

1. Report on

2024 | 25 POLLINATORS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

A pilot **Indigenous-led** fellowship program designed to **empower** leaders from Indigenous **peoples** and local **communities**, **enhancing** the **effectiveness**, impact, and **ownership** of **community-led** projects **rooted** in Indigenous **values**.



www.meli-bees.org

<https://www.meli-bees.org/pollinators-fellowship/>



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MEET THE FUNDERS



MEET OUR LOCAL PARTNERS



ASSOCIAÇÃO INDÍGENA KOKAMA
DO MUNICÍPIO DE SANTO ANTÔNIO DO IÇÁ-AM



Associação das Comunidades Indígena do Balaio - ACIB
Barreirinha Village - Araribóia Indigenous Territory
Vargem Limpa Village - Araribóia Indigenous Territory
Galheiro Grande Village - Krahô Indigenous Territory

MEET THE FELLOWS



Ana Maria

Fisher

[Blog link](#)



Arukapé

Aikewara

[Blog link](#)



Cruwakwyj

Krahô

[Blog link](#)



Geovani

Dessana

[Blog link](#)



Jonas

Guajajara

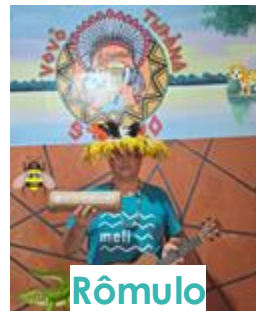
[Blog link](#)



Shirley

Aymara

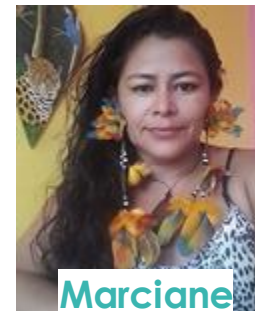
[Blog link](#)



Rômulo

Kambeba

[Blog link](#)



Marciane

Kokama

[Blog link](#)



Nonato

Guajajara

[Blog link](#)

We first selected **10 Pollinators - leaders from Indigenous and local communities** - to participate in a series of online activities in **Meliponiculture, Agroforestry, Project Management, and Storysharing**. Drawn from our network or recommended by trusted partners, they went through a thorough selection process, including interviews and **participant assessments**. **Prerequisites** for participation included internet connection, prior involvement with Meli's network, a 20-hour weekly availability, and active community ties. **Selection criteria** focused on each candidate's commitment and long-term vision, capability to implement projects, potential impact, experience with regenerative practices, and ability to inspire and empower others.

The fellowship addressed **key community needs** with a holistic approach, blending diverse topics and fostering **team building** through tailored sessions. Project Management was a very **innovative** topic and understood as opportunity for growth, while internet connectivity issues highlighted the need for **offline-first** solutions. Pollinators served as **ambassadors**, engaging guest participants like **Rosa Maria** from the Suruí Aikewara workshop, **Aruck**, a Terena teacher passionate about Agroforestry, and **Orlando**, from Romulo's team, who brought a strong interest in meliponiculture. These exchanges fostered **peer learning** and united leaders **across regions** and cultures.

TERRITORIES & BIOMES



The first Pollinator Fellows cohort represents **diverse territories and biomes**, from the **Amazon** rainforest and **Cerrado** savannah to the highlands of **Peru**, uniting Indigenous communities like the Desana, Aymara, Guajajara, Kokama, Kambeba Omágua, Suruí Aikewara, and Krahô. Despite the challenges of coordinating across remote regions, the program thrived. Meetings in Portuguese, a shared language, were enriched by Spanish-speaking participants, encouraging cross-cultural exchanges and strengthening collective learning across Latin America.

MEET THE TEAM

A **multidisciplinary** team, based in multiple locations and backgrounds, working **together** from the ideation, to the operation of the program's activities.

[Check our motivation in this post.](#)



Ana Rosa
Program
Manager



Laura Soto
Community
Engagement



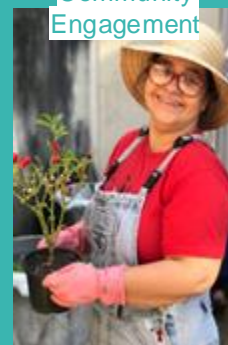
Ivi Pauli
Project



William Bercé
Meliponiculture



Lucas Bevilaqua
Agroforestry



Cynthia Rabelo
Storysharing



Thais Costa
Storysharing
Volunteer

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Led by Ivi Pauli, the Project Management discipline provided Indigenous and local community leaders with **concrete, actionable skills to plan, execute, and manage impactful community projects**. This training combined practical tools in project management with deeply rooted cultural values, empowering participants to advance sustainable development while actively preserving their traditions and heritage.

Activities: A total of 8 sessions covered essential project management topics, including project vision and team building, strategic planning, community-based business models, territory diagnosis and SWOT analysis, setting goals with the SMART method, effective pitching, timeline and resource planning, budgeting, project monitoring with visual tools, and risk management alongside ancestral leadership principles to build our legacy.

