PEOPLE & PLANTS

RUNA FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
2017

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

One of the core elements of our work at Runa Foundation is to understand and nurture the extraordinary relationships between people and plants. This report highlights a few of these relationships and our efforts to support them.

Humans rely on plants for almost all our energy needs — all our food, even animal proteins, enter the food chain originally through the miraculous process of photosynthesis. Oil, gas, coal, and biofuels also came to exist on this earth through the magical way in which plants capture solar energy and store it. Most of our medicine comes from the chemical processes that go on in the leaves of plants as they develop strategies for their own, and perhaps our, survival.

In the Andes Amazon region, the peculiar mix of an undulating geography filled with giant mountains and rivers and the blast of solar radiation from the proximity to the equator creates microclimates and micro-ecosystems. This biogeography allows for some of the greatest biodiversity on earth. It also has led to a rich diversity of cultures as indigenous people have formed their identity around the plants and ecosystems that surround them. Indigenous groups that ostensibly speak the same language often find it difficult to talk to people that live in the next valley as their relationship to the plants and ecosystem changes the words they use.

Runa Foundation's work sits at the nexus between conservation and international development. As a society, we must move beyond the early 20th century view of conservation as the delineation of national parks and the separation of humans from the wild. We need to realize that our intricate and complicated relationships with plants and ecosystems are a part of the solution to conserve the biodiversity of this planet. We also must understand how to value this knowledge and use this value as a tool to support local livelihoods. International development should not focus on teaching rural people how to farm better monocrops of corn and soy but should teach the world how to value the knowledge that local people have of their plants and ecosystems.

This report is a celebration of a few plants and people that we have gotten to know over the last year. Please join us as we continue to learn from these people and plants and nurture creative ideas to support them.

ELIOT LOGAN-HINES

CEO, Runa Foundation

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Mission

Runa Foundation improves local livelihoods to conserve tropical biodiversity.

Pictured:
A farmer holds up a part of his latest ishpingo harvest.

Vision

Runa works to create valuable products from rainforest plants for consumers around the world and sustainable livelihoods for the people of the Amazon. We bring people together from different worlds who believe people everywhere can benefit from the bounty of the Amazon without destroying it.

Pictured:
A farmer holds achiote from his forest garden, also known as a *chakra*.

Guayusa

An incredibly special tree for the indigenous people of the Upper Napo River in the Ecuadorian Amazon, *Ilex guayusa* plays an essential daily role to awaken and give strength to the local people. Brimming with caffeine and antioxidants this relative of yerba mate is brewed into a tea and consumed in the early morning hours by Kichwa families. Guayusa gives strength, clarity of mind, and helps to camouflage and protect an individual from snakes and mosquitos lurking in the shadows of the forest floor.

The origins of the plant are mysterious. It reproduces almost entirely by asexual propagation. That is to say that it is entirely dependent on its human friends for its survival and expansion. A preliminary study by Runa Foundation and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito in 2015 points to the idea that the plant was probably hybridized hundreds or even thousands of years ago somewhere near the border of Ecuador and Peru. People brought cuttings of the plants with them as the moved through the forest establishing new homes. Both in Kichwa and Achuar cultures, newlyweds plant a guayusa tree at the site of their new house. Guayusa is a case study in the interdependence and symbiotic relationship between people and plants.

Runa Foundation has worked for the past nine years to promote farming of guayusa in agroforestry systems. These systems mimic the structure of the forest creating important habitat for animals, capturing carbon from the atmosphere, and allow for local people to make income from cash crops to support their families. In 2017, Runa Foundation began a long-term research program to look at the resiliency of these systems and how the regenerative capacity of this agroecosystem can be improved.

Name: Fabiola Regina Aguinda Ajon
Association: Tsatsayaku Association of Fine Aroma Cacao Producers from Arosamena Tola (Tsatsayaku)
Community: Misi Urku
Age: 37

Fabiola Regina Aguinda Ajon

Fabiola Aguinda is the newly elected guayusa coordinator for her community, Misi Urku, where she lives with her husband, mother, and 5 children along the Ansu River. Guayusa is an intrinsic part of Kichwa culture, and Fabiola's family has always grown guayusa. She says "I have drank guayusa every morning for as long as I can remember." She increased guaysua production four years ago with the hope of providing an additional source of income for her family and to pay for her children's schooling.

