

PROTECTING THE AMAZON BEGINS WITH EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

With the goal of ensuring the protection of the Amazon, preserving its unique cultures, and standing in solidarity with forest defenders, the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance (ASHA), in collaboration with CONFENIAE and the Rhiza Collective, is working to promote a multicultural environmental education program to prepare young Indigenous Amazonian leaders of the future.

The Living Amazon of the School (Escuela Viva de la Amazonia-EVA) was established with the purpose of providing knowledge and skills through theoretical and practical modules, fostering the integration of wisdom and knowledge from both Western and Indigenous sciences.

EVA offers a 9-month training program focused on governance, human rights, gender, development perspectives, and cross-cutting knowledge for the defense of the Amazon.

In 2023, EVA welcomed its first cohort of 30 students, representing the 11 Indigenous nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon and their 23 organizations.

The students are selected by their respective organizations, which are committed to fostering the leadership development and education of their youth.

At the beginning of 2024, EVA welcomed its second cohort, consisting of 41 Indigenous youth—a 37% increase compared to 2023. This growth reflects the success of the first cohort, which achieved a 95% student satisfaction rate.

To support the educational process of its students, EVA has established partnerships with higher-level organizations such as Amawtay Wasi University. This collaboration ensures the robustness of the training program and enables the awarding of a technical diploma to the youth participating in EVA.

«EVA will unite worlds; it is a resource to ensure that human life continues for the next generation».

Uyunkar Domingo Peas
President of the Amazon Sacred
Headwaters Alliance





Cristian Pizango is now a leader of the FOIN, a Kichwa organization, and is working tirelessly to protect his ancestral river from mining waste.

Luis Santi, heads Allpa Manta, using advanced GIS mapping to defend Indigenous territories.



Nelly Tando, elected to FENASH leadership, develops empowerment workshops for young Indigenous women.

LOOKING AHEAD

With an eye on the horizon and the goal of strengthening and consolidating the impact of the Living Amazon School (EVA), the leaders, professionals, and wisdom-keepers involved in the school's development have proposed the following:

- Formalizing EVA as a higher education institution through the Ministry of Education of Ecuador. To achieve this, collaborative efforts will be undertaken with Amawtay Wasi University, the first officially recognized Indigenous university in the country and an academic partner of EVA.
- Consolidating and expanding EVA's facilities. This involves seeking an agreement with the Municipalities of Pastaza to obtain a loan-for-use arrangement, enabling EVA to be established in a suitable space that can accommodate students, teachers, staff, and visitors while facilitating technical activities.
- Increasing scholarships to reach at least three students per organization, with two of them being women. To achieve this, a fundraising strategy and partnerships will be developed at both national and international levels.
- Strengthening EVA's technical team to provide psychological and emotional support for students, and to expand the range of extracurricular activities, including excursions, campaigns and creative training workshops, as well as recreational activities, including dance, sports, music, and more.

- Promoting a network of community 'little schools' at the territorial level to prepare students, facilitate the transfer and exchange of knowledge within communities, and support projects established in the curriculum.

NEW PARTNERS AND SUPPORT

We invite those interested in protecting the Amazon—the most biodiverse region in the world, home to hundreds of cultures—to contribute to strengthening and creating opportunities for the Amazonian leaders of the future. Support can be offered by joining EVA's Circle of Donors or by providing scholarships for students.

Every contribution is welcome, and crucial to continuing the momentum of EVA, and taking direct action to protect the Amazon!

PARTNERS

- Amawtay Wasi University
- Rhiza Collective

CONTACT

rafaela@sacredheadwaters.org

DONATE

<https://donate.sacredheadwaters.org/page/ASHA>



Access the document
in Spanish

NOTES:

- (1) CONFENIAE. Confederation of the Nationalities Indigenous to the Amazon of Ecuador
Rhiza is a women-led collective that uses storytelling, healing, organizing, and research to support social transformation and environmental justice.
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