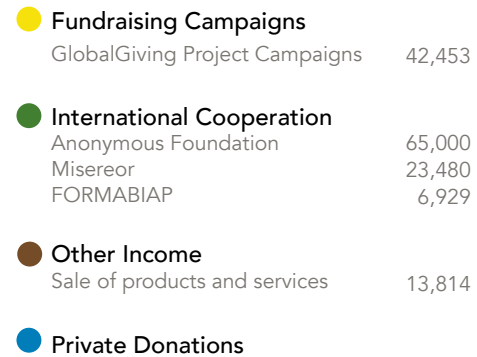
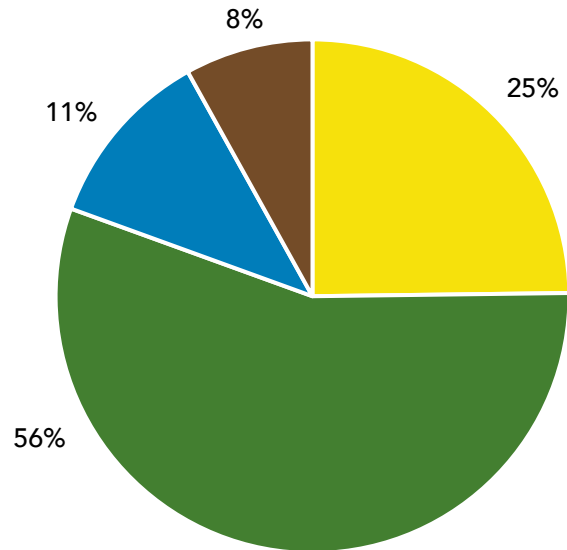
For 34 years the Bilingual Teacher Training Program (FORMABIAP) has been producing indigenous teachers in the Peruvian Amazon. Once their degree is completed, they are able to return to their communities to teach in a bilingual and culturally relevant manner. FORMABIAP has been an important ally for our Sui Sui program since its start in 2014. In 2022 FORMABIAP asked us to support one of their donor funded projects, assisting them in integrating environmental topics into their academic curriculum.

In addition to supporting specific activities conducted on their campus located just outside of Iquitos, in 2023 we accompanied them on visits to the Kukama communities of Atenas and San José de Parinari, where students were undertaking their pre-professional practices and implementing projects for the promotion and conservation of local biodiversity. As part of these visits, we engaged in dialogues and visits to the families of the students to learn about their projects and educational needs, in order to offer recommendations for improvement.

Financial Activity

Revenue & Support

International Cooperation	95,408 USD
Fundraising Campaigns	42,452 USD
Private Donations	19,497 USD
Other Income	13,814 USD
Total Revenue & Support	171,171 USD¹
Change in Net Assets ²	-31,079 USD

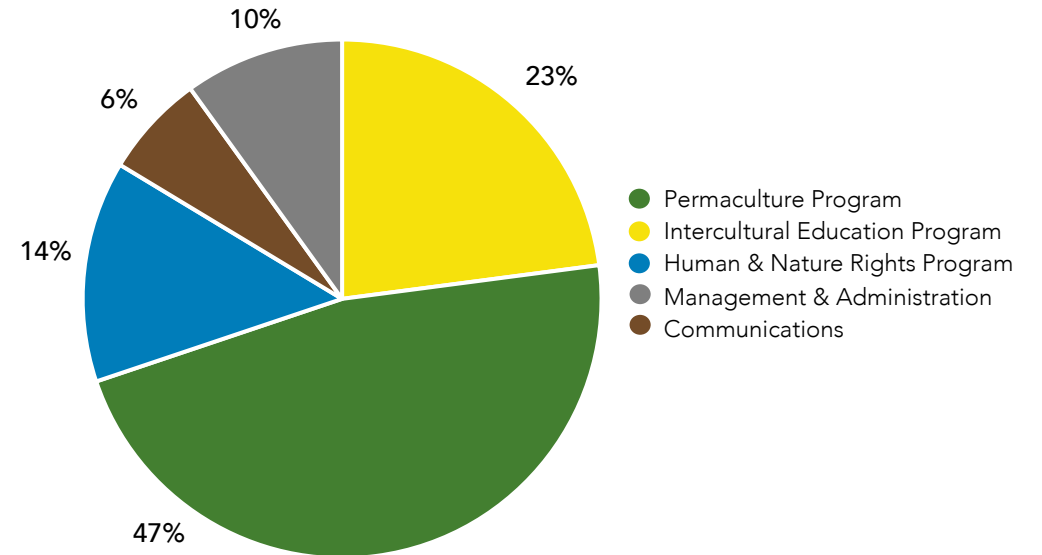


1. Services directly paid for by the TWL from which Chaikuni benefits, such as office rent, internet, and river transportation, are not included in this amount. In 2023, the TWL also generously donated a new solar panel system to our Center.

2. The deficit was covered with private funds raised in previous years.

Expenses

Permaculture Program	94,894 USD
Intercultural Education Program	46,360 USD
Human & Nature Rights Program	27,921 USD
Management & Administration	20,118 USD
Communications	12,957 USD
Total Expenses	202,250 USD



Acknowledgments

With special thanks to our donors and partners, and with profound gratitude to all of the individuals who support Chaikuni with their actions, time, energy, and donations.

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Sarah Kerremans, Associate

993 Putumayo street
Iquitos, Loreto (Peru)
RUC: 205 6711 3923
Email: info@chaikuni.org

Editorial Direction: Stefan Kistler
Editorial Design: Karina Ormeño
Proofreading and edits: Connie del Castillo & David Hill
Photography: Macarena Tabja, Euner Kajekui, Mirjam Blommert,
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