Fabiola says, "I was excited about taking on the role of guayusa coordinator because I believe it is important to always be open to new opportunities and responsibilities in order to keep learning and to create a better life for my children."She values hard work when it comes to the production of guayusa, recognizing that the more time she takes to maintain her guayusa trees - ensuring a high quality product - will generate greater benefits for her and her family.

Fabiola believes that the rest of the world would benefit from and enjoy guayusa. She states that "guayusa is a strong remedy for various ailments, it provides energy to carry out daily activities, and it has a great flavor." She is happy that people in other countries have started drinking guayusa and she hopes that they know about the powerful plant's history, its many uses, and its importance in Kichwa culture.

Ishpingo

When the conquistadors Orellana and Pizarro first made it to the Andean highlands, they were told of a magical valley of cinnamon to the southeast of present day Quito in the lush foothills of the Andes where the Amazon basin begins its eastward meandering to the Atlantic Ocean. Looking for gold and spices, Orellana headed east searching for the valley. They never found the cinnamon they were looking for, assuming it was the same as the Sri Lankan species, and moved further eastward down the river. Eventually they were attacked by female warriors somewhere in present day Brazil where he assumed he must be in the mythical land of Amazonas, from the Greek story of the land of women warriors, and thus named the river after his foes.

The cinnamon, however, was hiding in the valley that is now home to the towns of Archidona and Tena. It is not the cinnamon of Sri Lanka. Ishpingo or *Ocotea quixos* is a member of the laurel family (Lauraceae) like its relative in Sri Lanka. This family of trees is the most prolific family in the neotropics. It includes avocados, bay, and even the notorious "stink tree." Laurels tend to store oils in their leaves and fruits and often have striking odors like cinnamon.

The cinnamon flavor and smell of ishpingo is unique. It is spicy and strong. Its leaves have high concentrations of cinnamaldehyde allowing them to be harvested for extract either as a tea or an essential oil. Harvesting the leaf of the tree instead of the bark increases the longevity of the tree and contributes towards its sustainable management. Runa Foundation has begun working with farmers to plant ishpingo trees and experimenting in the creation of teas and essential oils.

Name: Elvia Illanes
Community: Puní Ishpingo
Age: 50

Elvia Illanes

"We are lucky to have ishpingo and we want to share our knowledge (of ishpingo) with other people. We invite anyone to come and visit us, to try ishpingo, and to learn about it." Says Elvia Illanes, a 50-year-old ishpingo producer from the community of Puní Ishpingo – one of the places with the highest density in the world of this remarkable tree species.

Elvia arrived in Puní Ishpingo thirty five years ago when she married her husband and she has been producing and selling ishpingo ever since. She says that people come to her community looking to buy the leaves, bark, seed pods, and especially seedlings, which all have different uses.

"Ishpingo is a plant that has great value in the Kichwa culture. . . Our grandparents taught us about ishpingo when we were young girls. We began to plant more trees so that we would not lose this plant, which is now becoming harder and harder to find." Elvia explains that "the Kichwa people value this plant because it has both nutritional, as well as medicinal and healing properties."

In addition to its cultural and practical value, Elvia also sees ishpingo as an important potential source of income for herself and her six children. The money that she makes from selling ishpingo in local markets or restaurants represents additional funds for her household that she can use to meet their basic needs such as buying food and paying for transport.

"We thank Mother Nature for giving us these plants on our lands," Elvia says. She explains how she sees ishpingo as a sustainable investment for her farm and her community: "If we plant more ishpingo trees, there is no negative impact on the ecosystem, actually, it is beneficial to the forest since, unlike other forest plants, it doesn't degrade the soil or the forest."

