



The effective participation of Indigenous people organizations:

A non-negotiable condition to adapt the project to the COVID-19 pandemic constrains.

The pandemic has put the adaptability of all project partners to the test.

Adaptive strategies have ranged from more logistical aspects (such as the development of greater capacities for participatory work in virtual environments, or the provision of equipment and materials to Indigenous people organizations to improve their connectivity and access to the Internet) to strategic aspects such as new approaches to policy advocacy and the inclusion of local markets within the possibilities proposed by the project objective aiming to strengthen Indigenous enterprises.

This adaptive process has been a rich source of learning for project partners. However, undoubtedly, the most significant learning for future implementation is that **change management in this type of project is only effective if enabling conditions are established and developed to ensure the full participation of Indigenous partners and their community members in such change.**

Managing the change is not about consulting on adaptation strategies with the organizations; it is rather about designing, following up on, and implementing strategies jointly, taking into account the priorities of the Indigenous people who are represented by these organizations.



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The project's governance bodies fulfill a three-fold function: Concertation, capacity building, and Indigenous agenda positioning

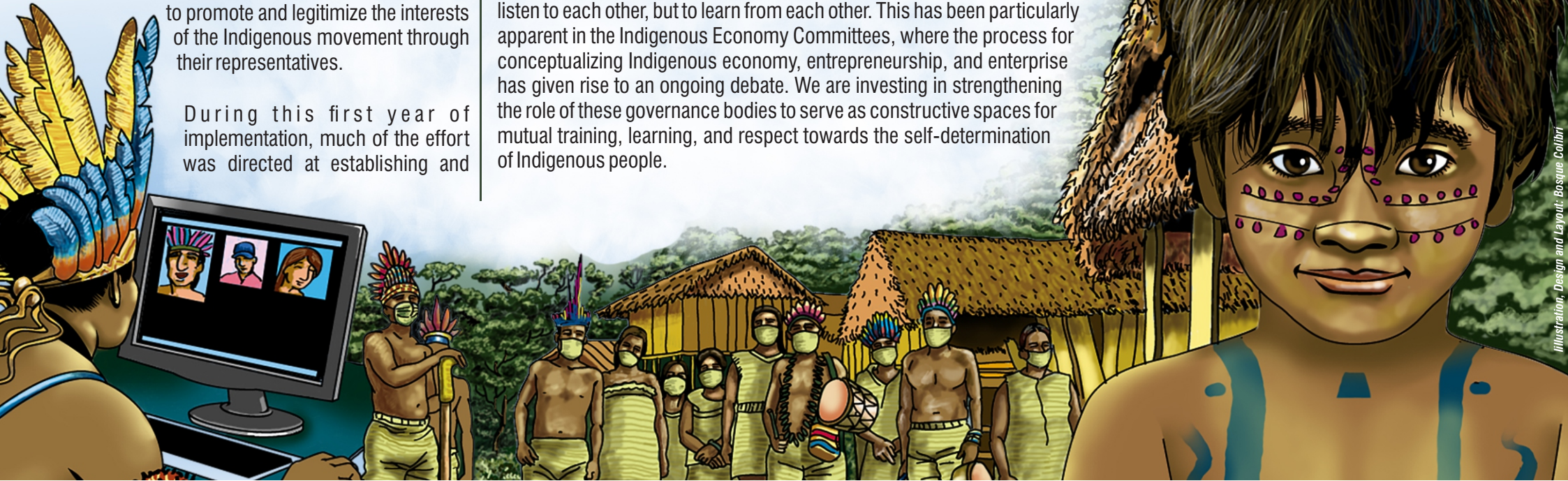
The importance of the governance bodies (Regional Committee, National Committees, and Indigenous Economy Committees) lies not only in the role they play in dialogue and consensus-building to guide the implementation and strategic vision of the project.

These bodies must oversee a process to strengthen and empower their members; they serve as forums to promote and legitimize the interests of the Indigenous movement through their representatives.

During this first year of implementation, much of the effort was directed at establishing and

ensuring the functionality of the governance bodies in each of the countries. Once they were operational, it became clear that the discussions in these committees involved conceptual and practical approaches to issues that are fundamental to exercising Indigenous and human rights.

Different perspectives and visions on the same topic, as well as different conceptualizations of terms, have compelled project partners (both the non-governmental and the Indigenous people organizations) to not only listen to each other, but to learn from each other. This has been particularly apparent in the Indigenous Economy Committees, where the process for conceptualizing Indigenous economy, entrepreneurship, and enterprise has given rise to an ongoing debate. We are investing in strengthening the role of these governance bodies to serve as constructive spaces for mutual training, learning, and respect towards the self-determination of Indigenous people.



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Indigenous enterprises and entrepreneurship within the framework of this project are much more than economic strategies; they are also vehicles for territorial governance

During the structuring and launching of the calls for proposals from Indigenous enterprises for project support, the Indigenous Economy Committees addressed issues that highlight the leading role of enterprises and entrepreneurship in different dimensions of territorial governance:

- 1. the environmental dimension**, reflecting an interdependence between a territory's biophysical conditions and opportunities and the Indigenous enterprises;
- 2. the political dimension**, as certain decisions will affect and benefit the population differently and must address tensions related to distinct visions of "development";
- 3. the social dimension**, to the extent that Indigenous enterprises differentially involve certain sectors and actors from the communities and necessarily deal with gender and generational equity; and
- 4. the cultural dimension**, to the extent that Indigenous enterprises bring into the system their traditional knowledge, acquired knowledge, and the elements of material culture necessary for the use, management, and transformation of the natural environment.

