



CULTURE FIRST

AN APPROACH TO INDIGENOUS CARBON PROJECTS

Alto Mayo, Peru Exchange 2024

Sharing experiences in Amazonia

“Our mission is to support indigenous communities on their path to achieving their own goals and worldview, as they face the growing threats of the Amazon.”

Claudio Schneider
Conservation
International Peru



Let's heal
the forest

In northeastern Peru, home to endless forests, lies the Alto Mayo. This ecosystem is transcendental for the country due to its rich biodiversity, but also because of the challenges it faces, with one of the highest deforestation rates in the Peruvian Amazon. The Tajimat Pujut initiative - Awajún for “good living” - is being successfully implemented here, led by the Regional Awajún Indigenous Federation of Alto Mayo (Feriaam) and Conservation International. Its purpose is to improve the quality of life of the Awajún people through the conservation of their forests and the implementation of sustainable economic activities.

LEARN MORE

A group of leaders of indigenous carbon projects came here to exchange experiences of their work and explore new opportunities in the design and governance of these environmental initiatives.

Representatives from countries such as Australia, Canada, Guyana, the United States and Colombia also sought to understand in situ the Peruvian experience: how they are organized around this project, what opportunities they have found and what challenges they face. Participants shared their expectations of what they wanted to find on this inspiring trip, and apply it in their respective communities.

The group traveled to the Huascayacu native community to learn about the progress of the work carried out in collaboration with Conservation International. The first stop was to discover how this community is streng-

thening its culture and governance through different lines of work, training new young leaders to support their authorities in decision-making.

Participants visited the communal library and then the Awajún Propagation Center. This space houses a high-impact project that benefits more than 230 families and focuses on forest recovery. Here vanilla seedlings are produced through sustainable planting systems, and there is a laboratory to produce natural biofertilizers and fertilizer controllers.

“**The fire projects in Australia were never about money, they were about getting people back to the country.**”

Tyronne Garstone
Kimberley Land Council,
Australia

PROTAGONISTS OF THE CHANGE

The event organized by Conservation International Peru, with the support of the BHP Foundation and the Pollination Foundation, brought together representatives of various indigenous organizations such as Feriam, Codepisam and Aidesep from Peru and the Desert Indigenous Alliance from Australia. The meeting was attended by members of the Awajún communities of Peru, the Rupununi region of Guyana, the Metis community of Canada and Australian traditional owners, as well as delegates from three partners of the Environmental Resilience Program: the Alto Mayo Awajún Communities Landscape Project, Forest Conservation in Manitoba's Boreal and IDA Keeping the Desert Connected. Conservation International representatives from Peru, Colombia and Guyana also participated, along with Landesa, BHP Foundation and Pollination Foundation.



Amanda Karst
Métis (Canadá)

Nelsith Sangama
Pueblo Kichwa (Perú)

Edward Cahuaza
Fabiola Yaun
Wilfredo Tsamach
Cristian Wajajai
Pueblo Awajún (Perú)

Nicholas Cyril
Vitus Antone
Pueblo Wapishana (Guyana)

Tyronne Garstone
Pueblo Bardi en
Broome (Australia)

Braedan (Bayo) Taylor
Pueblo Karajarri (Australia
Occidental)



Feriam: Awajún Indigenous Federaton of the Alto Mayo
Aidesep: Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest
Codepisam: Coordinator for the Development and Defense of the Indigenous Peoples of San Martín.





KEY MESSAGES

WHAT DID WE LEARN?



Carbon, in the context of the projects, is not the ultimate goal, but a strategic tool, with an alternative economic approach, to achieve “good living”, taking care of nature and people.



The project must include all the proposals of the indigenous peoples, respecting their rights, the management of their territories and the sharing of benefits.



We need communities that are committed to long-term projects. To achieve this, we must focus on their needs and priorities.



We need to conduct more thorough and objective feasibility assessments of carbon projects. This will allow us to address the real challenges facing these initiatives.



Sustainability of conservation outcomes is critical, therefore, **market opportunities must be explored** and developed to ensure long-term funding and community well-being.



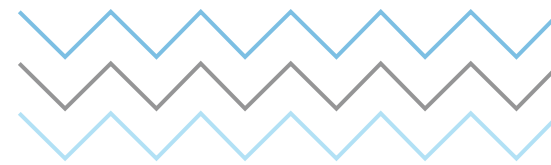
VALUE

The group explored the perspectives of knowledge and valuation of experiences in the Alto Naranjillo and Shampuyacu communities. They also participated in a discussion on consultation processes in carbon projects.