Muru Inchi

Peanuts are a new world crop like corn, potatoes, and tomatoes. They most likely originate from the subtropical Andean foothills of northern Argentina and southern Bolivia. Quickly domesticated by indigenous people, peanuts spread throughout the Americas. "Inchi" is the Quechua word meaning peanut. In Mexico, it is called *cacahuate* coming from the Nahuatl word *tlacacahuatl* meaning "cacao of the earth." Like many of the native cultivars of the Americas, the existence of a rich culinary tradition in both North and South America point to pre-Columbian trade between indigenous groups in Mexico and northern South America.

Ecuador is a region of rich diversity in peanut varieties. Muru inchi is a particular variety of peanut that is grown in the central-southern Ecuadorian Amazon. They are grown in agroforestry systems. As notorious nitrogen fixers, peanuts give back to the agroforestry system by helping to free up nitrogen in the soil for surrounding plants.

When dried and unroasted, muru inchi has beautiful purple stripes. It is potentially a hypoallergenic variety of peanut. Runa Foundation has worked for the past 3 years to support farmers to grow muru inchi and to find local and international markets for this beautiful peanut.

Name: Delia Isabel Pauchi Dahua
Community: Flor del Bosque
Age: 48

Delia Isabel Pauchi Dahua

Delia is a successful farmer, a single mother of four, and a leader in her community, her local government, and her guayusa producers' association. She makes a living by harvesting and selling products from her chakra such as guayusa, cacao, corn, and peanuts, and she occasionally works on projects for the local government.

Delia has been growing other types of peanuts for as long as she can remember and uses this experience to plant and harvest muru inchi. As a little girl she remembers her parents and grandparents also growing peanuts, which are used in traditional dishes, local festivals, and to make a special drink called chicha which is consumed particularly during community celebrations.

Delia and her children love the flavor of this peanut, they eat it raw, boiled, or use it to cook. While it provides an extra nutritional boost for Delia and her family, they have also appreciated the extra income generated by the sale of muru inchi and have used it to help pay for school-related expenses. She hopes that the project grows so that her children will see long term benefits from the production of muru inchi.

Since Delia considers muru inchi to be the best variety of peanut she has ever grown, and she is excited about its potential in national and international markets. Because it is also the most delicious variety of peanut she has tried, she thinks that the rest of the world will also appreciate this ancestral Amazonian peanut and will want to buy it for their families as well.

Pictured:
A farmer shares muru inchi from her recent crop.

Pictured:
A woman is seen preparing traditional guayusa tea.

Agave

While Mexico is widely thought to be the cultural and biological home of agave species (think Tequila and Mezcal), agaves grow throughout the Americas. From the Joshua Trees and Yuccas in the southwest of the United States, to the deserts of northern Chile and Argentina, agaves thrive along the arid spine of the Americas. In Ecuador, indigenous people of the dry highlands have a very intimate relationship with *agave americana*, one of the most prolific species of agaves in both continents.

Known as *penco*, this magnificent plant is used for a wide variety of needs for local people. In a recent study, Runa Foundation found that indigenous people in the Ecuadorian highlands use the plant for over 124 uses – from medicine to food to fiber. Agave is one of the most important and versatile plants for human needs that exist on earth. One of its many magical properties is its ability to store sugar water. Called *chaguar mishki* by local people (in Quechua, *chaguar* means raw or crude or bold and *mishki* means sweet), this liquid is stored for 13 years inside of the plant. Local people carve a hole in the base of the plant and extract chaguar mishki over a 2- to 3-month period in a method similar to the tapping of a maple tree. One plant can produce an average of 1 liter of this sugar water per day for 40-80 days. This liquid is used as medicine and sweetener. Fermented it is used as an intoxicant, and during long periods of drought, it is even used as a source of water.

Runa Foundation has been working for the past three years to support female producers in the town of Cayambe, Ecuador, to form a cooperative to bring their products to market. We have also worked with them to build a nursery to plant agaves and develop strategies for the sustainable management of wild agave populations.

Name: María Gualabisi
Community: Pitana Bajo
Age: 51

María Gualabisi

Maria Gualabisi, a 51-year-old agave producer, has been producing and harvesting agave since she was 9 years old. "It is thanks to my mother that I learned how to harvest the plant at such a young age, and I have been producing the agave ever since," says Maria.