The project is supporting these linkages between Indigenous enterprises and territorial governance to achieve its desired objectives, seeking to address the strengthening of Indigenous enterprises not solely from an economic dimension but through a balanced approach that also includes environmental, cultural, and social dimensions.



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The effectiveness of Indigenous people organizations advocacy actions

Depends on the quality of the connections fostered within the existing diverse levels of territorial, organizational, and political governance

A central component of the project involves strengthening and putting into practice Indigenous people organizations advocacy capacities to defend their rights, particularly in relation to extractive and infrastructure projects that impact indigenous territories. To that end, DAR (Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) and COICA (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica), designed a four-step roadmap:



Identification of the interests and needs to be positioned,



Establishment of the roles and those responsible for implementation



Definition of content for the communications and political relations strategies



Post-event follow-up strategies



This roadmap is based on the premise that international advocacy strategies must complement each other at the regional, national, and local levels. Most issues, organizations, and/or events have national focal points, counterparts, and representative offices that play important roles not only in the preparation of international events, but also in their implementation.

Advocacy by Indigenous people organizations in national and sub-national political agendas may be limited by insufficient connection between the levels of organization and the communities in the territory. Furthermore, advocacy in international forums falls short when it is not informed by the interests and needs of national and sub-national Indigenous people organizations and the communities they serve.

Ensuring the existence and quality of these connections is one of the tasks of the strengthening process.

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Connect, Communicate, And Get Closer To People, Experiences, And Topics Of Interest By Keeping In Mind:

Ease

- Download and use technological tools from your cellphone
- Know which are the most used tools on the internet
- There are many free options—take advantage of them!
- Many of them work well, even when service is poor
- Many of them are easy to manage and only require that you understand basic cellphone functionality to use them; these include **WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, and Jitsi.**

Complement Your Communications

Incorporate other resources and tools for communicating remotely.

- Radioprograms
- Pre-recorded audios
- Videos
- Printed materials such as: brochures, visual illustrations of information, and how-to guides, among others.

Combining remote communications with other informational materials helps to overcome cultural barriers and reduce the negative effects that may result from favoring online over face-to-face communications.



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The Online Environment Favors Dialogue Between Youth And Older People, provided that the role of young people shifts from that of mere technological assistance to that of active participants on the subject matter.

- Using online media has made it possible for different generations to talk to each other. In many cases, older people seek help from young people in their families or organizations to understand how to use technology so they can participate in the activities that involve them.
- In some cases, the young people have expressed interest in the subject matter of the activities and meetings, which goes beyond supporting the older people with the use of the cellphone or computer.
- An initial study reveals that young people's interest results from providing opinions, clarifications, and

answering questions to older people on the topics addressed in online meetings.

- This is how the dialogue between generations has started in some online meetings, not only with respect to technology, but also in terms of the topics being discussed.
- As a result, these spaces for dialogue can be strategic to ensure that young people are attracted to learn about and participate in activities related to projects such as Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources (AIRR).



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In An Age When Greater Importance Is Given To Online Communications Between People,

Protecting Cultural Diversity Is A Must.

- Indigenous organizations request that care be taken with cultural barriers in online communications processes, clearly understanding the value that online media has had in ensuring contact between people during the pandemic.
- Paying attention to the barriers in online communications is not just about making technology, internet or cellphone access available to communities and organizations;
- It is to understand that the online environment has limits in relation to cultural diversity, which is expressed, enriched, and transmitted through face-to-face communications in order to establish bonds of trust, make decisions, and reach agreements.
- Across the different indigenous cultures, they use their own means, tools, rhythms and channels, making personal relationships possible in traditional spaces such as the maloca and the tulpa, where contact with the other person, their eyes, and their facial expressions are important.
- Giving preference to online communications and interactions over the diverse and traditional forms of communication (*not necessarily compatible with the online environment*), is to impose a single possibility of communication and interaction.