Access to Alto Naranjillo, one of the 16 Awajún communities of Alto Mayo, is through a steep path of stones and vegetation that leads to the central maloca. The impressive view is in tune with the warm welcome offered by the women and the Pamuk (chief of the community). This place is the scene of dedicated forest conservation and restoration work, which promotes a sense of belonging and a real commitment of its inhabitants.

Half an hour away is Shampuyacu, where the premises of the , Association became the setting for a presentation by Leslie Hannay of Landesa*. She addressed one of the key stages in the implementation of a carbon project: community consultation and consent. The team also participated in a group dynamic that allowed them to analyze cases in Brazil and Ecuador and identify possible improvements in these processes.

Then, it was time to go deep into the community to get to know a natural sanctuary where trees are contemplated with gratitude and respect: the Nuwa Forest, nuwa meaning wo-



“As Aidesep, we believe it is important to integrate all the suggestions from this exchange into a joint effort, prioritizing effective communication that considers differences and impacts on both nature and humanity.”

Nelsith Sangama
Aidesep Peru



* Landesa is an organization that works to secure the land rights of millions of people, mostly rural women and men, to provide opportunities and promote social justice.





man in Awajun. In this ecosystem, a group of courageous women have taken the lead in protecting their environment, preserving their ancestral knowledge. Here the rescue and planting of native species, the collection of seeds and the cultivation of medicinal plants are developed.

After enjoying a pleasant banquet of fruits and traditional dishes offered by the nuwas, the group explored two plots. The first, a space where restoration work is being carried out, symbolizes a great change: where once was a degraded land for the intensive cultivation of products such as coffee, now there are more than 1,200 forest seedlings. In the second plot, the focus is on planting cocoa and a native species of vanilla, the pompona. These actions pave the way for expanding this variety in the market and generating new opportunities for the community.



Shampuyacu:
The value of a
standing forest



Awajún
life plan



KEY MESSAGES

WHAT DO WE VALUE?



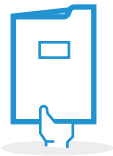
The indigenous community's understanding of their role in nature is key for the implementation of the projects to be integral and contribute to the sustainability we seek to achieve.



The carbon project in the Amazon prioritizes the work with the life plans of the communities, under an integral vision of the forest and with an indigenous perspective.



Communication and engagement is not just a one-off FPIC* process, but a management that must be responsive and executed throughout the project.



It is important to develop a communication plan for the community that uses a universal language to ensure that all people understand and make informed decisions.



We must involve women in the project, because they are essential to achieve better results due to their commitment and management skills.



Carbon projects should integrate indigenous values into their development and implementation, rather than replicating Western models of governance and economics.



*Free, prior and informed consent.



A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT

Effective Community Consultation and Consent

The presentation by Leslie Hannay of Landesa reviewed strategic concepts for proper community consultation and understanding the key steps in implementing a carbon project. The following graphic elaborates on some key aspects of the presentation.

GENDER

Women should have a greater voice in the decision-making process



CONSULTATION PRACTICES AND CONSENT

Trust is essential in a process that involves everyone



For the success of carbon projects, we must consider:

