



FUNDING THE UN-FUNDABLES:

SAMDHANA'S GRANTSMAKING

Funding the Un-fundables: Samdhana's Grantsmaking

Samdhana provides direct and flexible financial support to partners to achieve their own aspirations, which resonate with Samdhana's vision, mission, and values. This financial support is intended for IPLCs, community-based organizations, civil society organizations, informal groups, and/or individuals. The underlying principle to Samdhana's grant-making is prioritizing provision of financial support to those who normally are unable to get funding support from existing donors or funding sources-in brief funding the "un-fundable" in support of the social and environmental movement in the SEA region or elsewhere as necessary.

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Brief History of the Grants Programme

The evolution of the Grants Programme is almost synonymous to the history of Samdhana Institute. At present, Samdhana is legally registered in two countries – in the Philippines, which manages the programs for the Philippines and Lower Mekong, and in Indonesia. Samdhana found its niche as a grants-giving facilitator. It does not identify as a donor, but as part of the socio-environmental movement, offering technical expertise to support grassroots movers in accessing resources. Understanding the difficulty of informal community associations and small organizations to apply for funding, it takes on the rigorous administrative work required by large donor institutions while helping build the capacity of its partners to eventually directly access these large donor facilities.

At Samdhana's founding in 2003, some of the Fellows or individuals who compose Samdhana were advising the Global Greengrants Fund on its small grants making in Southeast Asia. Functioning as an advisory board, they recommended grassroots and indigenous communities, local and national organizations to access the flexible and small funding of Global Greengrants. The first Advisers were Nonette Royo, A. Ruwindrijarto, Edtami Mansayagan, Cristi Nozawa, Suraya Affif, and Tjatur Kukuh.

Conceptualized by a group of environmental activists and development experts, Samdhana aimed to support a groundswell of community-defined and community-led efforts in development. When it registered as a non-profit organization, Global Greengrants acknowledged it as an independent organization. It then became the Southeast Asia fund in the Global Alliance of Funds.

While it continued to distribute small grants in Southeast Asia for Global Greengrants, as an independent fund, Samdhana started to convene its own Advisers, and processed the review, approval and payment of grants at its own level, independent of the system of Global Greengrants. It facilitated small grants in the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Lower Mekong Region (Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar). As its pool of donors increased, it eventually included new granting mechanisms.





The Urgent Action Grants has been an integral part of the grantsmaking of Samdhana right from the start with the support from Global Greengrants. Even more flexible than the regular grants, the Urgent Action Grants are normally processed in just one to three days, intended for quick actions and responses to emergency situations. This urgent funding is accessible to any organization or individual in Southeast Asia. Emergency actions range from sanctuary support for activists and community leaders at risk to disaster relief.

In 2016-2017, Samdhana received restricted funding from the Protectors Fund of RSF Social Finance. This was specifically dedicated to urgent action grants for human rights defenders. The following year, another restricted funding for urgent grants was received from the Environmental Defenders Fund, still through the RSF Social Finance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Netherlands also contributed to the urgent grants through the Fair, Green and Global Alliance (FGG) led by BothENDS covering the years 2021-2025.

In Indonesia, grants size grew from micro to large funding with the entry of bigger donors. In 2009, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation became a popular development effort and was widely advocated in the funding community. Much of Indonesia qualified for the carbon-sequestration model and funders such as the Norwegian Aid and the Packard Foundation came in to support community efforts in the country. In 2016, the Indigenous Peoples alliance of Indonesia, Aliansa Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), requested Samdhana to become the National Executing Agency of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples funded by the World Bank.

With its grants work, Samdhana is a member of the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples. At present, already a total amount of US\$ 16,202,992 has been accessed by communities, grassroots groups, and organizations in Southeast Asia through its several grantsmaking mechanisms. It also continues to collaborate closely with other grant-giving organizations that originally were funded by Global Greengrants, such as Fondo Casa and Fondo Acción Solidaria.