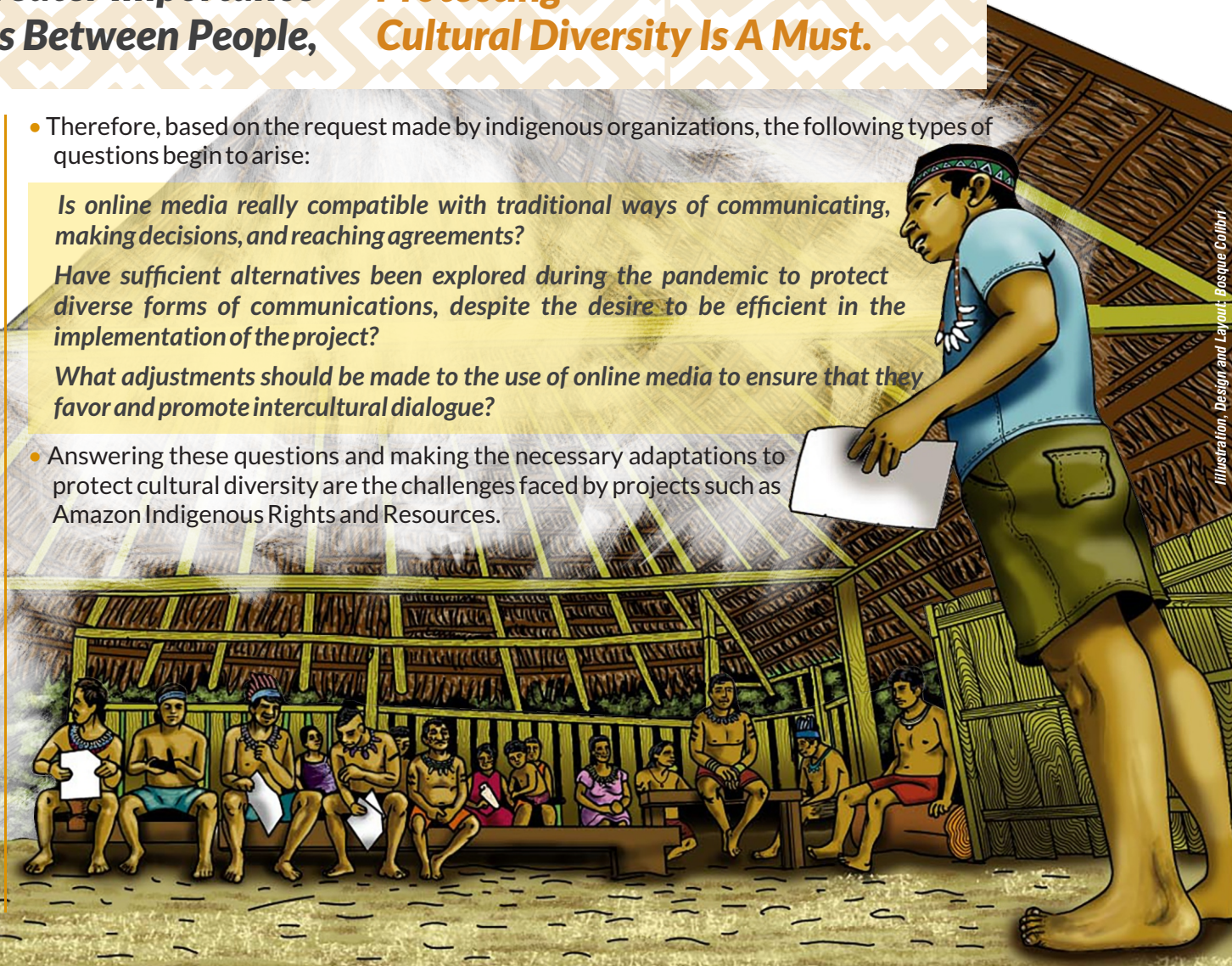
- Therefore, based on the request made by indigenous organizations, the following types of questions begin to arise:

Is online media really compatible with traditional ways of communicating, making decisions, and reaching agreements?

Have sufficient alternatives been explored during the pandemic to protect diverse forms of communications, despite the desire to be efficient in the implementation of the project?

What adjustments should be made to the use of online media to ensure that they favor and promote intercultural dialogue?

- Answering these questions and making the necessary adaptations to protect cultural diversity are the challenges faced by projects such as Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources.



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The Need To Adapt Online Activities So That They Do Not Promote Inequalities

In projects such as Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources, online media and tools have made coordination activities, informative meetings, some training activities, and effective project governance possible during the pandemic.

- The online environment has proven to be conducive for carrying out activities among NGO partners, NGOs and leaders, as well as NGOs and the indigenous organizations' technical teams.
- However, there is a warning around the current and potential deterioration of participatory and decision-making processes, especially when they involve community actors.
- In activities that require effective participation, dialogue, and decision-making, online media are being used, despite being aware of the technological and cultural barriers of the online environment.
- Online communications are being implemented in contexts with unequal access, understanding, and use of technologies, in areas with or without internet access or cellphone coverage.
- Potentially, inequalities are being perpetuated between youth and older people, and between men and women:

Because a certain level of formal education is required for online interactions, which supports, for example, their ability to read and exchange ideas about documents written in Spanish or Portuguese.

Because such documents are written in a way that has not necessarily been adapted taking into account cultural diversity or intercultural dialogue.

Because online communications use media and tools that require a knowledge of technology that few people have.

- Therefore, if the necessary adjustments are not made for the development of online activities, they could become a yet another cause of exacerbated inequalities, barriers, and discrimination

