

# AMAZONIAN VISION FOR AN INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2021**



# DIRECTORS LETTER

Dear VASI Community,

As a community founded and community led organization, we know that despite life's most powerful blows we must be able to both grieve and celebrate. Here, we provide both an accounting and a celebration of what, together, we have accomplished.

Supported by a growing international network of donors, volunteers, and experts, we are nimble with a deep understanding of the context. Our model results in economy, agility, and high impact, furthering our mission to create a more sustainable future for our communities and our world.

Crises often hit vulnerable communities, such as ours, the hardest. Most residents in our communities depend on the day's work to survive and have little access to healthcare or outside resources that others take for granted. Peru has the highest global death rate from COVID-19, and the loss of life and impact has been astounding.

Yet our communities have not just survived. Together, we have made lasting changes. We have taken steps towards increased sustainability and begun to address long standing inequities in health care and food sovereignty, and through these contributed to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation.

We thank you for all the ways you contribute to the massive impact we achieved together.

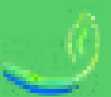
Abrazos,

Ytalo, Edgardo, Javier, Nancy

Local Board of Directors President and VASI Co-Executive Directors



Photo from Left to Right: Javier Del Aguila Chavez (VASI Co-Executive Director), Marlin Mañanita (local authority), Samuel Gordon (Secretary, VASI Local Board of Directors). Ytalo Hoyos Lescano (President VASI Local Board of directors), Joao Campos Silva (Instituto Juruá), Andressa Scabin (Instituto Juruá), Nancy M. Dammann (VASI Co-Executive Director), Edgardo Gómez Pisco (VASI Co-Executive Director), Phillip M. Harter (VASI Advisory Board and Health Working Group) Pucallpa, Peru, March 2022.



# MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Together with the municipality and the provincial health authority, we **launched Peru's first public river ambulances**, which transport people with emergencies, return with medicines and supplies, and bring health care to outlying communities.
- Worked with the provincial health authority to transport, install, and put into service **13 solar powered cold chain units for vaccines and medications** (Phase 1). A second phase will take place in 2022. As a direct result:
  - **10,000+** COVID-19 and routine vaccines were administered.



- Developed multiple **new partnerships** and opened **new markets** in our sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty programs:
  - Formed strong relationships with **Mater Iniciativa** and **El Cacaotal Peruano** (Peru), **Instituto Juruá** (Brazil), and **multiple US organizations**,
  - **Local cacao served in the internationally acclaimed Restaurante Central** (ranked as the #4 restaurant in the world),
- Formed **two working groups** composed of local and outside experts to guide projects,
- **Income up 70%**, volunteer and expert base grew exponentially.

*"VASI is the epitome of what a non-profit should be--community founded, community led, community designed--that is why I am excited to get involved."*

Amanda Jo Wildey, Chocolate and Cacao Certifier, Anthropologist, and owner of El Cacaotal Peruano



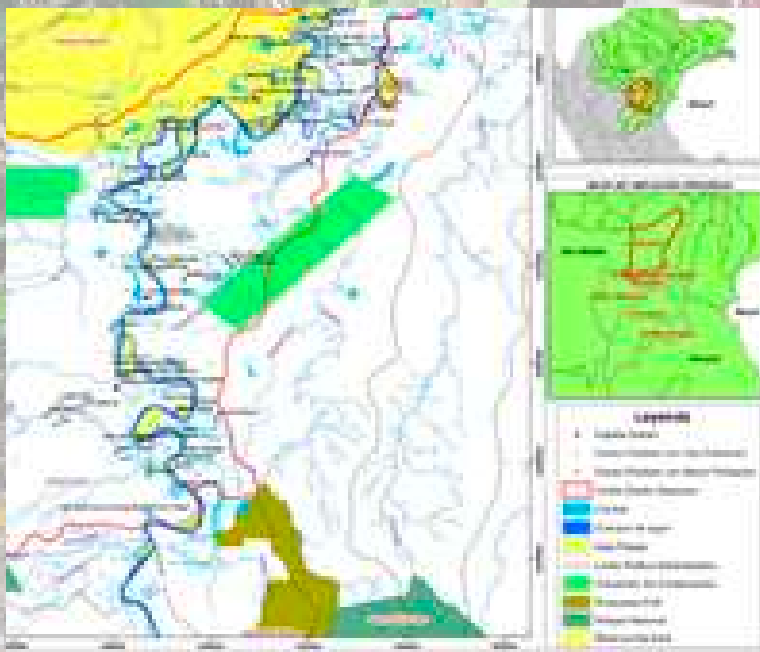
# OUR ROOTS

Founded by members of nine rural communities in the Peruvian Amazon, students, and scientists, VASI supports the work of local communities as we bring our visions of a sustainable future into reality. **We believes that rural and marginalized communities are powerful leaders whose expertise must be recognized at a global level.** Local cosmovisions guide our work and recognize the inseparability of human and ecosystem health and well-being and the power of collaboration, equity, and transparency.