Grantsmaking experience

Samdhana started with the Grants Program through the GGF model of flexible grants. The Samdhana Grants Program from then until now relies on the groundwork of its Fellows and Advisers. At the start, their role was at the core of the institution's operations. Projects and community proposals were brought for funding consideration by a grant adviser, or upon recommendation of a Fellow. There was no open call for submissions. Most project proponents were personally known by a member of the Samdhana community or recommended by other communities and individuals who had worked with Samdhana in one way or another.

Operating based on a "chain of trust", instead of requiring communities and organizations to provide extensive paperwork, the endorsing adviser is expected to know the proponent well, to the extent that they could clarify the context to the other advisers. A project for consideration is reviewed by the other advisers. Rather than an approval or rejection process, the review is a venue for enhancing the proposals.

Currently, the grantsmaking in the Philippines and Lower Mekong region, which ranges from micro to small grants, still does not have an open call for proposals. But as the partners Samdhana has established over the years have shared the opportunity to their own networks, proposals are not only brought in by advisers but are also sent to the Grants Team, as "unsolicited" proposals. Initial review and consultation with proponents, and assistance in revision if needed, are done by the Grants staff. Even then, all proposals are still reviewed and endorsed by the grant advisers.





While at the start of the program it was sufficient to have three to five advisers, as proposals started to come in from different parts of the country, more advisers were also brought in to maintain a grounded understanding of the contexts of the proponents. Samdhana currently has around 60 Fellows and advisers fulfilling different roles that range from grants advising to direct technical support to the partner communities. Advisers also occasionally take on monitoring tasks especially for projects that they have endorsed. Partners could also directly consult them, their time and expertise voluntarily provided to help in the project implementation and even in further development plans.

In 2009, Samdhana entered into partnership with the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) for the Indigenous Peoples Support Fund (IPSF). Samdhana's goal was to create a "Match Grant " for its small grantsmaking, such that for every dollar that Samdhana raises, other donors will match this value and add to the pool of funds for Indigenous Peoples.

The IPSF concept in general had two goals: provide support to ancestral domains to help realize their economic and social development that is to be expected once they gained the formal and legal recognition of their territory. The premise is that, if communities along contiguous territories will be supported, there will be a chain of interlinked communities that could manage and protect their territories, and the forests and ecosystems within, along a geographic landscape.

In the implementation of IPSF, Samdhana established partnerships with a number of ancestral domains and indigenous communities in Mindanao. The grants became a combination of livelihood and environmental protection. Reforestation activities became counterparts of the IP communities who received funding to establish their livelihoods.





Learning Over the Years

The original concept of the micro grants was to help seed initiatives that were expected to expand with sustained efforts from the communities. The vision was even to the extent that eventually the communities themselves would be able to grow their own resource pool for further development projects, and even provide support to other territories. However, assessing the initial operations of the Grants Program, it was difficult to determine its exact impact on the communities it supported for various reasons.

Scattered initiatives

The original aim of the program was to fund as many initiatives of Indigenous Peoples and grassroots communities as it could; in essence, spreading around the resources. In the early years, there was a practice that generally, an organization that has already received a grant from Samdhana could no longer apply for another one. So while the number of grantees and the geographic scope of the program expanded, there was no follow-up whether the previous initiatives were sustained after the funding ended. In this manner, Samdhana could not determine whether the small grants had ‘impacts,’ or if it contributed in significantly changing the partners’ situations.

Inexperience of partners

In the first ten years of Samdhana’s grantsmaking, there were a lot of situational challenges. In some cases, even before the funding period ended, the project was already experiencing difficulties. While Partners were fluent in the situation on the ground and knew very well where they wanted to bring their efforts to, they may not have had the ‘technical’ capacity to implement the activities and financially manage the grant project due to their lack of experience. Although the grant provided was relatively small, if the proponents didn’t know how to manage it, there would be problems in budgeting, recording, and liquidating. For projects, it was difficult to ensure financial sustainability after the funded activities without longer support or accompaniment for them to establish further income generating activities. It was also observed that these indigenous communities were already experiencing poverty or a dearth of basic services such that, understandably, the funding went to addressing immediate needs, rather than investing in assets that could help them grow financially.

