



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation
et la transformation



CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

Local Knowledge: Global Goals

Context

The BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve, a protected tropical forest in Northeastern Nicaragua, is essential to the survival of Indigenous peoples in the face of climate change. Climate change exacerbates the difficulties already faced by Indigenous communities including political and economic marginalization, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, gender inequality, discrimination and unemployment. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted both in their traditional gender-based roles and responsibilities.

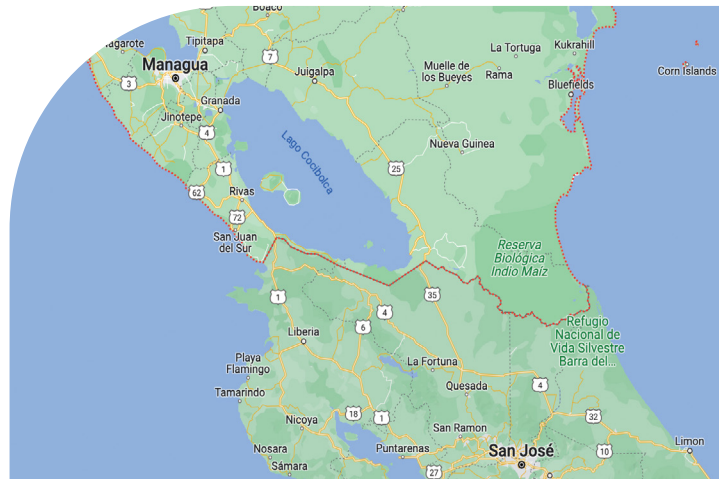
The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, Change for Children Association with local partner University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN) and the Territorial Indigenous Government of the Miskito Indian Taisbaika Kum (GTI-MITK) tested the impact of prioritizing local Indigenous knowledge and gender equality while strengthening the three pillars of comprehensive community planning (CCP): Sustainability, Self-Sufficiency, and Improved Governance Capacity.

Advancing Gender Equality

The results of the Gender Equality Approach found that for gender-equitable participation to occur both women's individual leadership capacities, and broad community member awareness needed to be increased. These two processes, individual and collective, interacted and intersected to support each other, and led to an overall more gender equitable result.

During the test, the reactivation of the territorial women's organization, WIMPA (which had been dormant for 10 years) was critical for laying the foundation for supporting women's leadership and sustaining the gender results of the testing. The WIMPA board of directors (7 women) held meetings in the seven main communities to organize the community-level WIMPA committees of WIMPA and to elect women's coordinators to become representatives to the regional GTI-MITK – very key to ensuring and strengthen women's role in Indigenous governance. There was also the election of women community coordinators in each of the 34 communities, where previously there were only men as coordinators and representatives.



COUNTRY
Nicaragua

AMOUNT
\$175,000

TESTING PERIOD
13 months
Ended May 2023



GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (GE3)

THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Results and Impact

- By endline, 1261 Miskito (63% women) from 34 communities participated directly in community planning activities, knowledge exchange activities, and felt their contributions were heard and had an impact exceeding the target of 400.
- 8 policies and programs were initiated with government or non-governmental institutions to sustainably manage the BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve.
- 7 strategies were adopted to increase gender equality in local decision-making and governance.
- 42 students (66% girls) and 38 forest rangers (all men) were successfully trained to utilize MAPEO – a digital mapping tool developed by and for Earth Defender – and more than 80 important territorial sites, geographic and social features, and points of cultural significance have been georeferenced and registered in MAPEO. These are the first detailed digital maps to exist in the communities in BOSAWAS. 300 community members participated in the 21 events including 59% women.
- The innovation's nature-based solutions component concentrated on developing knowledge of and using medicinal plants and local rice processing; 14 traditional healers and natural medicinal practitioners (9 or 64% women) from five communities were trained. Approximately 201 families from 7 communities processed 170 quintals (1 quintal = 100 pounds) of rice. The rice processing machine significantly reduced the domestic workload of women and girls, who are customarily responsible for hand-pounding the rice.

Key Lessons

1. Building on previous initiatives for synergies and sustainability was critical. Results from the FIT intake 1 project propelled the innovation forward due to the technology skills gained by students which led them to quickly gain competency with the MAPEO software and to integrate technology into sustainable Indigenous community development processes.
2. Community planning and flexibility to pivot was key. Due to time constraints, rather than inviting an Indigenous expert from Canada, a localized process was implemented to achieve the same objectives by utilizing local specialists and facilitators to support capacity-building and inclusive planning in the target communities.
3. Integration of PSEA in testing activities and processes was important. PSEA components were intentionally integrated as part of the gender training with community leaders and in schools. A PSEA-themed poster was developed, printed, distributed and posted in all local authority offices and at sites where innovation activities took place. Many local institutions agreed to place their logos on the poster, including the National Police, local indigenous government, the churches, and the Ministry of Health. Such PSEA practice effectively raised PSEA awareness with a high level of acceptance and support from community members, especially women.
4. Collaborating was powerful. FUNARTE, one of Change for Children's partner organizations in Nicaragua, facilitated a community visioning process including school children, high school students, elders and local leaders. Participants used story-telling and painting to envision what they would like the future of their community to look like. This strategy worked well in communities with lower literacy and formal education levels.

"I have learned about the geography of other continents and countries in school, but I have never seen a map of my own community or territory before. I was excited to participate in the creation of a map of my community."

-Ena Hernandez, High School Student, Pamkawas

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN) and the Territorial Indigenous Government of the Miskito Indian Taisbaika Kum (GTI-MITK)

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

1261 (796 W, 465 M) participants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



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