



BRIEF DOCUMENT

Case Study on the IFAD-supported Slow Food Presidia



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	RMS	Red Maasai Sheep
ITM	Indigenous Terra Madre	SF	Slow Food
PGS	Indigenous people	ToRs	Terms of Reference

Introduction

SLOW FOOD AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples are the custodians of large natural areas, which are biodiversity hotspots.

The rights of indigenous peoples to control their land according to their own needs and decisions is fundamental to protect their livelihoods and defend the biodiversity of native animal

breeds and plant varieties. It is clear then that supporting indigenous communities and their traditional food systems means preserving the world's biodiversity. The Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) network was born to bring indigenous peoples' voices to the forefront of the debate on food and culture, as an integral part of the

larger Terra Madre network, supported by the Slow Food movement. At present, ITM involves thousands of individuals in over **370 communities in 86 countries** around the world. More than **830 indigenous products** are already on the Ark of Taste and **65 Slow Food Presidia** are run by indigenous communities to promote and defend their food heritage.

To protect their livelihoods and defend the biodiversity



IFAD AND SLOW FOOD

In 2017, after several years of partnership between IFAD and Slow Food on themes related to food security, indigenous peoples and youth, IFAD approved a grant,

with title **“Empowering Indigenous Youth and their Communities to Defend and Promote their Food Heritage”**, to be implemented by Slow Food over three years.

THE CASE STUDY

The overall goal of the project was to empower indigenous youth and their communities, improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries by protecting and promoting their food heritage and uphold the sustainability and resilience of their practice.

A case study was conducted to learn about the enabling factors and the challenges that affected the implementation process and

the achievement of results and impacts. It studied significant changes (impacts) in the producers' lives and in their communities, as well as the prospects of these changes being sustained over time and a number of cross-cutting issues. It is worth mentioning that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic meant the project's effectiveness at a community level was undoubtedly affected by the global health and economic crisis. Since 2000, the Presidia project has become one of the most effective instruments for putting into practice Slow Food's vision on food



production and biodiversity. In August 2020, 588 Presidia in 78 countries in all regions of the world were active, involving more than 15,000 producers.

The first component of the project consisted of providing support to five existing Presidia and creating five new Presidia, which focused on the following products:



- Honey:** its production contributes to the biodiversity and environmental conservation of forests and improving food safety practices. There are three Presidia: Wichí Wild Honey in Argentina (a), Ogiek Honey in Kenya (b) and Nahua Honey in Mexico (c);



- Waraná and Manioc flour:** the first helps in combatting fatigue and in stimulating cognitive functions, while the latter is a staple food of Indigenous Peoples. There are two Presidia in Brazil: Sateré-Mawé Waraná and Kiriri Manioc Flour.



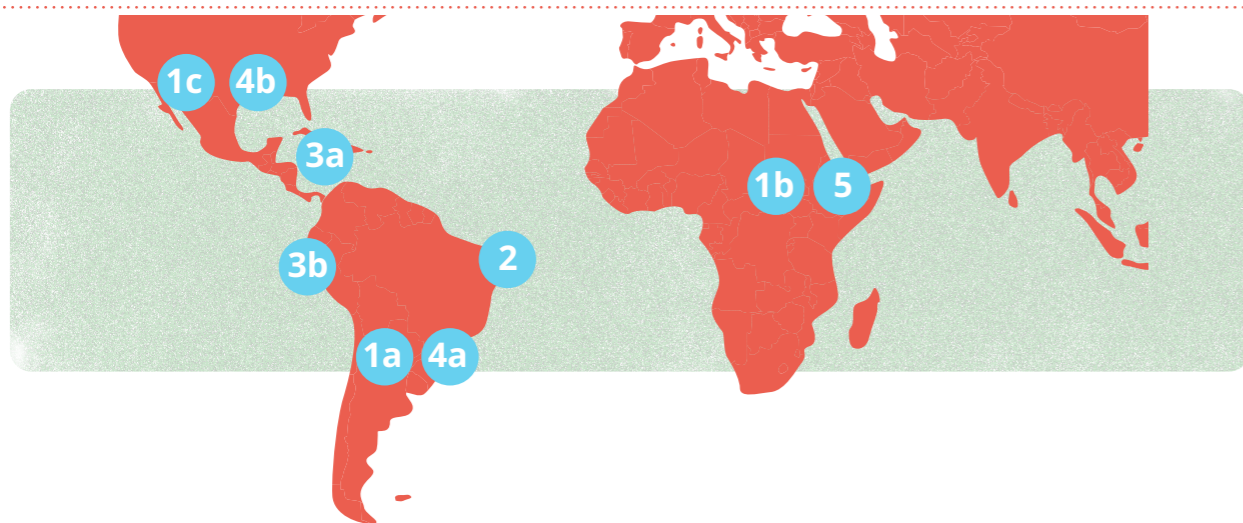
- Black and the Blue Crabs:** protection and sustainable consumption for the first, improved food safety and marketing for the latter. There are two Presidia: Providencia Black Crab in Colombia (a) and Esmeraldas Blue Crab in Ecuador (b).



