

Sara Fuentes Maldonado
WIPO Indigenous Fellow 2022

Sara Fuentes Maldonado is an indigenous Kichwa-Otavalo from the community of Ilumán, in the northern highlands of Ecuador. She graduated with honors from the Universidad San Francisco de Quito with a B.A. in International Relations and a specialization in Political Science (2021).

Before joining WIPO as Indigenous Fellow, Sara worked at the Secretariat of Management and Development of Peoples and Nationalities of Ecuador where she contributed in a number of initiatives in the field of education, youth participation and entrepreneurship.

In parallel, Sara was spokesperson of the Indigenous Community Council of Ilumán Bajo and implemented projects related to youth indigenous women's participation and leadership. This experience empowered her to found, along three other indigenous women, the "Tuparina Collective" which provides training to young indigenous leaders in support of community-based projects.



Sara was part of the eighth Edition of the Global Leadership School of Indigenous Women organized by the International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) and participated alongside other leaders and activists as an observer in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Sara was a speaker at various international events in Canada and the United States of America, raising awareness on issues pertaining to her community.

Coming from a community of artisans, Sara has been facing the challenges that indigenous peoples are exposed to when it comes to protecting and preserving their valuable forms of identity. This experience has nurtured her deep interest in the protection of traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as capacity-building in relation to such protection, particularly for indigenous women and youth.