**VASI's main programs are:**

- (1) access to quality, culturally integrated health care and education,**
- (2) sustainable livelihoods focusing on food sovereignty, and**
- (3) collaborative scientific research.**

In 2021, our focus was on continued health programming and further development of our food sovereignty work.



VASI's founding communities reside in the district of Sarayacu, Ucayali Province, Loreto, Peru. The **area is accessible only by boat.**

Rivers, lakes, flooded forests, and wetlands dominate the landscape. Humans have inhabited these landscapes for thousands of years, contributing to and helping to maintain the area's high biodiversity.

VASI formed out of our community members' desire to conserve the richness of their communities, design our own sustainable futures, and support other communities in doing so as well. **We believe that through collaboration, we can overcome marginalization, stem climate change and ensure a bright, sustainable, and healthy future for our planet.**



# HEALTH PROGRAMS

*In early 2021, 3-year-old Maria was crushed in an accident. She had a broken hip, multiple injuries, and desperately needed a hospital. Thanks to her community's immediate response, the attention of nurse Veivis Gonzales Guimaraes and doctor Oscar Zamorra (both more than an hour from her home), and a prompt evacuation via river ambulance, she now walks without a limp and shows no signs of having suffered a life-threatening accident.*

*Two years ago, Maria's story would not have had this trajectory. In a district that is 2,433 Miles<sup>2</sup>, there are 70 towns, 15 health posts staffed by LPNs, 3 doctors, and no hospital. Previously, to get to the nearest hospital, Maria would have had to wait for a commercial river transport to pass. The trip would have taken 12-24 hours, and the wait to catch a boat might have been days.*



*River ambulance serving as a mobile clinic bringing prenatal care to a flooded community. (Photo Juancito Health Center).*

## RIVER AMBULANCES

Until a year ago, residents with life-threatening situations would often wait for days for transport to the hospital. Working with the Provincial health authority and the municipal government, we launched the first public river ambulance system in the Amazon. Though they still require basic equipment, they have:

- contributed to **sharply reduced maternal mortality** in the district,
- **evacuated 50 people** with life-threatening or critical situations,
- carried **17 boat loads of** critical supplies and **medicines** to the district,
- served as **mobile clinics** carrying medical teams to **55+ communities** with no health care professional,
- **provided preventative and primary care to 2100+ residents**



# HEALTH PROGRAMS CONT.



## Community Health Promoters

Working with local experts and health professionals from both the US and Peru, VASI is co-developing a curriculum to train community members to act as first responders and provide preventative and basic care. Programming began in 2022.

*Residents of Yahuarango practice trauma wound management in a pilot community training March 2022. (Photo Dr. Jenny Jones, Stanford Emergency Medicine International)*

## Cold Chain for Vaccines

The main obstacle to COVID-19 vaccination in the district has been how to transport and store vaccines in a vast, roadless, tropical area with no electrical grid.

In Nov 2021, the Peruvian Ministry of Health provided the province with solar powered cold chain machines but no funds for their installation.

VASI raised the funds, coordinated the logistics, and helped staff the installation team. Together, we installed **13 units** in health posts across the district and trained local nurses how to use them. **The result:**

--**8231 COVID-19 vaccines** administered in the three months following installation,

--**2000+** routine vaccines also administered.

In May 2022, we will finish installing 53 cold chain and cold storage machines (for vaccine and vital medicine transport and storage) across the entire province.

*"This (cold chain project) has had a definitively huge impact! Administrative processes are slow...to be able to work with VASI has been important. It isn't every day one can accomplish something like this..."*

*Dr. Henry Alex Lobato,  
Director of the  
Provincial Health  
Network Ucayali  
Province, Dept of  
Loreto, Peru.*





# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

For millennia, Amazon peoples have managed, cultivated, and protected the landscapes in which they live and have been fundamental to the maintenance of Amazonia's biodiversity. Vitamin and antioxidant packed fruits known as super foods, such as acai and cacao, have been cultivated for centuries. Local water bodies have been governed by community rules that ensure local food supply and healthy diverse fish communities.