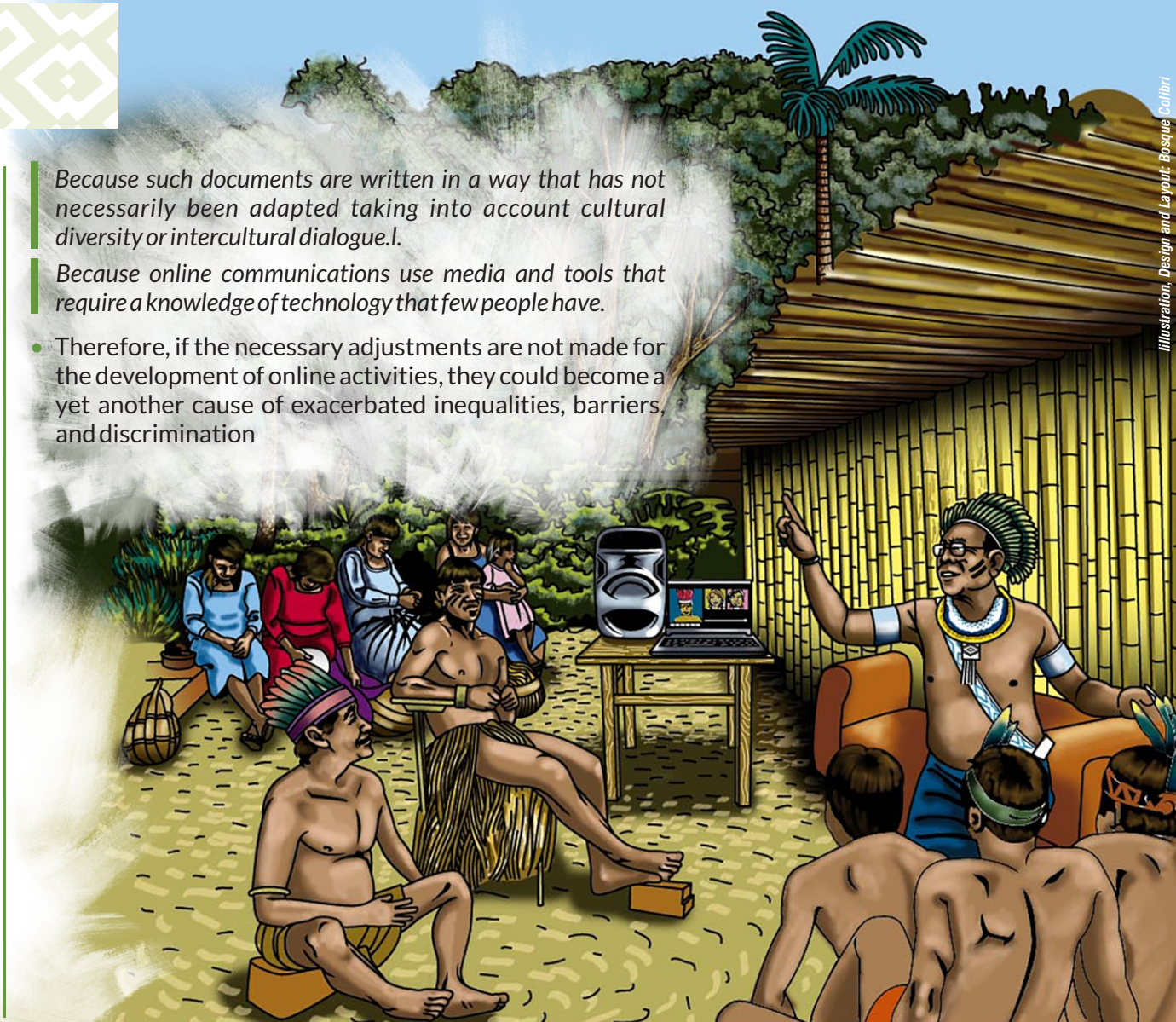


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Financially supporting participatory action-research training projects

Motivates students and allows them to strengthen connections with their organizations.

From EGIDA grants were awarded to a group of students from each of the participating indigenous organizations to carry out a specific project within the scope of the Research and Practice course.

This experience was of great educational value and allowed the students to strengthen and put into practice their skills and strengthen ties with their organizations.

The following two elements should be improved for the next edition:

1. It is important that the projects are incorporated into the planning of the training course so that there is consistency between the focus of the project and the contents covered in the course.
2. The exercise of budgeting, managing funds, and accountability should be integrated into the course, so that it becomes part of the training and does not become a burdensome task for all those involved.

Karla Zafra Educational support EGIDA



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Online training processes need simple procedures to improve interaction among the students and EGIDA staff

WhatsApp, email, and Zoom worked well for meetings with facilitators. It was also useful to have storage space for videos and materials to use if a student could not connect to the classes. In contrast, Google Classroom did not work well because students' cell phones and computers did not have the necessary capacity and because several participants were unfamiliar with the platform.

Karla Zafra
Educational support EGIDA



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What should be taken into account when conducting online or face-to-face trainings with indigenous peoples?



We must first identify participants' technical and technological limitations, as well as their living conditions (How far do they have to travel? Can they access the internet? Do they have access to a computer?).

In cases where the participants are leaders who have other responsibilities, there should be flexibility in terms of schedules, methods, and activities. Homework assignments do not work due to packed schedules, so assignments should be developed into “in-class” exercises.

Training courses should have a maximum duration of 6 months. If the process is prolonged for too long, it may lead to participants having more and more activities and responsibilities that interfere with the training.

