

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Margherita Scazza
Project Title	Indigenous strategies of resistance to deforestation in the Ecuadorian Amazon: technological interventions to protect Waorani's ancestral lands
Application ID	28780-1
Date of this Report	01/11/2022

1. Indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Investigate innovative forms of resistance to extractivism and deforestation				
Explore use of participatory mapping				I achieved this objective but by studying a mapping project retrospectively rather than being directly involved in its follow-up phase, as explained below.
Publication objectives				As presented below, I have published one report and two more academic publications are in progress.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). A doctoral thesis titled: "Resistencia Waorani: a study of anti-extractivist resistance, territorial defence and Indigenous autonomy in Ecuadorian Amazonia", due to be defended through a Viva Voce on 9 December 2022. Once it is successfully defended and published after any possible required revision.

The thesis will lead to the publication of several academic papers, currently in progress:

- A submission to the Special Issue of the journal *Alternautas*: "Critical Perspectives on Development, State Formation and Extractivism in the Amazon" – to be published in July 2023. The article focuses on the role of indigenous autonomous education and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in resisting extractivist governmentalities.
- A submission to the journal *Geoforum*, focusing on the transformative effects of the Resistencia Waorani's cultural-legal-cartographic strategy.

b). A report published with the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) and co-authored with Waorani defender Oswando Nenquimo (also published in Spanish):

Scazza, M. and Nenquimo, O. (2021). *From spears to maps: the case of Waorani resistance in Ecuador for the defence of their right to prior consultation*. IIED, London.

c). Attendance and presentation at several conferences, including:

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| 2021 | XXXIII Italian Geographical Congress "Moving Geographies" (University of Padua): presentation 'Lots of activism, little academia': ethical and methodological challenges of engaged ethnography with an Indigenous social movement' |
| 2021 | LANDac Annual Conference "Land, Crisis and Resilience" (Utrecht University): co-authored presentation 'Contested participation at the unburnable carbon frontier: challenges and dilemmas from Ecuador's Yasuní Biosphere Reserve' |
| 2020 | POLLEN 2020 "Contested Natures: Power, Possibility, Prefiguration" (University of Sussex): presentation 'Waorani resistance to oil extraction and deterritorialization: social cartography as ontological political practice' |
| 2019 | Summer School "SMART Political Ecologies? On the nature and power of environmental technologies and their implications for just futures" (Wageningen University) |
| 2019 | Edinburgh Environment and Development Network (University of Edinburgh): presentation 'Technologies for communities' empowerment in natural resources governance' |

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

- COVID-19 Pandemic

Quantifying the impact that the pandemic has had on my research project is not an easy task. I believe the greatest challenges and obstacles have been posed by the sudden end of my fieldwork, the condition of isolation dictated by the lockdowns and working from home. In March 2020 I had to bring forward my return from the field (in Ecuador) because of the beginning of the pandemic and the decision of the University of Edinburgh to suspend all work abroad. This partly impacted my plans for data collection and analysis, as well as plans for completing an additional

field visit during the winter of 2020-21. I have had to rethink part of my project based on the data I was able to collect before March 2020 and on this condition of uncertainty. Managing these unexpected changes required great flexibility and weeks of work. Moreover, my state of mind and my ability to concentrate were significantly impacted by my status as an international student from Italy, the country where my loved ones reside and which was most severely hit by the European outbreak in the Spring of 2020, and by my professional and personal ties in Ecuador, where COVID-19's impacts were also extremely tragic.

Over the following months, my productivity oscillated significantly, undoubtedly affected by the need to adapt to working from home, something I was not used to and was not prepared for, as well as the broader situation of distress that we all, to varying degrees, have been facing. Writing a doctoral thesis requires continuous effort and a consistent level of focus, which unfortunately I have not always been able to maintain during 2020. At times, I have felt unable to concentrate and meet the goals I had set for myself. Fortunately, I was able to find a new routine and, also thanks to the attentive pastoral care I received from my PhD supervisors, I have completed my PhD within the 4 years established by my programme. I have submitted my thesis in August 2022, after having completed a dissemination trip to Ecuador to share my findings with the Waorani communities and defenders involved.