Now, however, pressures of globalization, indiscriminate fishing, illegal logging, and industrialized agriculture, threaten biodiversity, food sovereignty, and health.



*Board of Directors member Raul Inuma Ojanama prepares samples of native flood resistant cacao grown by Cleto Rios Aguirre in Nuevo Dos de Mayo. (Photo Llamira Inuma Isuiza).*



*Pastry chef for world renowned "Central" in Lima uses a sample of native cacao seeds from Don Cleto Rios Aguirre to prepare a dessert featuring "VASI Cacao." (Photo Mater Iniciativa).*

VASI's food sovereignty programs have a landscape level focus. Our programs support community residents who work to adapt traditional agroforestry and community-based fisheries governance practices to meet modern needs, ensure access to nutritious food and stable strong incomes, and contribute to conservation. In 2021, we:

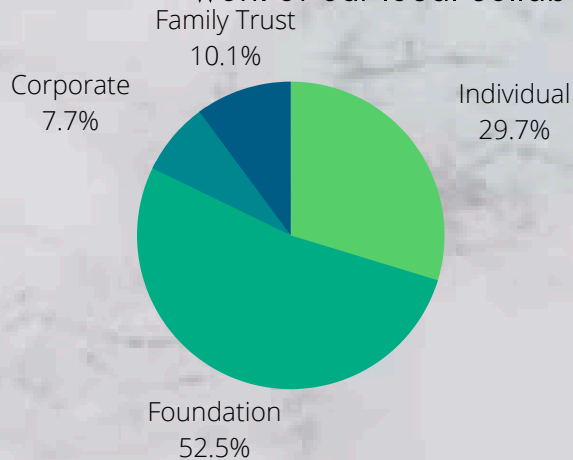
- established relationships with partners in Peru, Brazil, Honduras and the U.S.,
- designed programs and invested in market development, and
- obtained seed funding.



# FINANCIAL HEALTH

## Income: \$98,693

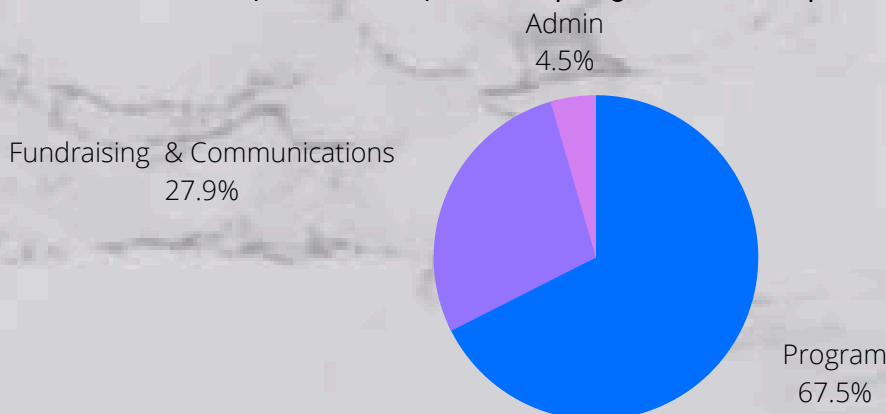
Our income was up by over 70% from last year, with increased gifts from both foundations and individuals. \$7,865 was in-kind donations and none of this includes the immense on the ground work of our local collaborating institutions.



Our fiscal sponsor, UTOPIA Foundation, covers, free of charge, many of the expenses of receiving donations, maintaining non-profit certification, accounting, and more. We do not include above this estimated additional value of \$5415.

## Expenses: \$52,299

In 2021, COVID-19 limited our ability to implement many of our programs. Much of our programming costs played out in volunteer hours (see below) and in program development.