Maria hails from Pitana Bajo, a community located in the highland city of Cayambe, where the harvest of the agave and its nectar, also known as *chaguar mishki* in Kichwa, has been practiced for generations. "The plant is very significant because it is important in the conservation of our Kichwa culture. It is not easy to remove the nectar from the plant. Everything we accomplish is based on the knowledge we learned from our parents, therefore this process is extremely valued in our culture." Maria says. "We use the agave in our homes as well, to make honey and jams or when we don't have sugar, we use the pure chaguarmishki. The consumption of it in our homes is also a part of our culture."

Even though Maria has been producing agave for over 40 years, she only began commercializing it 7 years ago. "In the beginning there wasn't much interest in chaguarmishki. Nobody wanted it because nobody knew about it. After selling it for awhile, we were able to explain the benefits of it for colds, flu, and bone pain. Since then, people have been buying it more and more, and now the product is quite popular in Quito," she explains.

The production of agave also helps Maria to support her 11 children and 8 nieces and nephews. The profits from her product sales in local markets, workshops, and hostels allows her to afford her family's education and day-to-day bills.

Speaking about the future Maria says, "Right now, we are leaving this as our legacy for future generations. We, ourselves, will not be able to keep doing this forever and these techniques we pass on will be valued. We hope that chaguarmishki becomes more valued in the not too distant future and that one day we can export it globally."

Chuncho

A true forest giant, chuncho trees (*Cedrelinga cateniformis)* can reach heights of over 50 meters (165 feet) and in extreme cases diameters of more than 2 meters. Chuncho is found in lowland terra firme and piedmont forests throughout the Upper Amazon, ranging from Venezuela in the north through western Brazil and the Bolivian Amazon. Throughout this region it is known by various names including *seique* (Shuar language, Ecuador), *tornillo* (Peru), and *cedrorana* (Brazil).

Chuncho is a member of the Fabaceae family, which is one of the most diverse and economically important plant groups in the world with over 19,000 species and 751 genera. Famous Fabaceaes include peanuts, beans, alfalfa, and acacia trees. Like other members of its family, chuncho fruits are an edible legume. When fruiting occurs (usually in February through April), hundreds of thousands of seeds fall to the ground, carpeting the forest floor with their golden hue. Seed production is irregular with large amounts being produced in some years and hardly any in others. This is indicative of a mast fruiting strategy whereby trees overwhelm the ability of seed predators (said to be agoutis and pacas) to consume the seeds, a small number of which can emerge from the rainforest canopy.

Chuncho is prized in much of South America for its lightweight, durable, beautiful, streaked, and easy-to-work wood. It is used for construction, millwork and furniture, and in Ecuador has been heavily exploited. Due to overharvesting throughout much of its range, the harvesting of chuncho is subject to restriction by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment. In 2017, Runa Foundation worked with communities on the edge of Sumaco Napo-Galeras National Park to wild harvest high quality seeds and establish locally managed nurseries. Through these efforts, we have established 25 hectares of mixed forestry plantations with over 18,000 trees planted. We accomplished this by creating the rotating agroforestry fund, an innovative financing system which helped small holders plant chuncho trees alongside a short-cycle crop, in this case corn.

Name: Walter Andy
Community: Luquino
Age: 43

Walter Andy

Walter Andy has been a chuncho producer for the past five years. He lives with his wife and two of his five children, in the small, remote Kichwa community of Luquino, found within primary Amazon Rainforest. He was introduced to chuncho commercialization by a friend, who taught him how to create plots, collect seeds, and maintain the plants. "We began to commercialize the plant because a lot of smaller vendors were becoming more interested in buying and selling the timber and seeds of the chuncho tree," he explains.

The native chuncho tree is used mainly for timber, but it also has medicinal properties. Since the plant is so sought after, Walter realized that cultivating it to sell would provide a new way to help support his family. "We use the profits to buy food, school supplies, and to pay our children's school tuition," he says. "The plant is important in our community because it allows us to provide for our homes."