Learnings: For most participants, this was their first exposure to project management content, which required careful adaptation to ensure accessibility and clarity. One-on-one meetings were conducted to address questions and provide support, helping participants gain confidence as their projects took shape. Their journey culminated in a final presentation to Meli's broader community, and they are now excited to present their pitches to potential partners and investors.



STORYSHARING

Facilitated by Cynthia Rabelo and Thais Costa, the Storysharing discipline aimed to engage participants in exploring the power of storytelling to reflect on the significance of bees, plants, and ancestral knowledge. Through interactive sessions, participants learned to appreciate the documentary value of oral tradition, the art of active listening, and the role of storytelling in preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage.

Activities: A total of 8 sessions covered key storytelling topics, including the role of oral tradition, active listening, the diversity of storytellers and styles, nature stories, and techniques for storytelling on camera. Activities included guided reflections, family and community storytelling circles, sharing recipes passed down through generations, and creating stories that capture each community's values and identity.

Learnings: Some participants initially saw storytelling as strictly recreational, but their openness allowed for a powerful journey of discovery. Storytelling emerged as a vital form of documentation, reconnecting participants with ancestral knowledge, cultural identity, and sharing community struggles. Even children were captivated, setting aside screens to engage with the stories. Through sharing across territories, fellows experienced deep exchanges that brought them closer to their own roots and to other communities. By the end, they recognized storytelling's transformative power to revisit values, beliefs, and cultural identity—a serious and empowering practice that stirs emotions and strengthens community bonds.



MELIPONICULTURE

Rooted in Indigenous cosmology, this training offered essential knowledge and skills for managing stingless bees, sustaining ecological balance, and providing crucial resources. Led by William Bercê, the Meliponiculture discipline equipped participants step-by-step, empowering newcomers to bring beekeeping to their communities and helping experienced beekeepers refine their hive management techniques and explore sustainable revenue opportunities.

Activities: A total of 8 meetings covered essential beekeeping topics, including bee biology, hive construction, meliponary establishment and management, honey and propolis production, melipon pasture and floral calendars, and commercialization models.

Learnings: The diversity of native bees across different territories was both a challenge and a source of excitement, revealing the unique bee species that flourish in each community and biome. This richness highlighted the need for flexibility and adaptability in our approach. In some communities, the local leader differed from the main beekeeper, emphasizing the importance of building strong teams to foster collaboration and peer learning. Through this journey, we reinforced that Meliponiculture is truly Meli's flagship activity, central to connecting communities, enhancing environmental stewardship, and celebrating the distinct ecological contributions of each region.

AGROFORESTRY

Facilitated by Lucas José Bevilacqua, the Agroforestry discipline empowered participants to **strengthen their role as native agroforesters**, reclaiming food sovereignty and protecting biodiversity rooted in their Indigenous cosmology. Through a blend of theoretical and hands-on sessions, participants enhanced their skills to design and implement diverse agroforestry systems tailored to local biomes, interests, and opportunities.

Activities: A total of 8 meetings covered essential agroforestry topics, including an introduction to agroforestry systems, forest stratification, natural succession, soil covering and dense planting, local system design, soil preparation, seeding and planting techniques, as well as ongoing management practices.

Learnings: Designing agroforestry systems for diverse biomes posed challenges due to the limited availability of Indigenous-led models. To address this, hands-on, in-person workshops have been instrumental in providing fellows with practical knowledge and skills. Additional grants enabled agroforestry workshops in the Krahô and Suruí Aikewara territories, where fellows gathered on-site to share expertise, deepen their connection to the land, and build a strong sense of community and collaboration.

Although the dry season initially delayed activities, the arrival of the rains has allowed full agroforestry implementation to begin, with Lucas offering dedicated one-on-one remote support to ensure success.



REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This pilot program has sparked a **legacy** rooted in guiding **principles** that will shape impact and resilience for **generations** to come. Through dynamic engagement with fellows and deep team **reflections**, we uncovered the **core values** driving its transformative power:

Our Shared Values



INDIGENOUS LEGACY

Anchored in the timeless principles and traditions of Indigenous communities.



GLOBAL NETWORK

Forge powerful alliances to amplify fellows' influence, resources, and impact.



TERRITORIAL STEWARDSHIP

Foster local collaboration to strengthen territorial and social integrity within each community.



ORAL TRADITION & LANGUAGE

Revive languages through the power of the spoken word to strengthen culture.



COMMUNITY AUTONOMY

Equip individuals with tools to uplift their communities, building resilience and enabling self-reliance.

As we move forward, we are committed to integrating offline-first technologies to bridge gaps in remote areas, ensuring uninterrupted access to learning and collaboration for all participants. The powerful synergy of online modules and in-person activities has enabled fellows to directly apply their knowledge within their communities, fostering deeper impact through hands-on experiences. Building on this success, we will refine and enhance this hybrid format to maximize engagement and outcomes.

Our vision for the future includes expanding peer mentorship, empowering experienced fellows to guide new participants and creating a sustainable cycle of learning and leadership. Additionally, we aim to share our insights on global platforms, with plans for an Indigenous Think & Do Tank and participation at COP30, showcasing the critical role of Indigenous and local communities in driving environmental resilience.