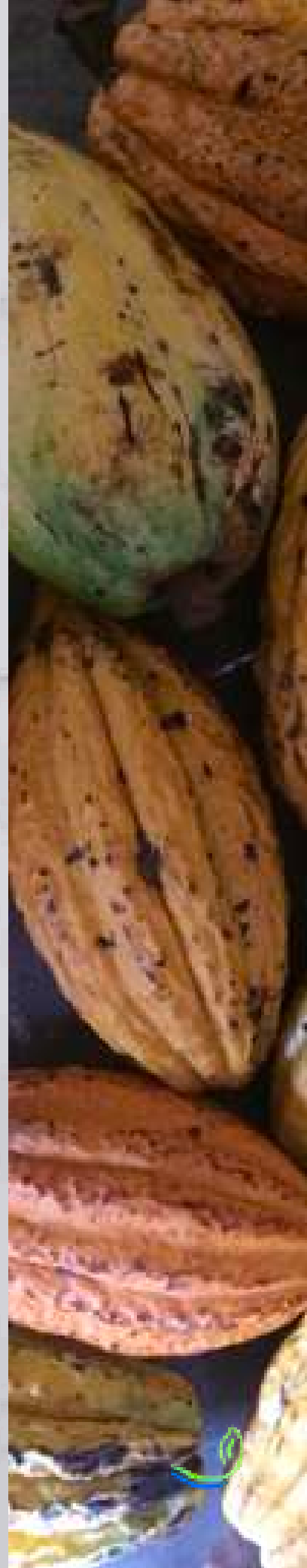


## Volunteer Hours

We estimate **2,460** hours of mostly programmatic volunteer time: local and advisory board members, students, volunteer interns, executive director team, and working groups.

## Entering 2022:

We hit the ground running, with \$45,000 in restricted program funds.





# THE VASI COMMUNITY

Our community representatives, advisors, volunteers, and donors are the heart and soul of VASI.

Our organizational structure reflects our commitment to collaboration and maintaining community leadership. Local community experts, farmers, fishers, timberers, teachers, and small business owners compose our local board of directors. Our advisory board (Peruvian and international professionals), together with our extensive working groups, complement the local board's leadership.

## **VASI Local Board of Directors**

Ytalo Severiano Hoyos Lescano— President	Raul Chavez Davila— Fiscal	Juan Pedro Sangama Reynaldo Navarro Torres
Samuel Gordon Isamani—Secretary	Ivan Isuiza Ojanama	Manuel Navarro Tapullima
Roque Ramirez Romero—Treasurer	Raul Inuma Ojanama	

## **VASI Advisory Board**

Adam Richards, MD, PhD, MPH, George Washington University	Malena Martinez, MD, Mater Iniciativa
Benjamin Hoffman, JD, EarthRights International	Marco Simons, JD, EarthRights International
Gena Mavuli, MA.	Phillip M. Harter, MD, Stanford
Gustavo A. Vasquez, MD. Pasteur Institute	Sadie Weber, Ph.D, Sao Paulo University, <i>Emeritus Board Members (As of Dec 2021)</i>
Lucille Glassman, BA.	Martin Mendez, PhD, WCS
	Ryan Clark, MBA, Genstar Capital

## **VASI Health Working Group**

Oscar Zamorra Huancas, MD., Elizabeth Martel Fernandez, Obst., Yessica Beraun Pardabe, Obst., Wicberto Pinedo Garcia, Obst., Ana Maria Reyes Castro, JD., Phil Harter, MD., Gustavo Vasquez, MD., Adam Richards, MD., Jenny Jones, MD., Daniel Ruiz Betancourt, Avinash Patel, MD, S. V. Mahadevan, MD, Dagan Coppock, MD, John Zurlo, MD, Rebecca Walker, MD, Kevin Kurgat

## **VASI Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Agriculture Working Group**

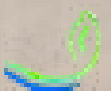
Amanda Jo Wildey, MA, El Cacoatal Peruano, Andressa Scabin, PhD, Instituto Juruá, Cleto Rios Aguirre, Resident, Chad Morton, Roast Umber, Efren Elvir Maradiaga, Atucún Chocolates, Julio Abel Ruiz, Resident, Malena Martinez, MD, Mater Iniciativa, Mario Pinedo Panduro, Phd, IIAP, Pilar Paredes, MS, Raul Inuma Ojanama, Resident, Ricky Tuesta, Resident, Sadie Weber, PhD, Universidad de Sao Paulo.

## **VASI Student Founders and Student Members Past and Present**

Augusto Arévalo Barbaran, Candy Pinedo Inuma, Erwin Navarro, Julio Cesar Ruiz Cachique, Deyvis Pinedo Inuma, Jairo Rodríguez Ribeiro, Helen Andrade, Luis Gómez Schrader, Marcos Schrader Zamora, Minorka Gómez Cárdenas, Neil Isuiza Ojanama, Ornela Muñoz Schrader, Paul Gómez Schrader, Roberto Murrieta Lozano, Sandro Arbildo Rodríguez, Sharon Schrader Zamora

## **VASI Student Interns 2021**

Kevin Kurgat, Samantha Neville, Penelope Alegria



# OUR DONORS

We honor all of our donors from our inception in 2016 through 2021. We are deeply grateful for our donors' commitment. Thanks to their support we have matured as an organization and grown in our mission of standing with marginalized communities as they build sustainable futures. Together we can create the world we dream.