Apart from being a source of income for his family, Walter explains why chuncho production is good for the forest itself. "The plant is easy to come across in the forest, because it grows naturally. We collect and sell the seedlings and leave the mother trees so they will continue replenishing the supply." When the seedlings are sold they are replanted in different forest gardens, known locally as *chakras;* contributing to the reforestation of the area and increasing the biodiversity along forest edges.

When asked about how he hoped commercialization would impact future generations, Walter said, "I hope that it has a strong impact because I would like to leave a legacy for the future generations of my family; so they can benefit from the cultivation of these plants in 30 or 40 years, so they can enjoy an inheritance and not lack economic resources. It would also impact the forest by aiding in positive reforestation and conservation for many years to come."

Achiote

What do lipstick, farm raised salmon, and raspberry sherbet have in common? It is likely that all of them use bixin as a natural colorant. Bixin can be used for yellow and red colors and is extracted from dried achiote (*Bixa orellana*) seeds. Achiote, also known as annatto, is a small tree native to South America that has been used as natural colorant since pre-Columbian times. Indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon and famously the Tsachilas people of the Santo Domingo Province in Ecuador have use achiote to adorn their faces. In the Napo Province of Ecuador, achiote is frequently found in home gardens and appears to fruit throughout the year. Achiote can be grown on degraded pastureland and is relatively easy to cultivate.

Despite the ease with which achiote is grown in Napo and the large international demand for dried achiote seeds, it is currently only cultivated for household use. In order to create new livelihood opportunities for guayusa farmers, Runa Foundation has been working to develop relationships with international buyers to support local farmers. Our strategy is to engage communities in achiote production, create plans for local aggregating and drying of achiote seeds, and integrate achiote production in local reforestation schemes. This model will provide additional income opportunities for guayusa farmers and will help with ongoing reforestation efforts.

Name: Mario Angulo Plaza
Community: Cola Urku
Age: 60

Mario Angulo Plaza

Mario Angulo Plaza is 60 years old and lives in the small community known as Cola Urku, which means small chain of mountains. Mario was born in the coastal province of Manabí, and has worked with achiote almost all his life. Mario has twenty five children, three of which are still living with him, and he claims to have anywhere between twenty and one hundred grandchildren.

When Mario was 10 years old, his parents started to teach him how to grow achiote, along with other plants and commercial crops, and how to maintain his own agroforestry plot to ensure that he would always have a source of income. It was custom that all the male children would have their own plots of land so that they could work to generate their own income. Mario claims that in Manabí, the young women sought out men who grew achiote because they knew it was a reliable source of income.

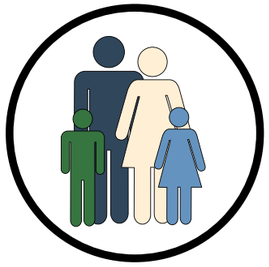
As a young adult, Mario joined the Ecuadorian military. After his service, he work for eight years producing and commercializing achiote in Manabí. Achiote is most commonly used for cooking, as a paint, and as an all-natural food coloring. Historically achiote was used to paint the faces of the indigenous warriors in order to confuse their enemies, and to paint the faces of the Spaniards when they arrived in Ecuador. It has also been used to paint designs on clay bowls and traditional reed hats made on the coast, and to make paints and powders. He says that even before the Spaniard's arrival, achiote was sold to people from all over the world.

Mario states that since he has moved to the province of Napo, it is much more difficult to find achiote and that is doesn't grow in the forests like it does on the coast; he says he definitely needs to bring more seeds from Manabí. While Mario continues to grow achiote here in the Amazon, the challenge is that there aren't many achiote buyers in the area. What he has managed to sell has been a significant source of income which he has used to pay for some of his children's schooling, to cover domestic expenses, and to save.

Mario hopes that a new initiative will be taken to show the world once again the many uses of achiote and the value that is has in agroforestry systems, in cooking, art, and culture, so that he can leave something behind for his children and grandchildren.