Among the observations in the operation of the Grants Program, these two factors contributed to how Samdhana developed the program over the years. Samdhana does not want to simply identify as a financing entity, but as a holistic support institution. To address the problem of scattered initiatives and to have a means to determine the outcomes from grants support, it decided to priority geographic areas.

In 2018, during the crafting of Samdhana's 10-years strategic plan, the Institute adopted a Living Land and Seascapes approach, which means that part of its funding and direct initiatives is concentrated in congruent priority areas. In fact, it is even proactive in looking for partners in these identified territories. It does not, however, preclude proponents from other communities and these project proposals are still reviewed and assessed by grants advisers. There is simply a shift in prioritizing initiatives.



To address the capacity weaknesses of partners, a separate Capacity Development program was established. This enables Samdhana to directly provide capacity development needed by partners during their grant project implementation, especially on project and financial management competences.

Samdhana started to directly implement projects through the Living Land and Seascapes Program (eventually called as Lifescapes) and Capacity Development Program (referred to as CapDev), providing staff who could accompany community partners in their project implementation and capacity building activities.

The Grants Program also stepped up its facilitation and assistance to partner communities within the priority lifescapes in coordination with the other programs. Lifescapes and CapDev Programs facilitated visioning and strategic planning exercises with community partners. The Grants team supported this process as a means of identifying possible initiatives that could eventually be financially supported.



Writing workshops are occasionally held by the Grants team, the skill meant to improve the capacity of the partners to access funding and other technical or networking assistance from other institutions. Moreover, the partners are invited to learning platforms where they meet each other, network, and learn about each other's initiatives. They are also linked to other grant-giving organizations especially if their development goals are not covered by any of the Grants mechanisms under Samdhana.

This progression in grantsmaking has necessarily been in response to articulated community needs. While the Grants Program had been accompanying its partners from the start, there had been a limit to what it could offer to partners. A program in Indonesia, for example, is Policy Support, which directly involve in policy advocacies in the country. This is not directly taken on by Samdhana in the Philippine-Mekong areas. Rather, in the Philippines, the extent to which Samdhana in policy is to support organizations that are already doing work on it. In Indonesia, however, the current legal mechanisms that are available, or unavailable, for indigenous communities to secure their territories require directing more support to policy advocacy, thus Samdhana has a dedicated program for it.

To date, there are seven classifications for the grants that Samdhana implements.



Matrix of Grants according to type

Type of Grant	Purpose	Application	Review and approval	Response timeline
Urgent Grant \$500-\$3,000	For Community, community-based groups, local organizations, CSOs, institutions; individuals; Emergency response	UAG format Simplified proposal/ appeal; Can be via phone call or email for emergencies	Screened by Grants team Advisers, 1 vote	Within 48 hours
Micro Grant \$500-\$9,999	For Community, community-based groups, local organizations, CSOs, institutions; Thematic area/ donor focus	Proposal format Profile Simple management and finance capacities assessment	Screened by Grants team Advisers, 3 votes	Within one month, maximum two months
Travel grant max \$5,000	Individual/ organization attending conferences or gatherings related to their work/ advocacy	Proposal format	Grants team Advisers, 1 vote	Within one month
Education grant (max \$5,000)	Individuals Formal/ non-formal or short-course/ internship/ field school/ certificate course	Proposal format Individual Profile	Grants team Advisers, 3 votes	Within one month
Indigenous Knowledge building grant (max \$5,000)	For Community, community-based groups, local organizations, CSOs, institutions;	Proposal format Profile Simple management and finance capacities assessment	Grants team Advisers, 3 votes	Within one month, maximum two months
Institutional development support (max \$7,500)	Organizations/ Institutions applying for core costs support For IPLC organizations/ POs needing organizational strengthening in preparation for medium or large grants	Proposal template Profile Simple management and finance capacities assessment	Grants team Advisers, 3 votes	Within one month, maximum two months
Small Grant \$10,000 – \$30,000	For Community, community-based groups, local organizations, CSOs, institutions; Thematic area/ donor focus	Proposal format Profile Simple management and finance capacities assessment	Grants team Advisers, 3 votes	Within one month, maximum two months