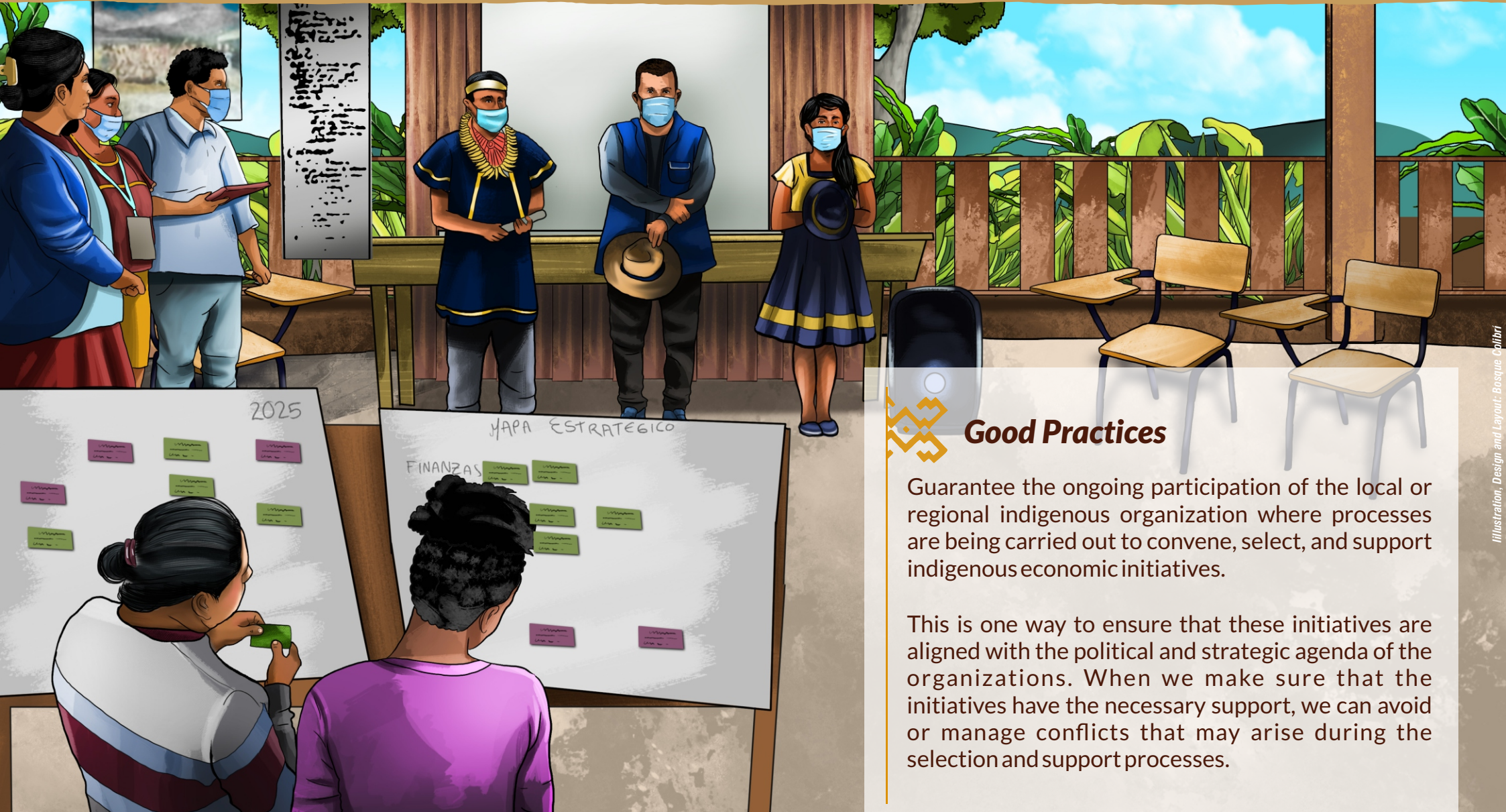
Attention and energy should be focused on those who actively participate in the classes, instead of trying to “retain” people who are unmotivated to participate, especially when the conditions for their participation have been met.

Karla Zafra
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Good Practices

Guarantee the ongoing participation of the local or regional indigenous organization where processes are being carried out to convene, select, and support indigenous economic initiatives.

This is one way to ensure that these initiatives are aligned with the political and strategic agenda of the organizations. When we make sure that the initiatives have the necessary support, we can avoid or manage conflicts that may arise during the selection and support processes.

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Key aspects for a successful call for proposals:



Develop a database of the indigenous economic initiatives that exist in the territories.



Ensure the requirements for participation in the call for proposals are clear from the beginning and appropriate for the context. They must include a request for endorsement from the relevant indigenous authority(ies).



Ensure the language and channels used to promote the call for proposals are appropriate for diverse audiences (women, adult men, youth from different indigenous groups) as well as for those with different levels of access to information (radio, posters, WhatsApp, Facebook, among others).



Once the call for proposals is launched, there must be regular follow-up.



Indigenous and ally organizations' support teams must have a good understanding of the application process and manage the necessary information to provide guidance to those who want to present their initiatives.



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Key aspects for a successful selection process:



Establish a qualified working group with the participation of the indigenous organizations:

- That will be trained in the subject matter.
- That have the time to devote to the selection process.



Agree on and be clear about the selection criteria; avoid having the process be "tainted" by personal or other interests.



Conduct telephone or online interviews with all the initiatives that meet the minimum application requirements.



Pre-select the most eligible initiatives and visit them. Visits can imply significant costs in terms of money and time, but they provide first-hand information that allows for a better final selection.



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Key aspects for a successful mentoring process:

Once the economic initiatives to be supported have been selected, the support or mentoring process must guarantee the following:



Mentoring must be comprehensive: technical, organizational, political, financial, and administrative.



It must involve the regional and community organizational structures where the economic initiative is based.



The mentoring team must have mechanisms and tools to resolve conflicts from the outset; and be prepared to detect if conflicts arise between communities, villages, families, or organizations in relation to the economic initiatives and have the ability to manage them.



Clarify from the beginning that the mentoring process has a defined duration and an assigned budget. This must be jointly planned with clear objectives and timelines; detailed investment budgets; and clear procurement and contracting processes.

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Three things that should never be done:

1.

Do not leave the initiative without support, yet at the same time, avoid generating dependency. Seek the independence of the supported initiatives.

2.

Do not promote businesses or activities that violate human rights or that are related to illegal actors or activities.

3.

Do not promote the commercialization of traditional elements with spiritual significance, such as ceremonial plants or visits to sacred sites.



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Floresta en Red,

A training program for young communicators that has accomplished important achievements in a short time (2019-2022):

A structured Network with 80 young communicators from the 9 states of the Brazilian Amazon and 50 indigenous peoples.



Independent digital activism was generated by some of the communicators.



The social networks of the indigenous Federations are managed by young communicators.



Active communication has contributed to the positioning of organizations in traditional media.



The young communicators cover the agendas of their territories in connection with the agendas of the Federations.



The young communicators are contributing to the coverage of the main events, increasing the visibility of the participating delegations through the networks of their respective Federation.



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To have significant achievements in a short time, it is important to consider the following:



Having a strategic vision of communication enables significant achievements in a short time, as long as the training of communicators includes political, organizational and technical aspects. The vision of communication as a tool or instrument allows the generation of materials, but the strategic vision for the use of these materials allows generating impacts.