OUR IMPACT

IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS FOR FARMING FAMILIES



- **INCOME TO FARMERS (2012-2017): $1,120,840**
- **NUMBER OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED: 2,329**
- **AVERAGE INCOME FROM A GUAYUSA SALE: $362**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

- **TOTAL OF $161,938 INVESTED IN THE FAIR TRADE SOCIAL PREMIUM FUND (2012-2017)**
- **TOTAL SOCIAL INVESTMENTS (2012-2017): $624,786**
- **NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIGENOUS ENTERPRISES WE WORK WITH: 16**
- **COMMUNITIES WE WORK WITH: 237**

REFORESTATION & SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

- **NUMBER OF HECTARES UNDER SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PLANS: 50,573**
- **NUMBER OF ACRES UNDER SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PLANS: 125,000**
- **NUMBER OF CERTIFIED ORGANIC HECTARES: 1,128**
- **NUMBER OF ACRES CERTIFIED ORGANIC: 2,787**
- **HECTARES REFORESTED: 20**
- **ACRES REFORESTED: 50**

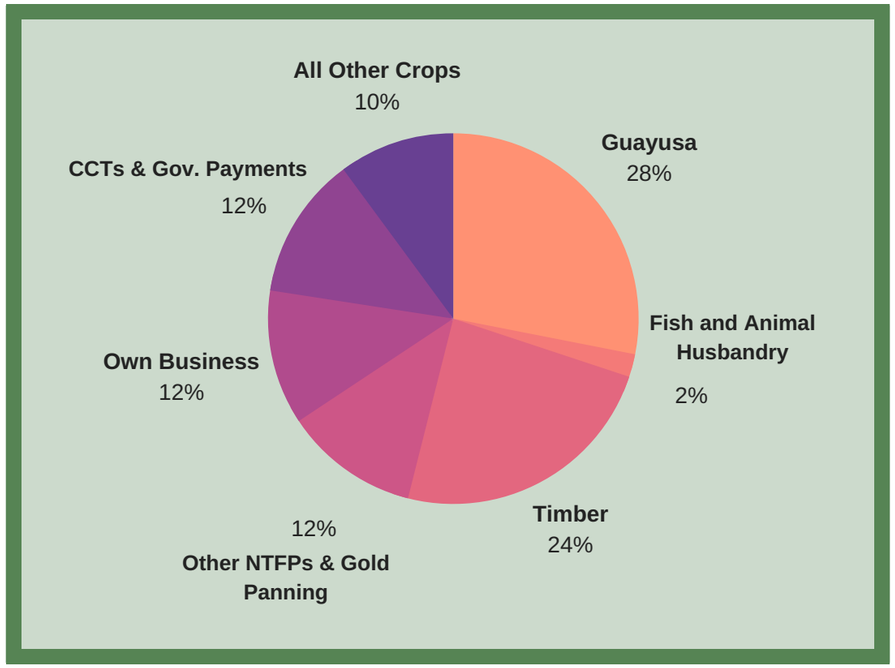
BUILDING RESILIENCE: CONTEXT AND EXPLANATIONS

Runa Foundation focuses on four key areas for building local resilience:

1. LIVELIHOODS

Increasing household income opportunities and diversifying livelihood strategies create resilient households that are more able to weather unforeseen changes or unanticipated problems. We promote the commercialization of new forest-based products that contribute to household incomes, yet do not replace other existing livelihood activities. In this way, we aim to create a diversity of potential livelihood strategies and forest-friendly sources of income for indigenous families.

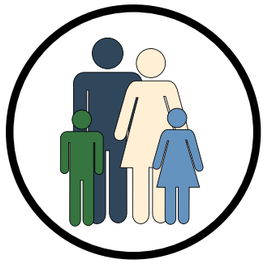
- **TOTAL DIRECT INCOME TO FARMERS FROM ALL FOUNDATION SUPPORTED VALUE CHAINS: $1,120,840**
- **NEW FOREST-FRIENDLY VALUE CHAINS IN DEVELOPMENT: 7**



In 2017, we carried out an in-depth study to gain further insight into the impact of guayusa farming on local livelihoods. We found that farmers make an average of around $360 dollars per harvest which is about the same as the minimum monthly wage in Ecuador. For farming families without access to wage-paying jobs, this represents nearly one quarter of their annual income (see pie chart). The only other source of income more significant than guayusa sales are conditional cash transfers and other government benefits programs.

