

Remembering the Forest

A Project by the Fungi Foundation



Overview

"Remembering the Forest" connects elders with their memories of forests, preserving ancestral knowledge of fungi and their uses. This project, part of Fundación Fungi's **Elders** and **Expeditions** programs, aims to intertwine the wisdom of the past with modern conservation efforts. Through sensory experiences, storytelling, and audiovisual documentation, it highlights the cultural and ecological significance of fungi.

The Fungi Foundation has spent 11 years promoting fungal conservation and advocating for their recognition as vital interconnectors of nature. This project builds on that mission by delving into the intricate relationships between fungi, forests, and elders—capturing their significance through medicinal, edible, ornamental uses, and the cherished stories that bind people to the natural world.

Remembering the Forest: Pilot Project in Coyhaique

On November 15, the Fungi Foundation successfully launched the pilot phase of the “Rememorizando el Bosque” project at two long-term care facilities (ELEAM) in Coyhaique, Chile: Padre Antonio Ronchi and Pather Nostrum.

This innovative initiative uses sensory experiences to evoke childhood memories and strengthen the connection between older adults and the forest, fostering emotional well-being and preserving personal stories.

The Experience

Designed to immerse participants in the essence of Chile’s southern forests, the activity incorporated materials collected during expeditions to ancient woodlands in the region.

- **Immersive Video:** Participants watched a video featuring the sounds of the Chucao bird, cascading waterfalls, and rainfall, bringing the forest to life.
- **Sensory Stimuli:** Containers with scents like tepa leaves, wild cilantro, and nalca leaves, along with tactile elements like lichens, native tree leaves, and edible mushrooms such as morels, allowed participants to explore nature through touch and smell.
- **Personal Connections:** Five individuals engaged in one-hour, one-on-one sessions. Inspired by the sights, sounds, and textures, they shared deeply personal stories of their youth, such as collecting wild strawberries or living in forested rural areas.

Impact

The activity was praised by care facility staff, including occupational therapists, nutritionists, and SENAMA’s regional representative. They highlighted the participants’ active engagement and the positive emotions the experience awakened. By creating spaces for older adults to reconnect with their roots, the project fosters a sense of joy, belonging, and storytelling that enriches both participants and their communities.

About the Project

“Rememorizando el Bosque” aims to rescue the memories and experiences of older adults with physical dependencies. Through thoughtfully designed sensory experiences featuring elements from the forest, the project celebrates their stories, underscores their bond with nature, and promotes emotional well-being.

This pilot marks the beginning of an exciting journey to bring the magic of the forest to more people and remind them of their deep connection to nature.

Some Photos from Our Pilot Event in Coyhaique, Chile