The current policy and procedure (see Annex 1) in place for grants management was developed in 2020 and reflects the range of flexibility that Samdhana affords to partners, in line with the emerging needs in communities, especially those that are not recognized by large donors or funding agencies.

The procedures are open to be revised as needed, again depending on the needs of the partners or other situations that may occur.

In line with Samdhana's goal to be fully accountable to donors and partners, several administrative safeguards have been put into place. With a growing pool of donors, the organization has also expanded with dedicated staff to implement appropriate fiduciary measures. It continues to maintain the flexible grants mechanism alongside new mechanisms for large grants. Despite a stricter criterion for medium and large grants and more stringent reporting requirements, the Grants team are still accompanying partners throughout the process. Partners – and even potential new proponents - could request Samdhana's assistance from crafting a proposal to providing support in accomplishing their post-project evaluation.

Towards Samdhana's Envisioned Southeast Asia



Supporting this vision, the grants program provides opportunities for communities and organizations to plan a holistic approach to maintaining the integrity of territories – from physical restoration and conservation, strengthening customary laws in complementation with policies and functional structures for effective governance, the passing on of knowledge across generations, to the expression of cultural and spiritual traditions. The program gives value to projects that, while small, are intended to achieve strategic results. For example, it prioritizes support for initiatives that work on the conservation of cultural references – mainly the environment – instead of simply providing funds for cultural expressions such as dances and music.

Support mechanism across the four goals

With funders who have different interests and priorities, Samdhana also expanded its thematic areas of work. All these themes and priorities, however, are necessarily linked to Samdhana's overall goals. Having been the core work of Samdhana at the start, the Grants Program continues to be an integral pillar of the institution. In itself, it implements grantsmaking aligned to Samdhana's themes and donors' priorities. At the same time, it serves as a support mechanism for the achievement of Samdhana's objectives and institutional targets under its three other programs.

However, Samdhana's 10-years strategic goals should be regarded as integral and interwoven, and do not stand individually from the other goals. For example, Goal 1, *which is 'To support indigenous peoples, local communities and individuals (including all gender and abilities and the youth) in defining, securing and asserting their rights over their territories / places and its governance and management'*, is an element or even prerequisite to attain Goal 2, *which is 'To contribute to building resilient and well-governed communities for climate adaptation, risk reduction, and environmental sustainability through integrated land and seascape management, economically viable livelihoods and other effective means.'*



Territory is key to the development of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Territory means resources, and is the most basic requirement for resilience. Securing their territory would mean food security, health, traditional employment, and the provision of basic needs of the communities. But this would also require good governance. Managing and ensuring the equitable sharing of resources and benefits within communities could only be through good governance based on shared values and agreed policies.

Aside from supporting projects that directly build on or contribute to the communities' resources, Samdhana grants include the protection of indigenous leaders and communities against personal, legal and extrajudicial attacks. This is especially true for communities that are asserting their rights since they are also met with intensified aggression by parties interested in their resource-rich territories. Often, the IPLCs are charged in legal courts where they are disadvantaged for lack of financial resources, which limits their access to good legal defense. In relation to this, Samdhana provides support for lawyer organizations that can provide service to the communities when they are in need.