This next chapter will strengthen our network, amplify Indigenous voices, and broaden our reach, laying the foundation for a transformative, sustainable future. More details on the program outcomes, our strategy and partnerships can be found in the **[ANNEXES](#)**.



ANNEXES



AGROFORESTRY WORKSHOP 1:

KRAHÔ PEOPLE

- CERRADO BIOME -



The Krahô people, guardians of the Cerrado's rich biodiversity and ancestral wisdom, embody resilience and harmony with nature while confronting the mounting threats of deforestation, wildfires, and habitat loss in this vital biome. With the generous support of Postcode Loterie grants, we hosted an in-person agroforestry workshop in the Krahô Indigenous Territory, home to our inspiring **Fellow Kruw**. This hands-on initiative provided participants with practical skills to restore degraded lands and enhance ecological balance. By blending agroforestry techniques with the Krahô's deep-rooted traditional knowledge, the workshop showcased how regenerative practices can address environmental challenges, bolster food sovereignty, and create sustainable income opportunities, all while preserving the cultural and natural legacy of the Krahô people. Dive deeper into this impactful initiative on our **blog** ([link here](#)).

ON SITE AGROFORESTRY WORKSHOP 2:

SURUÍ AIKEWARA PEOPLE

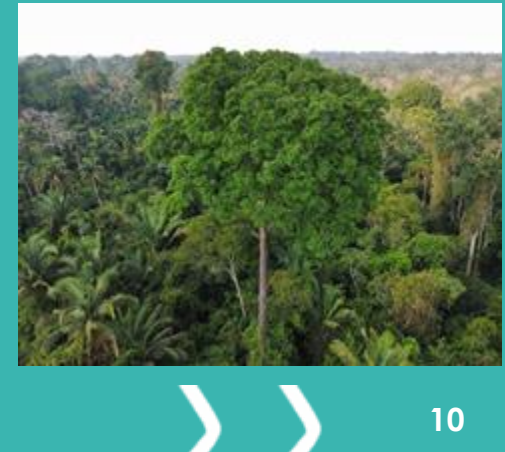
- AMAZON FOREST BIOME -



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE MOVIE](#)

In August 2024 we had the privilege of organizing a one-week agroforestry workshop in the Sororó Indigenous Territory. Led by our **[Fellow Arukapé](#)**, the community embraced the opportunity to blend their ancestral knowledge with modern agroforestry techniques. Our program facilitator Lucas, along with Director Ana Rosa, were on the ground to support the initiative, and fellows Nonato and Jonas were present too. This immersive experience strengthened their food sovereignty and cultural preservation in a community-led approach to land stewardship. More on our **blog** (**[link here](#)**).

On December 6th, we proudly released a film that captured the essence of the workshop, celebrating the Suruí Aikewara's resilience and showcasing a powerful example of how communities are creating sustainable solutions rooted in their heritage. **[Click here](#)** to see our **movie release page**.



FUNDING SECURED FOR COMMUNITY-LED PROJECTS WITH POLLINATORS' LEADERSHIP

Six community-led projects, combining cultural heritage and innovation, have secured funding for 2025, with eight Pollinators Fellows at the helm. Meli's role in connecting fellows with partners turned ideas into impact on the ground. By channeling all funds directly to the communities, we empower them to build a resilient, self-sustaining future, showcasing the transformative impact of investing in grassroots leadership.



ALTO SOLIMÕES PROJECT

Indigenous leaders from Alto Solimões, representing urban Indigenous communities, will receive funding from Azimuth Foundation to launch a project combining meliponiculture with cultural preservation. By strengthening Kokama and Kambeba heritage through music and crafts, Rômulo Kambeba and Marciane Kokama are driving social innovation that bridges cultural identity and ecological stewardship in the Amazon.

RIO NEGRO PROJECT



The Balaio Community Association will receive funding from Kerry Group to advance meliponiculture and environmental education in local schools, while also exploring community-based tourism opportunities. Led by Geovani Desana, this project aims to foster sustainable practices and economic growth in the Amazon.



SURUÍ AIKEWARA PROJECT

The Tukapehy Community Association will receive funding from SEZ (Stiftung Entwicklungszusammenarbeit BaWü, BWirkt! Ausland) to support meliponiculture training and establish meliponaries, led by Arukapé Suruí in the Amazon.

GUAJAJARA & UEMA PROJECT



The Guajajara people from the Araribóia territory will benefit from a project under the AMAZÔNIA +10 program, in partnership with UEMA (State University of Maranhão). This initiative combines ancestral wisdom with scientific knowledge to drive environmental restoration, led by Jonas and Nonato Guajajara in the Amazon.



MELI & INDIGENOUS WOMEN PROJECT

Meli Bees Network, with funding from SEZ (Stiftung Entwicklungszusammenarbeit BaWü, BWirkt! Inland), will spotlight Indigenous women as guardians of biological diversity. Led by Kruw Krahô and Tiniá Suruí, this project celebrates their vital role in preserving ecosystems across the Cerrado and the Amazon.

AYMARA ON THE GLOBAL STAGE



Shirley Mamani, Aymara from Peru, will participate as a speaker in the workshop Preserving and Transferring Indigenous Knowledge in a Digital World in Hamburg, Germany, in March 2025.