BUILDING RESILIENCE: CONTEXT AND EXPLANATIONS

2. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE IN PRODUCER ASSOCIATIONS



Creating strong organizational capacity for collective management is crucial for the creation of sustainable value chains that support farmers. Over the past five years, we have worked to create and strengthen 16 indigenous producer associations that have the capacity to effectively manage shared resources and facilitate farmers' participation in new value chains. In 2017, we achieved 100% Fair Trade compliance among 11 of our 13 guayusa producing associations.

What is Fair Trade?

Fair Trade Certification requires compliance with a set of rigorous standards that guarantee farmer participation, fair wages, sustainable production, and an equitable distribution of benefits with a minimum set price for agricultural goods. For our smallholder value chains, Fair Trade Certification requires that all of our producers are represented by an affiliated association and that they all have an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. For every dollar purchased from local farmers, and additional $0.15 is placed into their association's social premium fund. This fund is then invested in sustainable development projects that are managed by the producers and their elected leaders.

3. SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

We have been working producer associations to improve their investments and build capacity for their long-term management. We have worked with producers to create plans for the long-term management of their investments, from benefit-sharing, and maintenance of shared farming equipment to investments in scaling up the new Wild Jungle Peanut value chain, we work with farmers to identify opportunities that will benefit themselves and their communities for years to come.

Rotating Community Funds

One of the most successful sustainable investment mechanisms we have developed has been a model of rotating community funds. These funds provide small amounts of funding to families in times of need (to cover emergency health or educational expenses) or for investments in productive activities. Farmers receive around $100 for a period of 2-3 months, which they then return to the community along with a small interest fee for redistribution among other producers in their association. We have established three Rotating Community Funds which, over the past two years have proven extremely popular and highly effective, enjoying an 84% repayment rate and generating an additional $33,718 in local economic activity.

BUILDING RESILIENCE: CONTEXT AND EXPLANATIONS

4. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

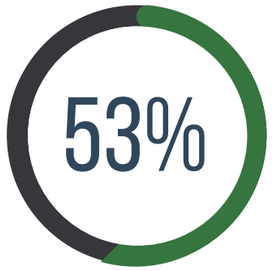
Resilience is often negatively impacted by unsustainable farming practices that deplete soil nutrients or extractive activities that decrease the health of local forests. We work with communities to create sustainable strategies for managing natural resources while increasing on-farm income potential to lessen the pressure on primary forests and protected areas. We have developed innovative mechanisms for enrichment planting of degraded lands, reforestation, and improved agroforestry systems that have resulted in the planting of nearly 20,000 trees with local associations. We have worked to build local capacity for sustainable agricultural production, with over 1,125 hectares registered as organic certified in 2017.

WOMEN IN THE GUAYUSA VALUE CHAIN

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

11% in 2012 → **50% in 2017**

Over the past 5 years, Runa has worked with local guayusa producing associations to build their organizational capacity and promote equitable participation in decision making by men and women. In 2017 we reached a milestone, with 50% of association leadership positions being held by women.



of all registered & certified guayusa producers are women

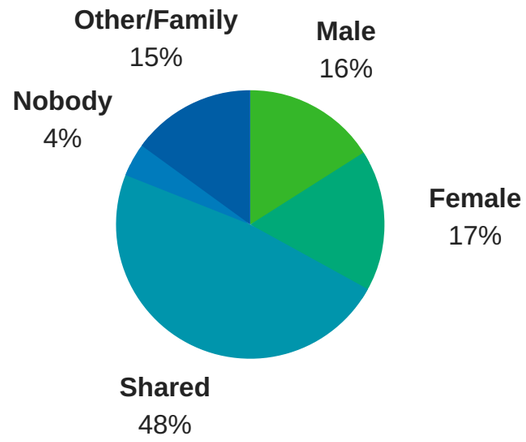
As part of our efforts to increase women's participation in decision making within the guayusa value chain we have implemented a host of new workshop methodologies aimed to accentuate women's voices and clarify their opinions, feedback, and priorities as guayusa farmers and value chain leaders.