Considering a process perspective rather than a project perspective so you can build on past progress and achievements rather than trying to start over each time resources for a specific project arrive.



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Good practices



Institutionalize the communication program in indigenous organizations.



Ensure a wide geographical distribution of the training program and promote exchanges between the culturally diverse Indigenous Peoples participating in this training.



Carry out practical activities, including field visits.



Have indigenous people as facilitators of the training process.



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Recommendations for the proper development of a training program for communicators:

- 1 An intergenerational approach to training must be promoted, facilitating the integration of older people with younger people.
- 2 The conditions must be guaranteed from the beginning so that the program can continue and develop without interruptions.
- 3 It is essential to manage scholarships to cover the basic needs of students considering the different contexts from which they come.
- 4 The training program should not depend on the virtual format, since in many communities and territories there are no adequate connectivity or internet conditions. The training must be mostly face-to-face and the virtual components, if any, must only be complementary.



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What must we do to ensure the sustainability of the achievements and expand the impacts of the communicators training program



Manage the certification of communicators, that is, their recognition as professionals.



Provide communicators with continuous training, support for the development of their own initiatives and access to paid work in the field of communication.



Establish agreements with different entities to promote training in new communication technologies.



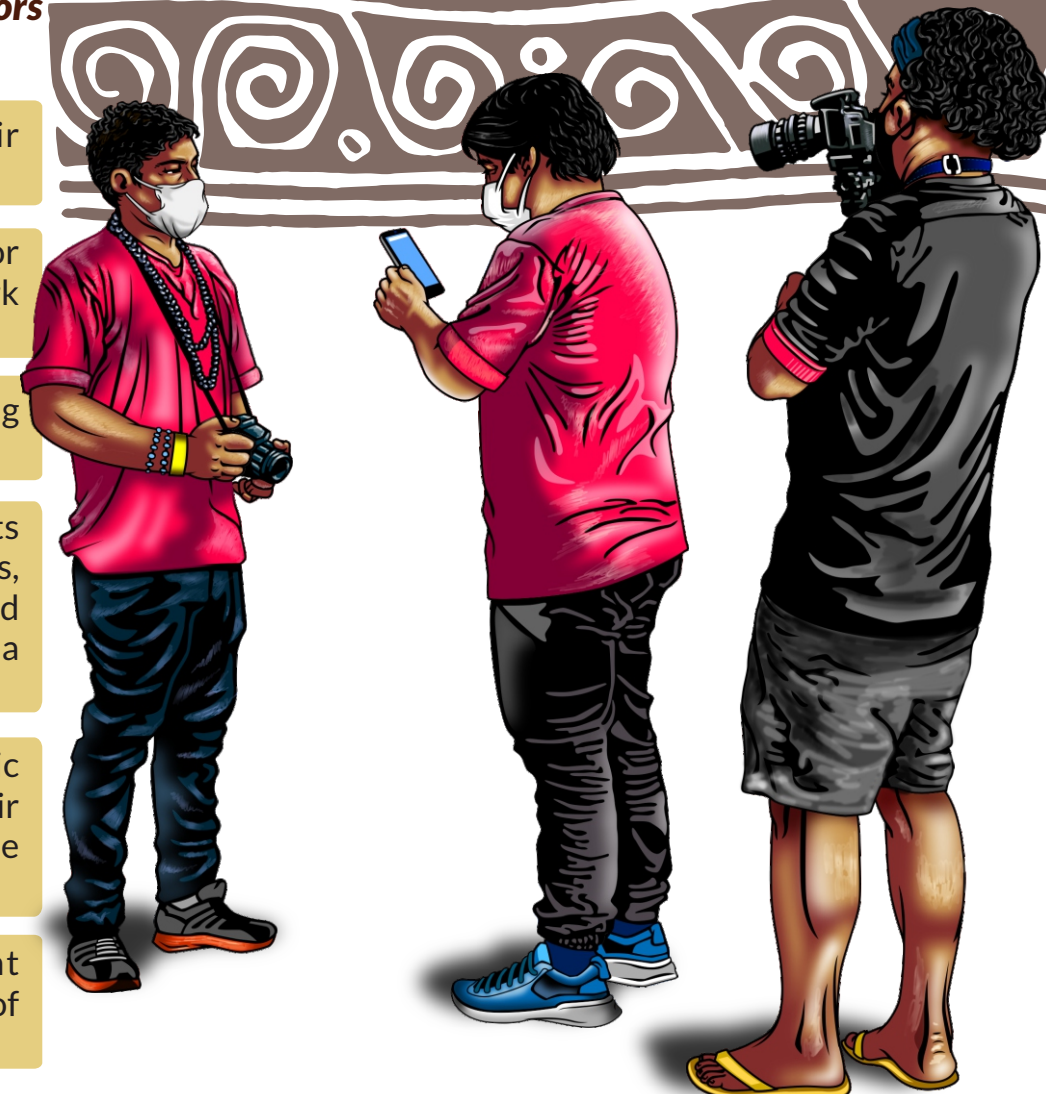
Actively link indigenous communicators to ongoing projects (such as AIRR) so that, once trained in the project's objectives, approach, and activities, they cover the various components and prepare material to disseminate progress and results to a diversity of audiences.



Ensure the organizational, political, logistical and economic conditions so that communicators reflect the reality of their communities (complaint, culture, etc.) and support the strengthening of grassroots organizations and their territories.



Promote exchanges with communicators from different countries and establish connections with other networks of communicators.



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 **What has supported us in ensuring the continuity of processes and that progress is not lost after the project ends?**

 **Agendas:** Indigenous organizations are incorporating project themes and approaches into their agendas – from there they will continue to implement the processes and build upon the achievements.