POLLINATORS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN OUR MEDIA CHANNELS

We actively promoted the Pollinators Fellowship Program across our communication channels, sharing updates, stories, and insights through [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) our [blog](#), our [newsletter](#) and [website](#) to engage our community and amplify the program's impact.

The Pollinators Fellowship has Started - Meet our Fellows

*O Programa Polinizadores Começou -
Conheça nossos Bolsistas*

June began with the first classes of the Pollinators Program. Meet the Indigenous and Local Community Leaders who have been selected to take part in this Program and multiply positive impacts!

Juni begann mit den ersten Klassen des Bestäuberprogramms. Lernen Sie die indigenen und lokalen Führungspersönlichkeiten kennen, die ausgewählt wurden, um an diesem Programm teilzunehmen und die positiven Auswirkungen zu multiplizieren!

[LINK FOR THE PROGRAM RELEASE NEWSLETTER](#)

[LINK FOR THE PROGRAM CLOSING NEWSLETTER](#)

MEET THE POLLINATORS



[LINK FOR THE POST
ON INSTAGRAM](#)

MEET THE FACILITATORS



[LINK FOR THE POST
ON INSTAGRAM](#)

MEET THE MOTIVATION



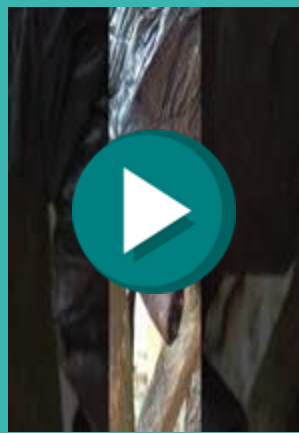
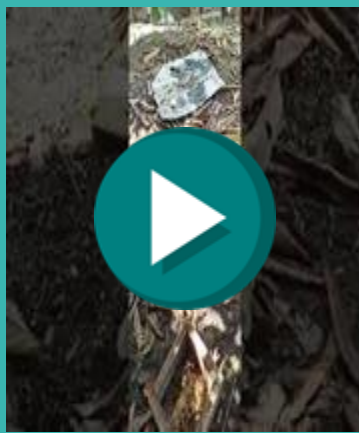
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ON LINKEDIN](#)



TRAINING OUTCOMES

MELIPONICULTURE

The Meliponiculture discipline highlights the participants' dedication to mastering sustainable beekeeping practices—from hive construction to honey production—rooted in Indigenous knowledge and environmental stewardship. They are now actively applying these skills, turning online learning into real-world practice.



TRAINING OUTCOMES

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Each class in the Project Planning and Management discipline served as a vital building block, guiding participants in the development of community projects. By February, these projects will be fully prepared to present to potential partners and donors, paving the way for impactful implementation. Below are the current Portuguese versions, still works in progress, along with the recorded mid-term presentations.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH SESSION 1](#)



HONEY FROM BALAIO: Strengthening the Forest and the Community

[CLICK HERE](#) to read **GEOVANI** full preliminary project



FLAVORS & HEALING FROM THE MANGROVE: Wild Edibles and Medicinal Plants in Perizes - [CLICK HERE](#) to read **ANA MARIA** full preliminary project



GUAJAJARA HARVEST: Food and Financial Resilience

[CLICK HERE](#) to read **JONAS** full preliminary project

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH SESSION 2](#)

SOLIMÕES CONNECTION: A Festival of Knowledge, Tradition, and Sustainability - [CLICK HERE](#) to read **RÔMULO AND MARCIANE** project



GUARDIANS OF THE CERRADO: Women's Autonomy and Krahô Identity

[CLICK HERE](#) to read **KRUW** full preliminary project



ANCESTRAL ROUTE: Community Based Tourism and Autonomy

[CLICK HERE](#) to read **NONATO** full preliminary project



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH SESSION 3](#)



STRONG YOUTH, LIVING TERRITORY: The Suruí Aikewara Legacy for the Future of the Amazon - [CLICK HERE](#) to read **ARUKAPÉ** full preliminary project

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH SESSION 4](#)

HONORING PACHAMAMA: Agroforestry and Environmental Education in Yunguyo - [CLICK HERE](#) to read **SHIRLLEY** full preliminary project