BENEFIT SHARING

It is important to work on the implementation of a benefit-sharing mechanism



LAW

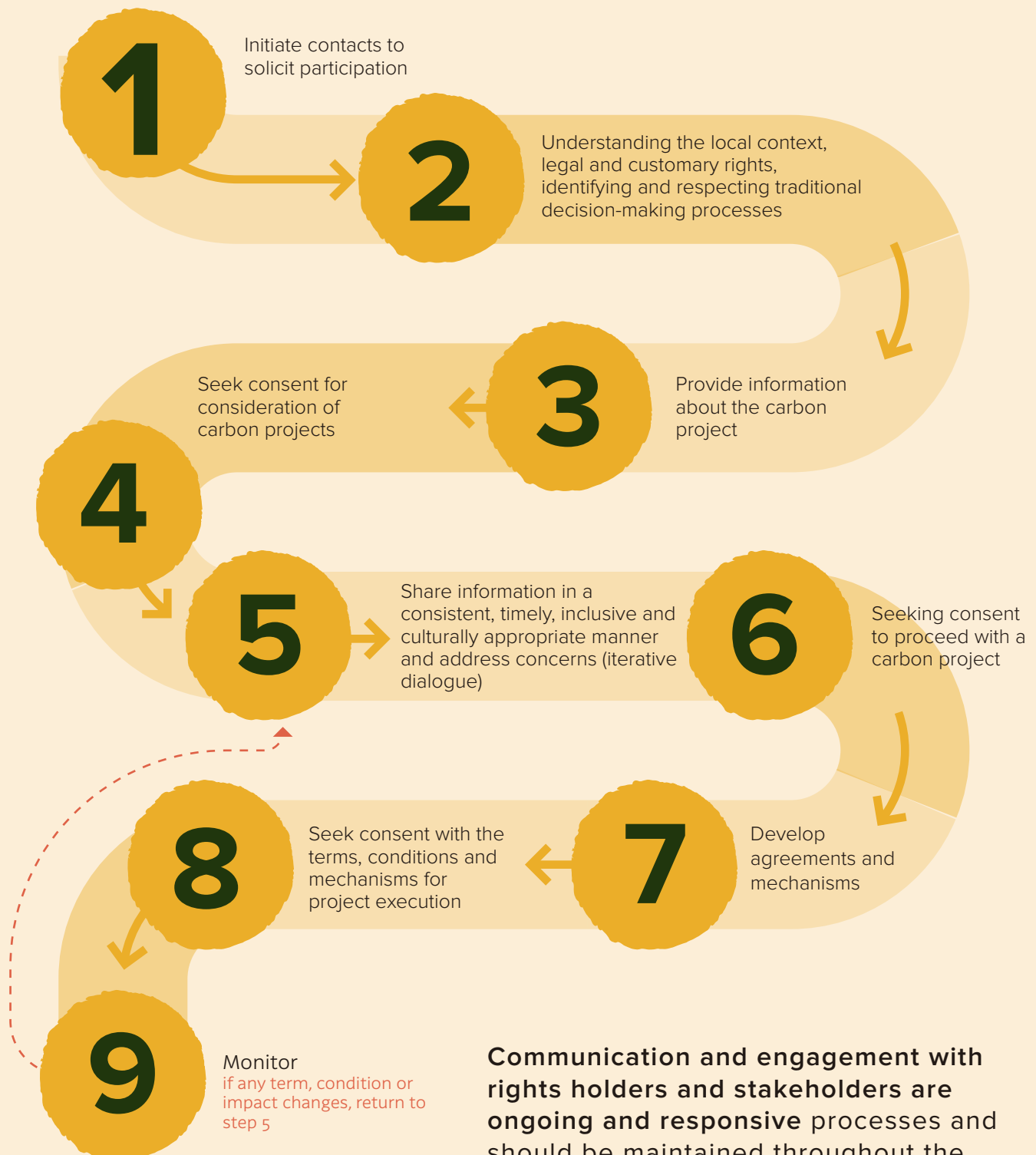
Clear land tenure and carbon rights enable long-term community decisions



GOVERNMENT

Strong governance will ensure the sustainability of the project

The process to be followed for consultation and consent for carbon projects has the following stages:



Communication and engagement with rights holders and stakeholders are ongoing and responsive processes and should be maintained throughout the life of the project.

ACT

After the group explored the Alto Mayo experience, at the conclusion of the exchange the participants reflected and shared a series of ideas and commitments aimed at building a brighter future for the indigenous communities.

During a dynamic session, the group members identified common ground on actions to be implemented in future projects or in their respective territories, based on the lessons learned from this experience.

1

Promoting tools such as conservation agreements, used by Conservation International, can help build trust to the extent that they are aligned with community interests.

2

We must specifically support, promote and advocate for women in leadership positions for their innovative approaches and drive for social change.

3

We need movements for change and the projects we develop are examples of how we can transform our environment.

4

It is essential that there is clarity in the community's land rights and tenure systems.



What is a conservation agreement?



5

Carbon projects should incorporate strategies for long-term sustainability, planning for revenue streams for future initiatives upon completion.

6

Identify allies with shared values: institutions with trusting relationships are needed to work together with humility, respect and collaboration to make these projects a reality.

7

Encourage corporate partners and donors to provide resources for key aspects such as governance, engagement and support for women's leadership to reduce project risk for both the community and investors.



“

We are here because we recognize that part of the solution to indigenous peoples' challenges involves supporting them from their ancestral territories and enabling them to lead with their culture.”

Melinda Macleod
BHP Foundation

PERÚ

LIMA



SAN MARTÍN

Comunidades nativas Awajún del Alto Mayo

Tajimat Pujut

Restauración y conservación de los bosques Awajún del Alto Mayo

The initiative in numbers

937

cacao, coffee, vanilla and garlic producers received technical assistance and inputs.

1

artisan chocolate production center.

7

communal libraries implemented.

