

Native organizations of women and young people in the Peruvian Amazon

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The study of politics and the native movement usually make the participation of women and young people invisible. This research aims to determine how they have been organizing these two important sectors of native societies in the Peruvian Amazon.

This is primarily an exploratory and descriptive research, although some clues for interpretation and further topics to go deeper could discern. In this project we have mainly worked with Asháninka and Shipibo-Konibo organizations.

The political participation of native women has been growing steadily over the last twenty years. In the early 1990s, some women were included on boards of directors of native organizations, especially to take over the so-called “Women’s Affairs Department.” Twenty years later, there are, in many areas of the Peruvian Amazon, native women who are heads, presidents or leaders of native communities who hold different posts within their organizations. They are not only secretaries of women’s issues, but also secretaries of culture and minutes, treasurers, vice presidents and presidents.

From 1993 women-only organizations started being created. The main purpose is to have a space where women’s issues are discussed and the problems faced by them are solved. The largest number of these organizations was created by Shipibas, in some cases specifically on the production and sale of handicrafts. In total, there are currently about a dozen such organizations.

In the case of native youth, in the 1970s the first organizations appear in order to help young students to deal with problems in the cities. Nowadays, the number of youth organizations has also increased. In some cases, there are student organizations – many organizations of native university students in the Peruvian Amazon exist - but in other cases, they are looking for training and meeting space to reflect on the problems faced as native youth in the country.