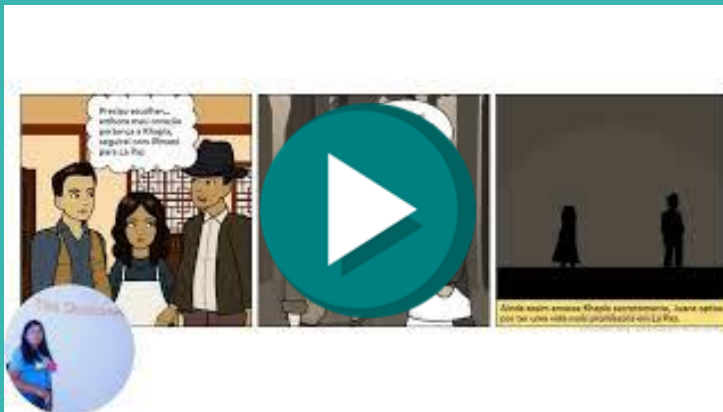
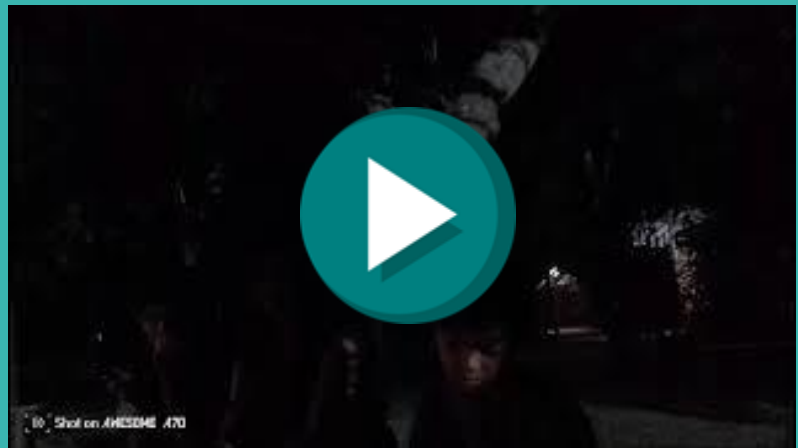


TRAINING OUTCOMES

CULTURE AND STORY-SHARING

Highlights from the Story Sharing class showcase the power of exchanging stories to strengthen languages, deepen spirituality, and foster ethnocultural appreciation among peers and beyond, creating a profound sense of connection and mutual learning.

This video features Jonas sharing a cherished tradition from his community, where nights around the fire become a time for storytelling, preserving ancestral knowledge, culture, and language for future generations.



Shirley from Peru takes us on a journey through the story of her municipality, Yunguyo, sharing the origins of Cerro Khapía and bridging our connection with Spanish-speaking communities through rich ancestral narratives.

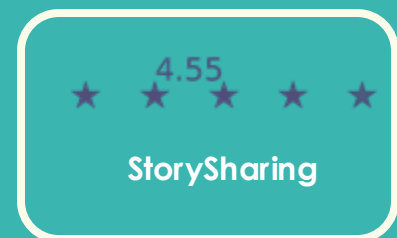
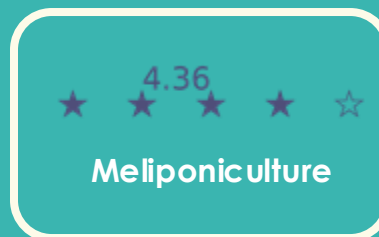
In this video, Romulo captivates a group of Indigenous children at the local school, singing ancestral stories that ignite their imaginations and strengthen their connection to cultural heritage.



MID-TERM ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Halfway through our course, after delivering four sessions for each subject, we conducted an evaluation survey. Here are some insights and highlights. [Click to access the full report.](#)

How useful do you find the content for practical application in your daily work or community projects?



What the fellows are saying:

"I really like the project management plan. **We always dream of having a major project** within our territory and village... Because we really need it... something that could bring improvements to our community"

"Until I attended the classes, **I didn't know much about agroforestry**; I only knew the traditional way of farming by burning, and I **knew almost nothing about bees.**"

"**The classes are being very useful for my community**, where we are facing a severe drought, and I hope to learn more."



An inclusive space where Indigenous leaders teach about the Rights of Nature
The session will be held in Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

Tuesday, October 22nd,
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
GMT-5
(Green zone)

Monday, October 28th,
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
GMT-5
(Science center)

Friday, November 1st,
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
GMT-5
(Blue zone)

CLICK HERE TO READ OUR BLOG POST

This year, our Pollinator Fellows participated in the “Rights for Nature” workshops at COP16 in Cali, Colombia, hosted in partnership with [Savimbo](#). This unique hybrid gathering brought together Indigenous leaders from across Latin America—virtually and in person—to share their perspectives on the foundational rights of nature. For three days, participants engaged deeply with the eight core rights, exploring the principles of respect, resilience, health, and stewardship that have been integral to Indigenous cultures for generations.



Pollinators played a vital role, sharing ancestral knowledge and lived experiences that resonated deeply with policymakers, academics, and global leaders. Their contributions highlighted the urgent need to shift from exploitation to stewardship of the natural world, showcasing their leadership and the critical role of Indigenous wisdom in addressing the climate crisis. The workshops reinforced the importance of honoring nature’s autonomy and the communities most connected to it, inspiring a renewed commitment to environmental justice and coexistence.

The Challenges of Bioeconomy at the Brazilian Embassy in Berlin



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

As part of the “Challenges of Socio-Bioeconomy” event at the Brazilian Embassy in Berlin, the Pollinator Fellows played a key role in showcasing how Indigenous and local communities in the Amazon are driving sustainable solutions through their traditional knowledge and innovative practices. Representing diverse Amazonian territories, the fellows shared firsthand insights into the opportunities and challenges of agroforestry and stingless beekeeping, highlighting the importance of Indigenous leadership in building regenerative supply chains.



Pollinator Fellows showcased the preparation and dedication of their communities in overcoming challenges to build sustainable practices in agroforestry and meliponiculture. They emphasized the critical need for Indigenous representation in bioeconomy discussions. Their insights highlighted the importance of partnerships with countries like Germany to strengthen local efforts and support broader inclusion in shaping the future of socio-bioeconomy.