346

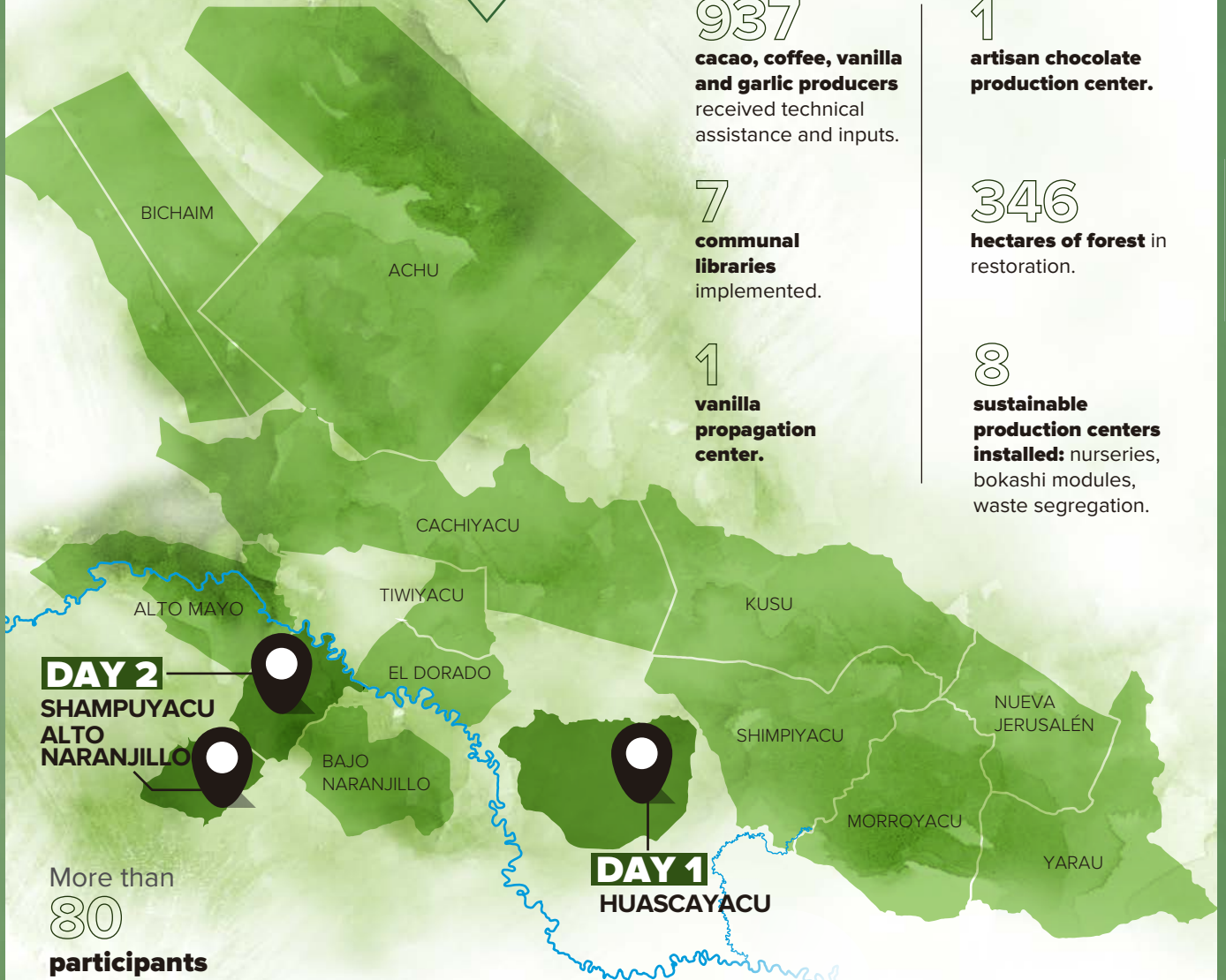
hectares of forest in restoration.

1

vanilla propagation center.

8

sustainable production centers installed: nurseries, bokashi modules, waste segregation.



DAY 2
SHAMPUYACU
ALTO NARANJILLO

DAY 1
HUASCAYACU

More than
80

participants have graduated from the **Awajún Governance School**, promoted by Feriaam and Conservation International.



Conservation International, in coordination with Feriaam, **has developed 11 life plans in the communities of Alto Mayo.**



Currently, a restoration initiative is being implemented to **generate connectivity between the Alto Mayo Protected Forest and the Awajún community forests of Alto Naranjillo, Shampuyacu and Alto Mayo.**



Let's heal the forest festival

