

Synopsis & Goals: *Women on a Mission* is part of a short film series by Conservation International that highlights indigenous female conservation leaders. The series is directed, produced, shot, and edited by filmmaker Katie Bryden, in collaboration with the indigenous women. Episode 1, *Technology Meets Tradition* follows Nancy as she uses a cell phone camera to document traditional knowledge, such as dances, of the older Awajún women in her village of Shampuyacu. She documents their work to restore their forest and their traditional knowledge for future generations. Episode 2, *Poacher to Peacekeepers*, follows Josphine Ekiru, a peacekeeper of Northern Kenya, as she risks her life to reduce ivory poaching.

Case Study:

Women on a Mission

(2019/2020) 5 minute episodes



Creative Design: Filmmaker Katie Bryden set out to make the series feel personal, heartwarming, and authentic. Rather than formal interviews, the series bring viewers into the day-to-day lives of indigenous women through their voice and eyes. Using a low-tech production style enhanced the genuine feel of the series, with an emphasis on the story itself.

Collaborative Model: The series uses participatory techniques and a collaborative approach. From the onset, Bryden's goal was to include the characters in the story and filmmaking process, saying: "I want to make sure I'm telling their story in the appropriate way. I never script things and ask people to repeat. It's always a conversation." Bryden incorporated Nancy's footage into the episode, and Nancy reviewed the episode to ensure accurate cultural and language translation.

Outreach Strategies: The initial goal of the series was to elevate Conservation International's working relationship with women leaders in conservation for the 2019 International Women's Day. Episode 1 was released alongside ten other videos. It was then selected for the DC Environmental Film Festival and has had tens of thousands of views on Conservation International's social media. Bryden notes that the process of participatory filming created local impact, empowering the women to speak on camera and make their own videos.