First International Forum on Native Stingless Bees



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE RECORDING \(SPANISH\)](#)

On May 20th, 2024, we partnered with Amazon Research and BioAmaz and national institutions to hold the first virtual forum on Native Stingless Bees in Peru. National Geographic Society Regional Director of Latin America, Gael Almeida, shared a kind message at the start of the event encouraging biocultural events such as this one. Over 150 attendees joined from multiple countries including Peru, Mexico, USA, UK, Argentina, Germany and Denmark to learn all about stingless bees. We counted with 20+ speakers from the Amazon Rainforest as well as other locations worldwide sharing their expertise and experience in scientific research, conservation initiatives, policy, education, storytelling and beekeeping.

PROGRAMA

Hora	Tema	Expositor	País	Institución
8:00 a 8:30 a.m.	Introducción	Gael Almeida / Gael Almeida	Perú	Directora de National Geographic Society Latinoamérica / Gobernadora Regional Loreto
8:30 a 9:00 a.m.	Experiencia en campo: Mi primer día de abeja	Milton Alzamora Fernández	Perú	Independiente
9:00 a 9:30 a.m.	Diversidad de Abejas en el Perú	Clara Rasmussen	Dinamarca	Alma University
9:30 a 10:00 a.m.	Experiencia abejas nativas en la periferia de Tucumán	María Beatriz Roscini	Argentina	Mil Nuvia Kallin
10:00 a 10:30 a.m.	Compartimiento social de las abejas sin aguijón	Christopher Crutcher	Estados Unidos	Brace University
10:30 a 11:00 a.m.	Experiencia como meliponicultor	Carlos Hernández	Perú	BIOAMAZ
11:00 a 11:30 a.m.	Importancia de las redes en la conservación	Laura Soto	Alemania	Wild Bees
11:30 a 12:00 a.m.	Manejo de abejas nativas	Edberto Vela	Perú	Independiente
12:00 a 12:30 a.m.	La apicultura en las fincas de abejas nativas sin aguijón: Caso de Cuzco, Cuzco y Cuzco	Steeq Hualand	Perú	Amazon Research International
12:30 a 1:00 p.m.	Abejas nativas en aguijón en Argentina desde la ciencia y la cultura	Melba Gabriela Costa	Argentina	Laboratorio de Entomología y desarrollo comunitario
1:00 a 1:30 p.m.	Educación ambiental con abejas	Julié Verdaguer	Francia	UCER Aduffa
1:30 a 2:00 p.m.	Experiencia de meliponicultura en bosques secos	Reynaldo El Estable	Perú	Proyecto CEP: Bosque seco de la cordillera de Pari
2:00 a 2:30 p.m.	Los derechos de la naturaleza: Caso de Abejas sin aguijón	Constanza Arias	Perú	Expo-Las Cajas
2:30 a 3:00 p.m.	Manejo de recursos en la Reserva Nacional Alpahuasi Mishne	Herman Vladimir Ruiz Alvarado	Perú	Sernamp
3:00 a 3:30 p.m.	Uso de tecnología para el monitoreo de las abejas	José David Aguilar	Perú	WCC Lab
3:30 a 4:00 p.m.	Financiamiento para desarrollo de bioproductos: Caso Heligeros BEE QUEEN COM	Adriano Mora Braga	Perú	WIKUENCOM LLC
4:00 a 4:30 p.m.	Salud Apícola y Malpaca	Samuel Ramirez	Perú	Colembio University
4:30 a 5:00 p.m.	Protocolos para comunicar historias de conservación importantes	Gael Almeida	Perú	Independiente
5:00 a 5:30 p.m.	Valoración de los servicios ecosistémicos de las abejas nativas sin aguijón	Osvaldo Sotgiu	Perú	SNP
5:30 a 6:00 p.m.	Importancia del policultivo científico en la conservación de las abejas sin aguijón	Marta Vargas	Perú	Red de redes y servicios ecosistémicos de servicios, educación y cultura
6:00 a 6:30 p.m.	La importancia de las redes y video: Bee Culture y diapositivas nacionales	Ara Eliza Schell	Perú	Independiente
6:30 a 7:00 p.m.	Planificación de guardabosques de conservación	Madeline Cheng	Perú	Asociación de Mujeres
7:00 a 8:00 p.m.	Clausura del evento: Canto de las abejas			

Bees and Communities at Bristol University

meli
Presents:

Bees & Communities

An event to foster biomes and people flourishing together!

- Communities presenting their work with stingless bees,
- Launch of P2P app on stingless bees,
- Learning exchange: academic and local knowledge,
- Inspiration from biodiversity, to regenerate the world!