- Change of plans during my fieldwork

As all PhD studies, my project has gradually morphed during the 4 years of its duration. It did so particularly in response to the needs and requests of my research participants. Initially I wanted to focus on indigenous community use of technologies as tools for territorial defence and resistance to extractivism. I was particularly interested in the role of alternative participatory mapping and forest monitoring technologies as part of broader resistance strategies aimed at combating deforestation. I was going to investigate these processes by collaborating with a mapping project aimed at developing Waorani communities' Life Plans. Yet, because of my collaboration with Amazon Frontlines, Alianza Ceibo and the Coordinating Council of the Waorani Nationality of Ecuador-Pastaza (CONCONAWEP) – with whom I worked as a volunteer – I re-adapted my research focus.

Because of changes to their priorities, these organisations decided not to pursue such a mapping project but rather to pursue another project. The latter focused on the development of an autonomous indigenous education programme that would centre Waorani traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and their worldview. I thus adjusted my ethnographic methods and research scope to collaborate and explore these endeavours, thus encompassing a series of strategies for territorial defence that I had not foreseen before undertaking my fieldwork.

I am incredibly grateful for the flexibility that the 1st Rufford Small Grant afforded me, allowing me to adapt my research plans to these unforeseen and challenging circumstances.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

During my fieldwork, I have worked as a volunteer for CONCONAWEP and Alianza Ceibo. Both are indigenous organisations. The first is a political, elected organisation, representing all Waorani communities from the province of Pastaza, in central-western Ecuador. The second is an indigenous foundation, created in 2014 by activists from four Indigenous nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon: A'i Cofán, Siona, Siekopai and Waorani.

During my fieldwork, I was invited to assist CONCONAWEP – as a volunteer - in the process of research and initial consultation that would feed into the development of new teaching practices and curricula, centring Waorani ecological knowledge and conservation practices.

Within the scope of this role, I have:

- Participated in intra- and inter-organisational meetings.
- Joined communal workdays (*mingas*).
- Assisted with the design and analysis of a survey for a baseline study on the state of education and with its administration during visits to several communities (which I also helped with organising logistically).
- Helped with the organisation of a consultation process on autonomous indigenous education.
- Attended different workshops in the city of Puyo.
- Accompanied many of CONCONAWEP's leaders' visits to the communities.

During my 7 months of fieldwork, I worked closely with Nemonte Nenquimo, a Waorani leader who, during the same period, was awarded the 2020 Goldman Environmental Prize, was nominated by TIME Magazine among the 100 Most Influential People of 2020 and recognised by UNEP as one of 2020 'Champions of the Earth'.

I have also undertaken a dissemination trip in May-June 2022 to share my findings with my Waorani interlocutors and collect their feedback before finalising my thesis. The main objective of this last fieldtrip to Ecuador was to collect opinions from Alianza Ceibo and CONCONAWEP's activists and verify whether I had misunderstood or omitted something they deemed important, and to discuss ways

to reciprocate their trust and time and use all the material I collected. During this visit, I was able to reconnect with many of those who made the research possible, and I was updated about the organisations' work over the past 2 years. I presented my research to the new leadership of CONCONAWEP and held a few individual meetings with defenders directly involved in my research, who had the chance to comment on my reconstruction and representation of the campaign.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

I plan to continue with the publication and dissemination of my findings. After that, I would like to design a post-doc project focusing on the theme of indigenous autonomous education and ecological knowledge and apply for an early-career fellowship to pursue it.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

- The aim of the ILED report written with Oswando Nenquimo and published in two languages is to offer a resource accessible to practitioners and Indigenous defenders interested in pursuing similar projects (participatory mapping and legal actions).
- As mentioned above, I am also working on two academic publications, largely for academic audiences.
- Additionally, in collaboration with illustrator Vanessa Cárdenas Roa, I am designing a graphic novel, which narrates the events I researched and captures Waorani activists' subjective experiences. My intention is to share it with my interlocutors as a form of reciprocation for our research collaboration. During my dissemination trip in May 2022, we agreed the graphic novel could be used as teaching material within their new education curriculum. Furthermore, I hope it will be useful to share my research findings with other non-academic audiences.

7. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

I believe the most important and imminent steps are:

- I. Passing my viva in December 2022 and publishing my thesis.
- II. Submitting my manuscripts for publication (between February and May 2023).

- III. Developing a new research proposal, building on all this experience, and apply for research fellowships, while I begin my new job as a teaching fellow in Human Geography at the University of Edinburgh (by December 2023).

8. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the Foundation receive any publicity during the course of your work?

I have used the logo in several presentations to conferences (all those listed above), as well as in all lectures about my research that I have delivered so far. Moreover, I will include the logo in the graphic novel upon completion.