Through the Urgent Action Grants mechanism, individuals facing unjust persecution could seek help to partially fund their legal needs as well as seek temporary sanctuary while they look for a sustainable option. There is a preference for the funds to go to legal representatives coming from indigenous communities themselves. Samdhana encourages communities to plan for a strategic approach to these attacks as multiple cases could be filed against them with the intention of depleting their finances. Through the small grants, communities could propose setting up a sustainable source of income that could fund not only payments for lawyers but also campaigns that would strengthen their rights assertion.

Samdhana not only funds the process of securing tenure but also communities who decide to reclaim their land by other means – such as *bungkalan*, which is a collective tilling of the land being reclaimed. Samdhana has also funded self-delineation and mapping of territories.

Complementing the assertion to their right to territory is the need for a structure that gathers the strength of the community. A functioning governance structure with a firm and strong leadership allows a community to face challenges systematically. Leadership support is not limited to members of indigenous political structures but also to community leaders who function in various organizations integral to the development of the communities. These organizations include those implementing livelihood projects, socio-civic activities, and even cultural traditions. Grants can be used for organizational strengthening and capacity building. Once a community or an organization identifies the skills and capacities they would want to develop, they could either request funds from Samdhana to implement capacity-building activities. The training could also be carried out by Samdhana's CapDev team. Meetings that are necessary for organizational consolidation and strengthening can also be funded.

Grants also support initiatives that ensure knowledge and wisdom from the older generation can be passed on to the next so that even as the community is moving forward with a modernizing society, they keep traditions and values important to their people.



Case example: Sezukadang Menuvu

The first grant in 2017 to the Sezukadang Menuvu had been to improve the community's access to water. Surrounded by sugarcane and rubber tree plantations, and in conflict with the local government unit over non-recognition of their ancestral domain, they were not served by the barangay water system. The first issue they brought up was the dire poverty the families were experiencing because they had lost control of their land through mortgages and were working as sugarcane farm laborers instead of growing their own food. They were also in the height of land conflict with non IPs that had come to 'own' the lands in their ancestral domain through the Integrated Social Forestry scheme (ISF) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Through a series of community meetings, and initial sessions on Indigenous Peoples' rights, the Sezukadang community was able to narrow down the urgent problems that they were facing. Accessing the water came up as a practical and heavy issue for all, since it consumes much of their time and physical efforts to go down the steep slope from where their homes are to the river below and return up the mountainside with only a meager amount of water needed for many domestic and gardening needs. The community proposed that, if they can lessen their effort in getting water, they will have more time to address other pressing issues, especially on their land conflict. Thus, the proposal on the water system was facilitated and supported.





The time and process accompaniment of the Samdhana staff was a necessary investment to fully understand the situation of the community. Through accompaniment, there was a venue for shared analysis of the problem, and identification of a project that enabled the community to do more and go beyond addressing their basic issues and concerns such as access to potable water.

The Samdhana team accompanying the Sezukadang community eventually learned the broader issues they faced, not only within their area, but as part of a unified ancestral domain of the Kirentenken, a sub-group of the Menuvu People, spanning across six municipalities in Southern Bukidnon. The unified ancestral domain was given legal recognition in 2016 as Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title 206 (CADT206).

The partnership that started with the water system project grew in scope, aligning with the strategic plan of the Szukadang community, and also in partnership with other communities within the whole of CADT 206. It became a large part of the Lifescapes Program, with Samdhana supporting various Menuvu communities that are struggling to gain control over their territories.

Building blocks of resilient communities

Acknowledging that even remote communities are to some degree affected by market systems, Samdhana supports livelihood projects that allow for the sustainable use of resources and ensures food security. It is necessary that these projects, although undoubtedly following models of market viability, don't cause damage to their territories or lead to large economic disparities within the community. In fact, livelihood projects that create traditional jobs – like weaving, farming, and other occupations that have long been the source of income for communities – are encouraged.