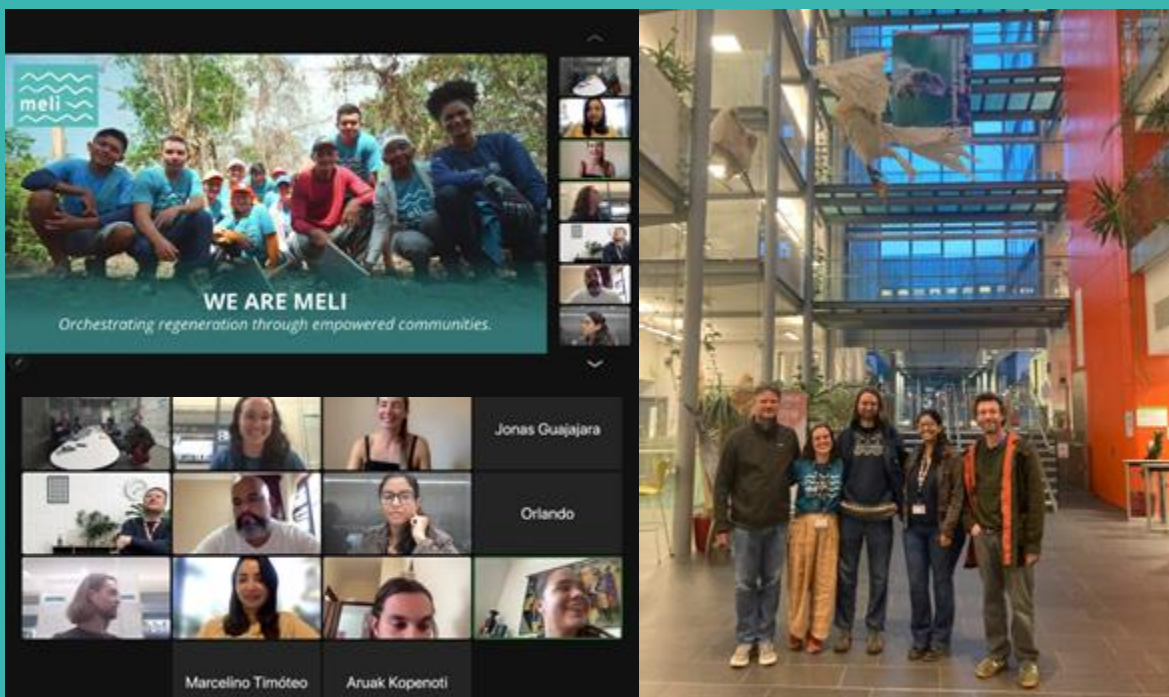
Register at:
www.meli-bees.org/event-bees-communities

University of Bristol
8th of March
from 9am to 5pm

watson
Western Union Foundation

On March 8th, Meli hosted an event in collaboration with the School of Biological Studies at the University of Bristol, P2Panda, and Indigenous and local communities working with stingless bees. During the event, communities presented their work with stingless bees, academic researchers shared their studies, and a P2P app developed with P2Panda was officially launched.

[CLICK HERE TO READ OUR BLOG POST](#)



IMPACT THAT REVIVES OUR FUTURE ON EARTH

This **data and quotes** were gathered through a **comprehensive questionnaire** completed by each Pollinator, reflecting their **personal experiences**, insights, and the transformative impact of the fellowship.

Empowering Skills and Leadership

100% of participants gained transformative skills in meliponiculture, agroforestry, and project management, and feel empowered to lead projects, share knowledge, and create a ripple effect that inspires a new generation of Indigenous and local leaders.

"It's like you knew exactly what we needed." My vision is for my community to become independent, free from relying on food from the city, as we have the land to produce sustainably. I hope to increase fruit production through agroforestry, expand beekeeping, and create new opportunities for our youth and those in need. "

Jonas, Guajajara

Transforming Communities and Nature

97% reported strengthened cultural identity and community engagement, and new perspectives for generating income; **90%** saw tangible environmental improvements, and **100%** believe the practices will sustain and scale, building resilient ecosystems and communities.

"In the agroforestry class, the facilitator taught us that biodiversity is possible even in difficult conditions. Hearing this gave me strength to keep protecting nature and planting life where it doesn't yet exist. "

Shirley, Aymara

"Sharing our stories revitalized our knowledge and captured the attention of our youth and children. "

Marciane, Kokama

"If it were not for our new Agroforestry, we would be struggling to find enough food now. "

Wkapé, Suruí

Reviving Culture and Building Connections

100% of participants revitalized traditions and preserved oral stories, forged cross-community partnerships across biomes, and experienced strengthened emotional well-being, fostering a deeper connection and global solidarity.

"Presenting our project to everyone was a moment of deep connection and emotional support—it made me feel truly seen, valued, and part of something bigger. "

Ana Maria, Fisherman Village

"Through the knowledge and strategies I learned from the Pollinators program, I was able to create an opportunity for women in my community to work in preservation and territorial protection for the first time. "

Kruw, Krahô

Advancing Equity and Innovation

98% increased women's leadership and mentorship, breaking gender barriers, while **100%** feel confident driving sustainable innovations and shaping global conversations on autonomy.

"Before Meli's program, we struggled to write projects, and it never worked out, but their guidance taught us how to succeed. Now, we're ready to create a project for our community. "

Geovani, Desana

Investing in Community Potential

90% of the 11 projects developed during the program have already secured funding and are being implemented. More are ready for investment with all fellows ready to pitch their ideas.