In addition, the vital support received by The Rufford Foundation is acknowledged in my thesis and in all my manuscripts, as well as on my university website.

I have spoken about the work of the foundation to colleagues within the School of Geosciences at the University of Edinburgh, as well as to my research collaborators in Ecuador.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Margherita Scazza – main researcher

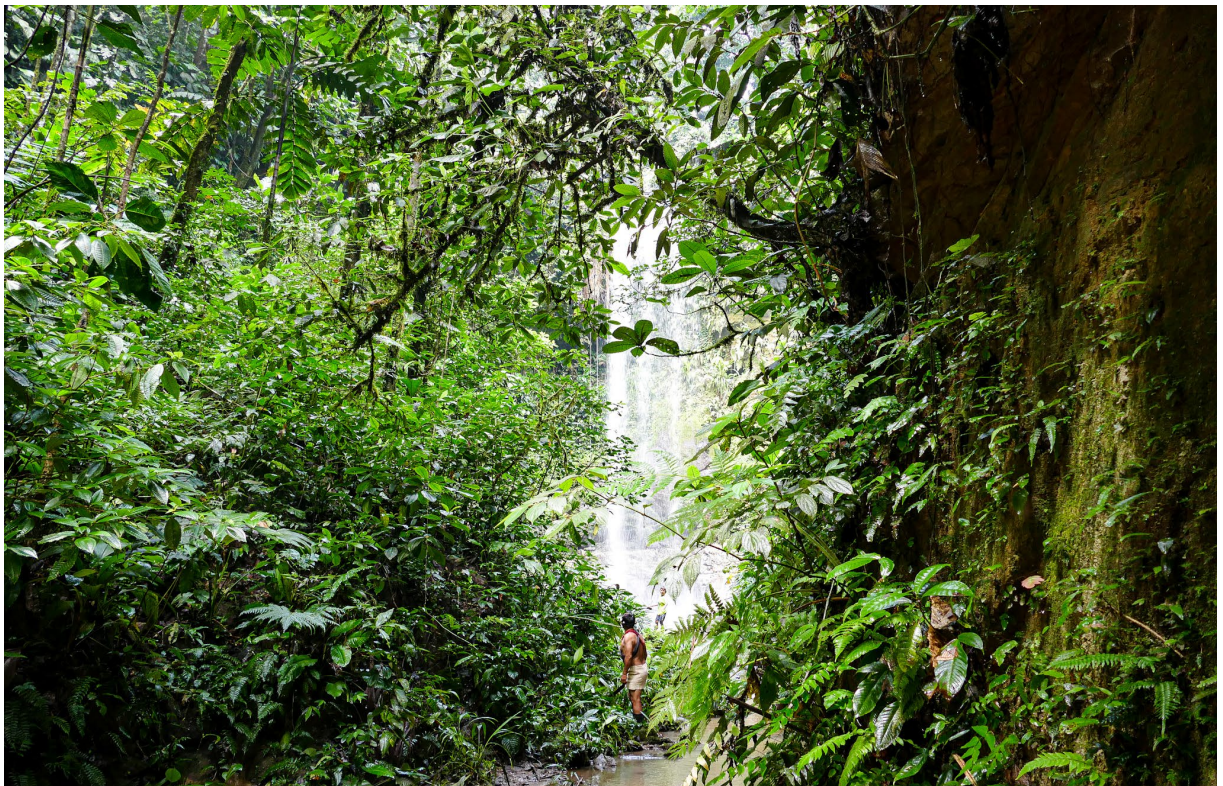
I conducted ethnographic fieldwork, mostly based on interviews and participant observation. I also recorded traditional chants as digital storytelling. As mentioned above, during my fieldwork I worked as a volunteer with the Indigenous organisation CONCONAWEP.

Boris Nenkiwi and **Oswando Nenquimo** – translators and interpreters

Boris accompanied me during my interviews with community members who could not (or preferred not to) speak Spanish. He helped me with translations from Wao-terero to Spanish, also providing complete and in-depth explanations after our interviews. Oswando helped me translate traditional chants about territory and the forest, which I recorded as part of my digital storytelling methods.

10. Any other comments?

Pictures below:



Gaba shows the way to a waterfall near the community of Nemompare, inside Waorani territory.



Waorani leaders Nemonte Nenquimo and Silvana Nihua sing traditional chants before an assembly.



Participants to an assembly organised to discuss a new education curriculum that centres Waorani Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).



Banner reads "Amazonian peoples defending life and territory".