In livelihood endeavors, what is most important to qualify for any of the grants is that it is self-determined economic development. It means that it is the community that determines what to do with their resources. Since the lives of the IPLCs are closely tied to their territory, it is their interest to design sustainable livelihood projects that would not compromise the resources available to future generations. There had been cases where proposals were influenced by purely market opportunities. Although they were not outrightly rejected, these were 'guided' by advisers, mainly by asking them to countercheck the design with the actual situation and capacity of their community. Priority was given to building the capacity of the community so that they could handle such market-oriented production without destroying indigenous knowledge systems and practices.



Livelihood grants are admittedly one area wherein Samdhana has learned a lot of lessons from partnerships that were not so 'successful'. In one case, the proposal for a rice miller was led and implemented by one of the community leaders who was residing in a town some kilometers away from the actual part of the territory where the farmers were growing rice. While the need to have their own milling to save costs on the milling fee was a valid case for supporting the proposal, the actual implementation itself was not designed well enough to bring benefits to the IP farmers. This was primarily due to the oversight that the project had been designed by individuals who were not constantly in touch with the supposed implementers.

Another situation that does not often result in a good outcome is when livelihood projects are designed from an opportunistic moment. An example has been the rising trend of woven products. A community had thought it would be easy to find a market with the seemingly high demand. Most of the community members know how to weave and they could easily teach others. However, the community at that point did not have an organizational unit that could manage the livelihood activities once it goes into commercial production. Primarily, the community did not have experience in handling financial transactions, and this could easily cause conflicts within their organization if mishandled. Worst, it could turn into a private enterprise where the proponent functions like the business owner instead of having a community-owned livelihood.

These situations prompted Samdhana to reflect on prerequisites, and what 'interventions' are helpful or burdensome for indigenous communities, given each specific context. It also challenges the thinking about, at the broader level, what kind of economic systems we want to contribute to. Are we just capacitating indigenous peoples to be able to engage in the current capitalistic market system, or are we helping to recreate a self-sufficient economic system that is translated from the worldview of Indigenous Peoples and resource-independent communities?



Strengthening representation and networks for IPLCs

Samdhana also supports gatherings of communities, local organizations or federations, and other national networks, so that they could make important decisions. While these are more one-off activities, these are important in movement building. Supporting such activities could ensure broad and better representation, participation, and personal exchanges for sustaining solidarity, and strengthening the commitment of members.

Other important networking initiatives that have been supported are for national policy campaigns of sectoral organizations. One significant experience is the support to the Teduray-Lambangian Indigenous People during the legislation of the autonomous Bangsamoro region's Organic Law. Small grants as well as urgent action grants enabled key Teduray-Lambangian leaders to participate in the legislative lobbying in Metro Manila. Samdhana provided support in the background while other organizations led in the development and lobbying of the policies.

Samdhana is not directly involved in campaigns, and, as a policy, it does not sign on to any public petition. However, it provides support for the mobilization of campaign groups. The support enables the participation of other groups, activists, community representatives, especially those who come from the most isolated areas, who, without funding support, could not attend such gatherings. The supported activities range from quick action activities such as pickets - as immediate reaction to legislation - to conferences meant to relay information to a wide audience.



Self-determination in disaster recovery

One of the most important lessons, and a turning point for Samdhana's grantsmaking, was during the aftermath of super typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) in the Philippines. As the biggest natural disaster of the decade, humanitarian support and funding came flooding into the country. Samdhana donor partners who did not have any humanitarian assistance program allowed Samdhana to use its regular grants funding to address any needs resulting from the major disaster.

Samdhana received an appeal from the Calamian Tagbanwa in the Calamianes Islands, north of Palawan. This led Samdhana to secure and facilitate a chain of responses to the Calamian Tagbanwa living in the three (out of four) island municipalities. These sea-faring Indigenous People were considered geographically isolated, especially in the first few days of the disaster, because the magnitude of the damage also immobilized the local governments as there were no means of sea transportation to reach the islands.