- Wild Fruits and Agave:** the first for its production of preserves and dried fruits, the second for its contribution to biodiversity conservation, sustainable environmental management and production of by-products. There are two Presidia: Gran Chaco Wild Fruits in Argentina (a) and Oaxaca Mixteca Agave in Mexico (b).



- Sheep:** re-introduction of the indigenous Red Maasai Sheep for biodiversity conservation and strengthening the resilience of Maasai communities. The Red Maasai Sheep in Kenya.



November 2019-October 2020: in-depth Presidia case studies were carried out on Wichí Wild Honey in Argentina and Red Maasai Sheep Presidia in Kenya, both newly established Slow Food Presidia.

Key activities

THE WICHÍ PEOPLE IN ARGENTINA AND THE WICHÍ WILD HONEY SLOW FOOD PRESIDIO

The Wichí are the largest indigenous people of the Gran Chaco region; although some are in Bolivia, most Wichí communities live in the central area of the Chaco, between the Bermejo and Pilcomayo rivers, in northeastern Argentina.

The Wichí have their own language, which is also one of the three official languages of Chaco Province in Argentina. Traditionally, the Wichí combine limited slash-and-burn agriculture with the fishing, hunting and gathering of wild foods. One of the most important products for the communities is the honey gathered from wild bees, known in wichí as Tsawotaj. The Wichí collect the honey from hollow trees where wild bees build their hives. Honey and wax are collected together and separated by pressing. Afterward, the honey is filtered three times through a cloth to remove impurities,

before being packaged for sale. The Larguero community in the Salta Province, where the Presidium was established, comprises approximately 50 Wichí people. In Larguero there is a group of 13 men honey gatherers, nine of whom are youths. The Presidium's objective is to bring together in the same network producers, chefs, gastronomes, specialists and institutions who are interested in preserving and promoting the honey gathered by the Larguero community, as well

as Wichí knowledge, culture and traditions. The main issues addressed included the hygiene of gathering, pressing and filtering facilities, and market promotion. Individual equipment was of crucial importance in significantly increasing the productivity of the nine young members of the group, who had previously only been able to work when the adults' tools were available. Traditionally, youths learn from adults and elders about where and how to gather



honey in an environmentally sustainable manner. Through the Project, training sessions were organized and equipment supplied, including dedicated clean bags, specific drums for

collecting the honey and plastic jars for selling it. The Project also supported the construction of an extraction space. This improved the hygiene level throughout the process, from gathering

to packaging, in order to meet official honey sales standards on national and international markets. In 2020, the Presidium started selling its honey with the Slow Food label.



From 2019 to 2020, the Presidium doubled the purchase price of honey from gatherers and increased the market price by 30%, while in 2020 the quantity sold before the end of the harvesting season had increased by 75%.

Within the Larguero community, women could not benefit from the Presidium due to the traditional exclusion of Wichí women from the wild honey production process. Slow Food thus set up gender-based workshops and proposed exchanges between the Larguero women and the neighboring indigenous women-led Slow Food Gran Chaco Wild Fruit

Presidium. The Grant provided additional support for the purchase of a mill for grinding carobs and tools for woman gatherers. Exchanges were planned between the two women's groups to strengthen skills and consolidate collaboration, but everything ground to a halt with the mobility restriction measures introduced on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

THE MAASAI OF KENYA AND THE RED MAASAI SHEEP SLOW FOOD PRESIDIUUM

The Maasai people of East Africa live along the Great Rift Valley in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania.

Traditionally, they were semi-nomadic people who lived under a communal land management system, their livelihood relying largely on cattle, goats and sheep. Herding cattle is typically a male job, whereas sheep are tended by women and children. The movement of livestock was typically based on seasonal rotation. According to

Maasai traditional land agreements, no one should be denied access to natural resources such as water and land. In recent times, the Maasai have lost large swaths of their land with access to critical water sources, pastures and salt licks to national parks and reserves. This, together with increasingly severe droughts, a consequence of global warming, has led to a significant reduction in traditional Maasai sources of livelihoods. The Red Maasai sheep, with its red-brown fleece, is an indigenous East

African breed traditionally kept by the Maasai and by smallholders in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Though less productive than some other breeds, the Red Maasai sheep is valued for its hardiness in arid conditions and good resistance to internal parasites. Other positive features are flavor of its meat, which the Maasai describe as "sweet" and the quality and thickness of its milk. Over time, Red Maasai sheep almost disappeared and were replaced by flocks of Dorper sheep, introduced by the British.