## **Individual and Family Donors:**

Abbey Adler, Adair Dammann, Aldric Ulep, Althea M. Brimm, Amber Phillips, Amy Austin, Ann Kelly, Ann Bresnan, Annabel and David Dwyer, Anne Chapman, Anne and John Pfluecke, Arvind Krishnamurthy, Attilio Zazzali, Autumn Lamb, Ayrie Moore, Bayard Cobb, Ben Kaplan, Ben Hoffman, Betsy Dean, Bill Stelling, Bill & Betty Henne, Bill and Marylee Fowl, Brad Kik, Bridgette Hubbard, Bryan Agnetta, Caitlin Koucky, Catherine Paklaian, Cathy Carrigan, Charlene Leung, Charlotte and Ralph Dammann, Christine Felton, Christine Lincoln, Constance Saltonstall, Cori Georgi, Courtenay Carella, Crystal Fisher, Cynthia Kobel, Dan Myers, Danielle LaBruna, David Griswold, Dawn Ward, Denise Wakeman, Dinah Farrell, Dorsey C. Sherman, Doug Mast, Ed Halliwell, Edward Zagat, Elizabeth Sherwood, Erin Sharoni, F.L. Dammann, Faith Miller, Gena Mavuli, Georgina Cullman, Gerald Mundy, Gina Handers, Ginger Winters, Greta Green, Hassan Azar, Heather Dietrich, Heather Harrod, Heather Garth, Helen Froeb, Hellen Addison, Holly Gayley, Ina Silbergleit, Irit Tau-Webber, Isabel Dammann, Izabel Patik, Jae Sherwood, James Ryan Clark, Jamie Sechrist, Jason Wiser, Jeff Dammann, Jenn Evans, Jennifer Carroll, Jessica Clear, John Dammann, Jonathan Huey, Jonathan and Lynn Friendly, Joseph Sexton, Joshua Voice, Jude Bierman, Julie Bennett, Karen Wyman, Kate Hendrickson, Kathleen D. Malone, Kerri Finlayson, Kevin Schiff, Kevin Kurgat, Kiara Kim, Kijana Bailey, Kyungsuk Yoo, Larry Smith, Laura Murphy, Laurie Fischer, Libby Bird, Liz McLeod, Lucille Glassman, Maggi Gallaher, Marc Durant, Marco Simons, Marilyn Morehead, Marnie Cheney, Martin Jensen, Mary Beth McGraw, Meg McClorey, Megan Cassada, Michael Mallett, Michelle Wingfield, Mike Cunningham, Mimi Glaser, Mona Barbera, Nancy Stewart, Nancy M. Dammann, Nick Young, Nicole Karsin, Nina Silbergleit, Pål Skogholt, Patricia Webster, Paul Czapiga, Phillip M. Harter, Polly Conlin, Randy Smith, Rebecca Hendrickson, Richard Reoch, Robert Rieck, Robyn Unrau, Russell & Susan Bolt, Sadie Weber, Sally Larrick, Sally Kaplan, Samuel Williamson, Sara Gay Dammann, Scarlet Teschke, Shannon Campbell, Shannon Cummings, Sharon Workman, Sigrid Weber, Solsire Cusicanqui, Stephen Biggs, Sue Rogers, Susan Forte, Susan Leeder, Tammy Essenberg, Theodore Touloukian, Thomas Bauer, Tim Wells, Tim Boyko, Toby Usnik, Tom Bailey, Tracy Hough, Trish Boaz, Vee Halliwell, Walter Taylor, William Dreyer, William and Betty Henne, Winnie Boal, and several anonymous donors.



# VASI DONOR & PARTNER INSTITUTIONS (2016-2021)

## Corporate Donors:

Ki Security and Compliance Group, NBBJ, Wayre

## Foundations:

AMB Foundation, Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation, Marcel and Ulo Zwingmann Foundation, Tides Foundation

## Partner and Collaborating Institutions:

Atucún Chocolates, Crow & Moss Chocolate, El Cacaotal Peruano, Fenix Emergency Group, Good Stuff Cacao, Grocer's Daughter Chocolates, Instituto Juruá, Mater Iniciativa, Municipalidad Distrital de Sarayacu, Roast Umber, Stanford Emergency Medicine International, Thomas Jefferson University Department of Infectious Diseases, Unidad Ejecutora de Salud Ucayali--Contamana



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