 **Advocacy:** Many advocacy actions developed by indigenous organizations are aimed at guaranteeing the political, regulatory, and financial support that will sustain processes and progress.

 **Alliances:** The establishment and strengthening of alliances among partners and with other actors is another ongoing strategy aimed at ensuring sustainability beyond the life of the project.

 **Financial resources:** Project management to ensure the flow of financial resources is perhaps a more "classic" and, to some extent, transitory strategy on the road to sustainability. Innovation lies in the fact that this management focuses on long-range funds (climate funds, conservation funds) and involves actors other than conventional donors (e.g., the private and public sectors).

 **Capacities:** Capacity-building continues to be the preferred strategy in the pursuit of sustainability since the beginning of the project and has been increasingly incorporated organically in all project actions, not only through courses and workshops but also throughout activity implementation.



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What has allowed us to make significant progress towards the inclusion of women and youth in project actions?

Implementing the intersectional approach: While the term sounds complicated, in practice, we have learned that this approach implies ensuring the effective participation of certain population groups of particular interest to us - such as adult women and young women and men. Beyond sex and age, we must consider other aspects of their lives such as their domestic responsibilities (childcare, food preparation, provision of spending money); reading and writing skills; previous experience in the topics to be covered; the nationality or ethnic group to which they belong; safety during their travel; access to and use of technology, among other characteristics.

Once this characterization has been completed, we must identify which factors are limiting participation and develop alternatives together to overcome these limiting characteristics. If, for example, literacy skills are limited, we need to ensure that calls for participation and materials arrive in graphic and audiovisual formats. If, for example, people have responsibilities around the care of small children, we need

to ensure that conditions are provided for someone to care for them while their caretakers attend the events or training sessions; and so on.

Once alternatives are identified, partners can adjust budgets, materials, educational approaches, agendas, and work or training schedules, all in accordance with the intersectional approach.

We implemented two strategies that made this change possible. On the one hand, we provided opportunities for strengthening all partner organizations to clarify concepts. On the other hand, we developed opportunities to apply tools to enhance the inclusion of women and young people in project actions. Once training activities were concluded, we drafted the *"Practical Guide for Gender and Generational Inclusion with an Intersectional Approach"* and made it available to the partners.



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When strategic planning does not consider all the necessary information, implementation will most likely fail.

Partners described several such cases in which, had they dedicated time during planning on analysis, reflection, and collection of basic information, they would have been more effective in their proposed strategies. This was the case with NESsT regarding the difficulty in establishing networks of indigenous enterprises in the different regions. It was also the case for COICA with respect to the regional meeting of territorial monitors for training and aligning strategies in the construction of the SAT-RR COICA. Partners in Colombia experienced this in relation to the lack of participation of OZIP's technical team during the administrative strengthening program. In Ecuador, this proved to be the case with the failed attempt to link the role of paralegals with CONFENIAE's Information System. Finally, in Peru, this ended up happening when they failed to modify the organizational and community Statutes to strengthen the participation of indigenous women and youth.



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An error identified and corrected in a timely manner can become an innovative strategy.

This insight can be gleaned from a situation in Ecuador in which we gave technological equipment to indigenous enterprises (computers, cameras, mobile phones, printers, and projectors) without anticipating the need for capacity-building to overcome the knowledge gaps related to actually using it. Once this error was identified, we arranged for university students to visit two indigenous enterprises at the end of the fiscal year to train them in the use of these tools. Having the students' support ended up being an excellent strategy; so much so that in fiscal year 2023 we will replicate this training activity with all the enterprises that are facing similar challenges.

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Each process has a unique characteristic, and each characteristic entails a lesson learned:



Perú, through EGIDA (School for Indigenous Governance and Amazonian Development): combining different training modalities (diploma courses, courses, and seminars).

Ecuador, through the Paralegal program: promoting art as a tool for training and intercultural communication.

Brazil, through capacity-building for advocacy: "learning by doing," from the classroom to ministries and Senate offices.

Brazil, through the network of young indigenous communicators: using social mobilizations as spaces for learning, communication tools as a means for advocacy.

Colombia, with the PFGTI (Indigenous Territorial Governance Training Program): a territorial problem is identified at the beginning of each training cycle whose solution will link the contents of the program in each cohort: "the common cause."

In the four countries (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Brazil): with support from NESST, each indigenous enterprise is unique. While the themes may be common, the content must be adapted to the circumstances.

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Interculturality in educational processes, the barriers that prevent us from moving from intention to action:

The variety of experiences in training carried out under AIRR highlight the importance of an intercultural approach. However, they also bring to light limitations that can impede or make it challenging to ensure the continuous and systematic application of this approach:

Interculturality is not just about establishing a dialogue between the "indigenous" and the "non-indigenous;" it is about understanding that in both there is also cultural diversity (several indigenous peoples and several non-indigenous cultures participating in the same training process).

Multilingualism: Should not only mean using Spanish or Portuguese but including the different indigenous languages. The question lies in how this might be operationalized and made possible if we have different peoples participating in the same training process.


The "translation" into an intercultural approach implies much more than switching from one language to another. It means having the ability to assign meaning to concepts and ideas across the diverse cultures that are involved in the process.

Educational approaches and the development of educational materials using an intercultural approach should consider how knowledge is generated, transmitted, and processed in different cultures.