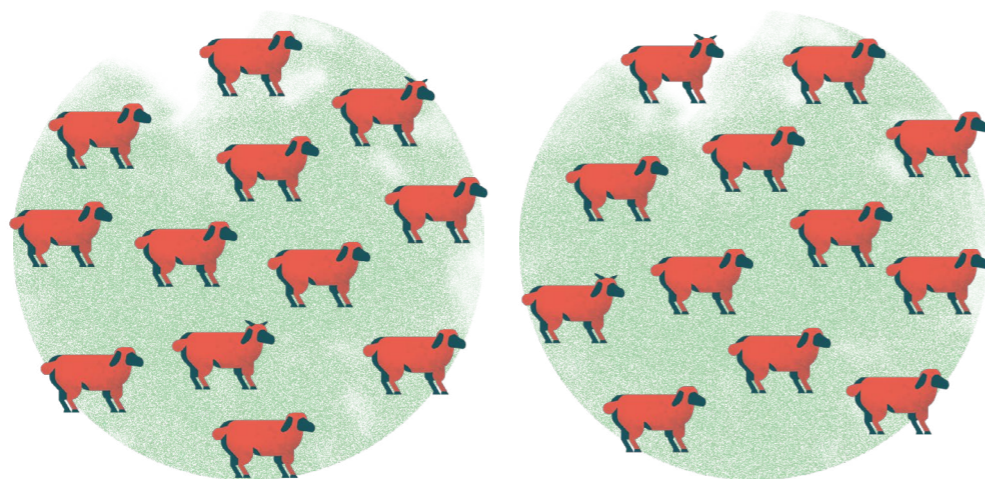


The Slow Food Kenya team proposed the Red Maasai breed for a Presidium because of its uniqueness and, considering the benefits that would be generated, to help the Maasai people in the difficult situation in which they found themselves. Realizing that economic returns would be slow to emerge, however, they were also aware that a

long-term commitment would be necessary for a Red Maasai Sheep Presidium to become self-sufficient. Two groups of breeders were identified, one in the Nakuru County Satellite/Rosarian community, and one in the Narok County Olkeri community. By September 2020, the Presidium had 41 members, 20 of whom were youths when they

joined, 19 of whom were women. Youth involvement in the Presidium was a specific commitment in both groups and youths have worked alongside the elderly to learn and help in reviving traditions. The Presidium also left plenty of room for female participation, as women are considered to be highly skilled in identifying the best animals.

One of the main challenges for the Presidium was to find the two small flocks of Red Maasai sheep that would constitute the first nuclei of reproducers. It eventually purchased two flocks of 10 ewes and two rams each for a total of 24 animals.



During the first year, activities focused on group formation, registration and intensive training (leadership, group organization, animal nutrition and husbandry etc.). Slow Food Kenya and Presidium members also

scouted for butchers and other potential buyers for Red Maasai Sheep. Information collected during monitoring in September 2020 indicates that both flocks comprised a total of 25 animals and a new round of lambing is expected soon.

Overall, the Presidium is operational and its members are dedicating energy and effort to ensuring its viability, bearing in mind that, for them, tangible results will only emerge slowly and over time.

Key findings and outcomes



The expansion of marketing options for all Presidia has been the most successful outcome, also contributing to increasing the revenues of their members.

With regard to sustainability, the prospects are good for all Presidia, especially in institutional and environmental terms. The Project significantly contributed to empowering the indigenous communities where the Presidia were established and offered an invaluable opportunity for many youths to develop a sustainable livelihood in their native areas.

Capacity-building and exposure to the external world seem to be the most effective tools in this regard, together with recognition of the value of one's own tradition and culture. The Wichí Wild Honey Presidium presented the challenge that honey gathering is a strictly male activity for the Wichí. Slow Food staff decided to respect the traditional gender-based division of labor and engaged with the women in the Larguero community, exploring the possibility of a link with the Gran Chaco Wild Fruit Presidium. It also organized a number of discussions and workshops on gender issues in the community. Maasai women, both mature and

young, currently represent almost 50% of the members. They are highly respected thanks to their skill in identifying the most productive animals. Some of them hold positions of leadership and all engage in the daily management of the flocks. All Presidia have put mechanisms in place to enable a high level of participation by all members and transparency in decision-making. The positive results achieved in terms of production, marketing, stability of membership and empowerment are also a direct consequence of robust and sound governance mechanisms and adequate capacity-building.

Conclusions

Strengthening existing and establishing new Presidia has proved to be very important for engaging with Indigenous People and youth in particular. The following features were visible in eight out of ten Presidia:



All Presidia comprise products that have a strong cultural relevance for the Indigenous Peoples concerned, represent their local area and are a key element for the food security of the communities involved, directly and/or through income generation

All supported Presidia are managed by communities or groups of Indigenous Peoples



All Presidia improved the initial economic status of members with better marketing opportunities, thanks to improved product quality and food safety and larger production volumes

All Presidia are addressing the link between biodiversity and environmental conservation and economic development successfully, generating additional income for members while, at the same time, contributing to the enhancement of their natural resource base



With their extensive capacity-building work, all Presidia have helped empower youth and adults, valorizing their traditional knowledge and enhancing it with new skills and know-how to better address their rapidly changing context: youth have thus become key players everywhere

Presidia membership is stable and there seems to be potential for expansion across all groups, thanks to the visible benefits generated through the establishment of the Presidia themselves