"I THINK THE MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS ARE VERY USEFUL BECAUSE THEY CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE WE MAMACITAS (WOMEN) DON'T FEEL SHY TO TALK."

– PRODUCER, TSATSAYAKU ASSOCIATION

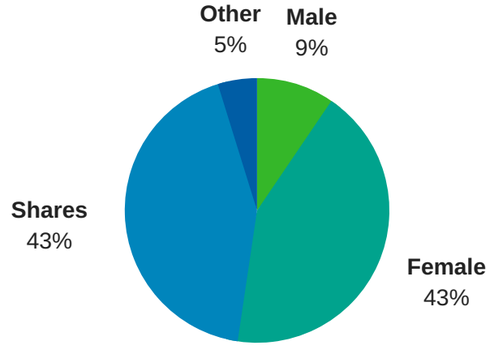
WOMEN IN THE GUAYUSA VALUE CHAIN

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN GUAYUSA PRODUCTION



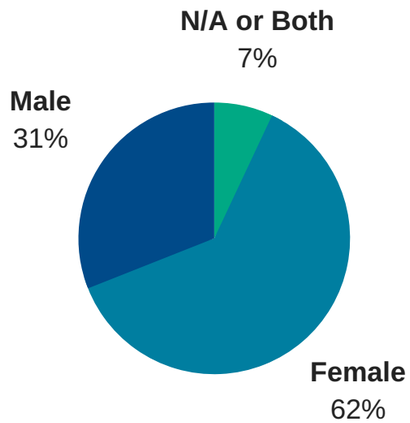
We carried out a study in 2017 to better understand the distribution of responsibilities and benefits among men and women along the guayusa value chain. Our results show that, though women have traditionally been solely responsible for the production and harvest of guayusa, in the new commoditized scenario men and women are more likely to share the responsibilities from propagation through harvest.

DECISION MAKING FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME



Over 85% of both men and women respondents said that either the women decide how to spend the money, or that it is a shared decision. While only 9% of respondents answering that men make the decisions of how to spend the money received from guayusa sales.

ALLOCATION OF SALES INCOME



While study results indicate that women are more likely to carry out a majority of the responsibilities related to guayusa production, they are also more likely to directly receive the income from sales.

"I JOINED RUNA BECAUSE I WANTED TO HAVE A GREATER EXPERIENCE. BEFORE, I DIDN'T LEAVE HOME, I DIDN'T KNOW AS MANY THINGS. NOW, I AM AN EXAMPLE FOR MY SONS, MY FAMILY, MY COMMUNITY, TO HELP MY PRODUCERS KEEP GOING."

- MAIRA PISANGO, PRESIDENT OF UCKAR GUAYUSA PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION

Pictured:
A farmer collects chuncho seedlings to transplant into her own chakra.

Pictured:
The giant trunk of the chunco tree.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2017

RUNA FOUNDATION, USA

INCOME:

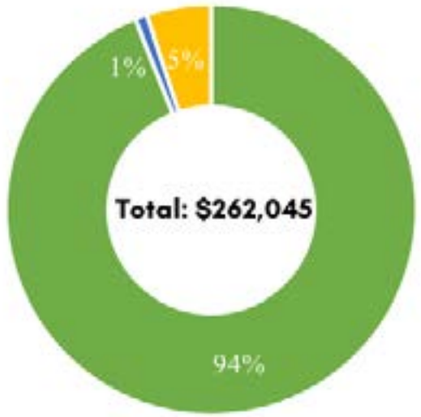
- Grants
- Program Fees
- Donations and Contributions

EXPENDITURE:

- Landscape Program
- Livelihood Program
- Plant Research
- Admin
- Education

FUNDACION RUNA, ECUADOR

INCOME:



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