"Hearing about the success of local entrepreneurship projects reminded me that I have all the skills needed to develop similar projects focused on native plant-based resources in my community. "

Shirley, Aymara

"You give us the strength to keep going and not give up. "

Rômulo, Omágua Kambeba



Overall Rate



FELLOW'S TESTIMONIALS



Through heartfelt videos recorded in their own territories, our Pollinators Fellows revealed how the program inspired and transformed their leadership, deepened their connection to their land, and fortified their community resilience. Their growing autonomy and confidence shine through every word, as they captured these powerful messages themselves, using their own phones—a profound testament to the transformative impact of the Storysharing discipline.





BUILDING TOMORROW TOGETHER: *Pollinating New Horizons for 2025*

This pilot project has been a journey of invaluable learning, providing profound insights into the needs and strengths of the communities we serve. The enthusiastic participation and meaningful feedback from our fellows reaffirmed the importance and value of this initiative. These experiences have demonstrated the program's transformative potential and sparked our determination to refine and elevate it for the next iteration. With every challenge met and success achieved, we are more motivated than ever to co-create a stronger, more impactful program that empowers communities and drives sustainable, grassroots-led change. Up next, we'll share the improvements, new partnerships, and exciting opportunities for growth as we continue to shape the future of this work.

UEMANET & MELI: *Pioneering Scalable, Community-Led Digital Education*

During our pilot program, we identified a critical need for flexible, scalable educational solutions to address challenges such as coordinating common schedules across diverse communities and regions, especially as we expand into other Latin American countries and English-speaking communities worldwide. To meet this need, UEMA (State University of Maranhão), renowned for its expertise in online course development, is partnering with Meli Bees Network to create a groundbreaking educational model tailored to Indigenous and local communities. This collaboration combines UEMA's technical excellence in building high-quality, scalable digital learning platforms with Meli's expertise in community-driven approaches and culturally adapted content. The platform's offline-first design ensures accessibility in areas with limited internet connectivity, while its flexibility allows for continuous updates, integrating relevant content identified over time. Multilingual courses in Portuguese, Spanish, and English will empower communities to shape their learning journeys, blending technical rigor with cultural sensitivity to foster social innovation and scalable impact across Latin America and beyond.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: *A Catalyst for Community-Driven Impact*

In our pilot program, it became clear that our fellows learn best by doing, which has solidified our commitment to Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a core methodology. Already validated in practice, PBL empowers Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to apply their lived experience while addressing gaps in formal education. By engaging directly with real-world challenges, fellows develop critical skills like autonomy, problem-solving, and innovation, enabling them to lead transformative, sustainable change in their territories. This approach not only aligns with the hands-on, collective learning traditions of IPLCs but also ensures that our program delivers impactful, culturally resonant, and scalable results.

THE IP&LC-LED THINK TANK: *Driving Change from the Ground Up*

Building on insights from our pilot, we recognized the need for a global IPLC-led think tank that brings together Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities across multiple territories and continents to tackle shared challenges, such as land protection, cultural preservation, and climate resilience. This initiative is part of Meli's core pillar of "global engagement," where we elevate decolonial voices from the Global South, fostering meaningful dialogues that raise international awareness and improve North-South cooperation. Our goal is to spark key conversations driven by the real challenges faced by communities, then bring in key stakeholders from science, industry, governments, NGOs, the UN, and more to collaboratively address these issues. The think tank will operate through both local and global chapters, blending online and offline approaches to ensure accessibility, while always overcoming language barriers. By creating a platform where local knowledge meets global expertise, we empower IPLCs to lead the way in shaping a sustainable future and driving transformative change on a global scale.

IP&LC PITCH EVENT: *Redefining Global Investment in Indigenous-Led Innovation*

During the pilot program, we recognized a critical opportunity to provide Indigenous and Local Communities (IPLCs) with a platform to present their solutions directly to global investors and partners. The IPLC Pitch Event is a first-of-its-kind initiative that gives communities the tools and space to showcase their projects, rooted in local knowledge and designed to address real-world challenges. By guiding participants through an innovative curriculum, we help them develop investment-ready pitch decks that align with sustainable economic goals and community priorities. This event empowers IPLCs to take control of their narrative, build partnerships that support self-determination, and drive scalable, impactful solutions to the world's most pressing issues. It's a bold step toward bridging the gap between grassroots innovation and global investment.

INDIGENOUS-LED LIVING LABS: *Testing Solutions, Catalyzing Autonomy*

The scaling of the Pollinators community opens the door to creating Hubs and Living Labs—innovative spaces where Indigenous and local communities can lead solutions to global challenges by leveraging their ancestral knowledge. These hubs will serve as testbeds for sustainable, community-driven initiatives, blending traditional wisdom with modern science to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic inequality. By fostering partnerships with scientists, industry leaders, and policymakers, they will develop scalable, localized solutions rooted in the realities of those most affected. This model strengthens ecosystems, informs policy, and lays the groundwork for truly regenerative global initiatives.

**REGENERATION IS HAPPENING,
WE WANT YOU TO JOIN US!**



All pictures in this document are authored by Meli members and partners.

LEARN MORE AT:

<https://www.meli-bees.org>