After the initial emergency food aid, Samdhana shifted to livelihoods and environmental recovery. Samdhana implemented this under a 'resilience framework' which includes strengthening the basic organizations within the community, which will lead, implement, and manage the recovery process of the community, and not just implement livelihood activities. This project, coined as Early Recovery and Resilience Building (ERRB), became the first salvo of a combined approach of grants with capacity development and governance strengthening strategies.

During this process, Samdhana was able to develop its process for community social investigation and organizing, brought about by new staff onboard. Veering away from a donor-beneficiary mindset, Samdhana followed a process in building partnerships with the existing Indigenous Peoples' organizations (IPOs) in each of the barangays. The Tagbanwa IPOs in turn facilitated the organizing of their community members to assess needs and prioritize families or individuals who will receive the livelihood assistance. Some communities developed communal projects, such as "bigasang bayan," that were intended to create a rolling fund for the community. During this time, Samdhana also institutionalized the Project and Finance Management Training (PFMT) for each of the grantee-partner to ensure that they have the skills to implement their projects, since for most of the IPOs, it was their first time to receive funding.



There were good cases, and there were cases where the livelihoods did not take off or continue, but these were also the seedbed for lessons and reflections. As former Executive Director, Nonette Royo, said, the amount of \$5,000 is a very small price to pay for communities who have been historically and systematically marginalized, to gain an experience in managing their own projects and funds, and bring forward the lessons they learned along the way. For Samdhana, it is but an investment to support various small and diverse actors, who when brought together, can significantly contribute to the overall social and environmental movement.

Looking Forward

Global developments unavoidably affect the communities in Southeast Asia. Gains in the rights movement across the Pacific are translated into new opportunities. For one, the Grants Program now has dedicated funds for disability rights. This primarily acknowledges that individuals with disabilities also have so much to contribute to environmental justice. It also affirms that in many cases, environmental abuse has also caused various forms of disabilities so that environmental justice means justice for these affected individuals. At the start, this had been challenging in some indigenous communities who see disability as a punishment or *karma* so families prefer to keep disabilities among their children hidden.

The growing global concern for climate change also affected how Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are viewed. There are talks about the viability of using Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) in solving climate problems. Moreover, different fields find convergence in the holistic way Indigenous Peoples view development for their territories. Agroecology, ethical supply chains, food security, and even the development of renewable energy could all find cause in and among the IPLCs.

On the other hand, there are still some struggles as to how Samdhana could better address some community needs that are not covered by its programs. For example, education of indigenous children has been identified as important in the community's development but Samdhana still doesn't offer scholarships. Rather, it provides small support to already existing educational opportunities such as short trainings and supplemental activities. And support for continuing education is limited to a maximum of one year. But with the growing network of Samdhana's partners, Samdhana may not be able to provide scholarships but assist the youth in accessing what are already offered by universities or other institutions.



Another struggle that the Grants Program continues to face is the inevitability of the market economy's effect on indigenous communities. There is a need to properly guide the entrepreneurial initiatives of indigenous communities without destroying traditional jobs and without creating economic inequality among the families. The balance between tradition and market is very delicate and Samdhana is wary that even a microgrant could destroy a community's effort, or worse, its relationships. For now, each entrepreneurial project is always accompanied with capacity building. And building skills is not limited to financial or project management but also includes in depth understanding of the community's identity. The CapDev team regularly provides discussions on Indigenous Peoples' Rights to new partners.

"The way forward for Samdhana has always been clear. It is together with the communities we support," said Edtami Mansayagan, of the Aromanen-Menuvu people, one of the first advisers of the Grants Program who continues to dedicate his time and expertise to Samdhana.

The development of the Grants Program evolved together with the changes and needs of the greater socio-environmental movement. While issues that had beleaguered Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities remain primarily linked to territorial control, there have been new opportunities created as the rest of the global movements influenced and were influenced by developments. Whether the communities adapt to or resist the changes that arise, Samdhana continues to evolve responding to the needs of the movement builders.



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