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 **Inclusion, beyond lip service, is an area for further debate:**

When talking about inclusion, the AIRR project's training experiences have a number of elements in common:

- ☉ Diversity represents a benefit, something positive, for training processes.
- ☉ Inclusion is about the recognition and exercise of the rights of sectors of the population that have traditionally been "marginalized" or made invisible.
- ☉ Inclusion activities are aimed, for example, at women, young people, the elderly, inhabitants of remote regions, and members of peoples or nationalities that have not been organizationally or politically strong.
- ☉ Inclusion implies adapting meeting announcements, educational approaches, materials, language, and content to ensure not only the presence of diverse people, but also their full participation in the training processes.

However, there are aspects of inclusion over which there is uncertainty, deep differences, discomfort, debate and questions: *Should inclusion efforts be premeditated, or simply open invitations for those who are able and interested to come? Should we be more concerned about including people with disabilities? Should we be more concerned about including people with diverse sexual identities and orientations?* This last issue is particularly controversial: with the argument that there are issues that are culturally sensitive, some people, more men than women, are reluctant to engage in discussions. This is a pending task.



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The role of academic partners on the pathway to sustainability in educational processes:

Academic institutions could play a key role in the sustainability of educational processes: they should contribute their own educational offerings, methodologies, teachers, and materials, drawing on their experience. It is important for programs to find academic partners that are interested and have the capacity to implement intercultural approaches.

There are tensions or challenges to overcome in the relationship with academic institutions:

- ⦿ There must be co-creation, not imposition.
- ⦿ There must be involvement and commitment to the programs and not just academic accreditation.

The quality of education (especially higher education) in the Amazon regions of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru is not the best, which further weakens the links with indigenous organizations and their contributions to the design and implementation of intercultural educational methodologies.

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Here is a synthesis of reflections on technology in indigenous territorial monitoring initiatives within the scope of AIRR:

The Role of Technology in Indigenous Territorial Monitoring Experiences

Technology is increasingly utilized in indigenous territorial monitoring initiatives for data collection, recording, and subsequent analysis. Common examples include drones, GPS devices, camera traps, cell phones, and online recording and consultation programs and platforms.

Indigenous leaders and monitors emphasize that technology is a means to streamline certain processes and enhance precision. However, they stress that indigenous territorial monitoring cannot depend solely on technology: *"Monitoring must continue, even without technology. While it facilitates data collection and advocacy, we must persevere in collecting data and advocating, even without it."*

Challenges:

- High equipment costs and the need for replacement and maintenance pose challenges for the sustainability of monitoring processes.
- There is a need to value traditional knowledge as a fundamental tool for monitoring and explore its inclusion or harmonious combination with technology.
- Regional and national authorities must recognize and validate the data collected and processed by indigenous territorial monitoring systems to ensure their credibility.



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Reflections on the Participation of Men and Women in Territorial Monitoring

Within the scope of AIRR, we have reflected on the reasons why there are more men than women involved in indigenous territorial monitoring initiatives, especially during field phases, despite both men and women agreeing on fundamental premises, such as:

It would be valuable to have equal numbers of men and women, as the contributions of both genders are complementary.

Both men and women possess equal capacities to navigate the territory; learn how to use technology; understand the guidance and advice of elders regarding monitoring and its importance for territorial protection; and explain to communities what monitoring entails, how it is conducted, and why it is necessary, among other aspects.

While men and women may have different capacities in some respects, this does not imply that one is preferable over the other. For instance, men often exhibit the physical strength to clear a path in the forest, whereas women are typically more adept at collecting and recording data and handling equipment with care.



If parity is deemed necessary and desirable, and capacities are recognized, then how do we account for the imbalance in the number of women participating in indigenous territorial monitoring processes? We have learned that this discrepancy is related to prejudices that have been entrenched over time and are perpetuated not only by many men, but also by the communities themselves and even by some women. These prejudices include beliefs that women are not suited for walking, that monitoring is physically demanding and unsuitable for women, that women are more vulnerable to dangers than men, that it is unconventional for women to engage in work traditionally reserved for men, and that women's biological cycles limit their participation in monitoring expeditions.

Final conclusions from these reflections: women's limitations to participate in indigenous territorial monitoring are not biological, but cultural and social. They can, therefore, be transformed and overcome so that women who wish to be involved in these initiatives are no longer discriminated against.

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Strategy to Bridge the Gap Between Indigenous Enterprises and Impact Investors

The significant gap between the criteria of impact investors, many of whom are unfamiliar with the unique characteristics of Amazonian enterprises and lack suitable investment strategies for this sector, and the reality of indigenous economic initiatives in the Amazon region, which encounter logistical, financial, and capacity limitations, is widely recognized. At times, it seems as though these are two worlds that may never converge.

However, throughout the implementation of AIRR, we have learned that the most effective strategy to help close this gap is to **“build the bridge from each shore”**. To move forward with this approach, we have shifted the initial question from *what must indigenous enterprises strengthen to meet the criteria and requirements of impact investors* to *¿what do both impact investors and indigenous enterprises need to strengthen and understand for both parties to take advantage of the opportunities that each represents?*



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Recommendations for Bridging the Gap Between Indigenous Enterprises and Impact Investors

What do both impact investors and indigenous enterprises need to strengthen and understand for both parties to take advantage of the opportunities that each represents?

Indigenous enterprises should focus on demonstrating their sustainability, social and environmental impacts, and unique characteristics.

Impact investors need to shift their perspective and understanding of investments in the Amazon by familiarizing themselves with the territory's particularities, cultural dynamics, and population. They should also strive to establish direct communication with indigenous organizations and communities, avoid intermediaries, forge alliances, and innovate financing and capacity-building strategies. Additionally, they should make investment instruments more flexible, prioritize impact over financial return, redesign risk assessment matrices, and integrate special mitigation strategies for investments in the Amazon.



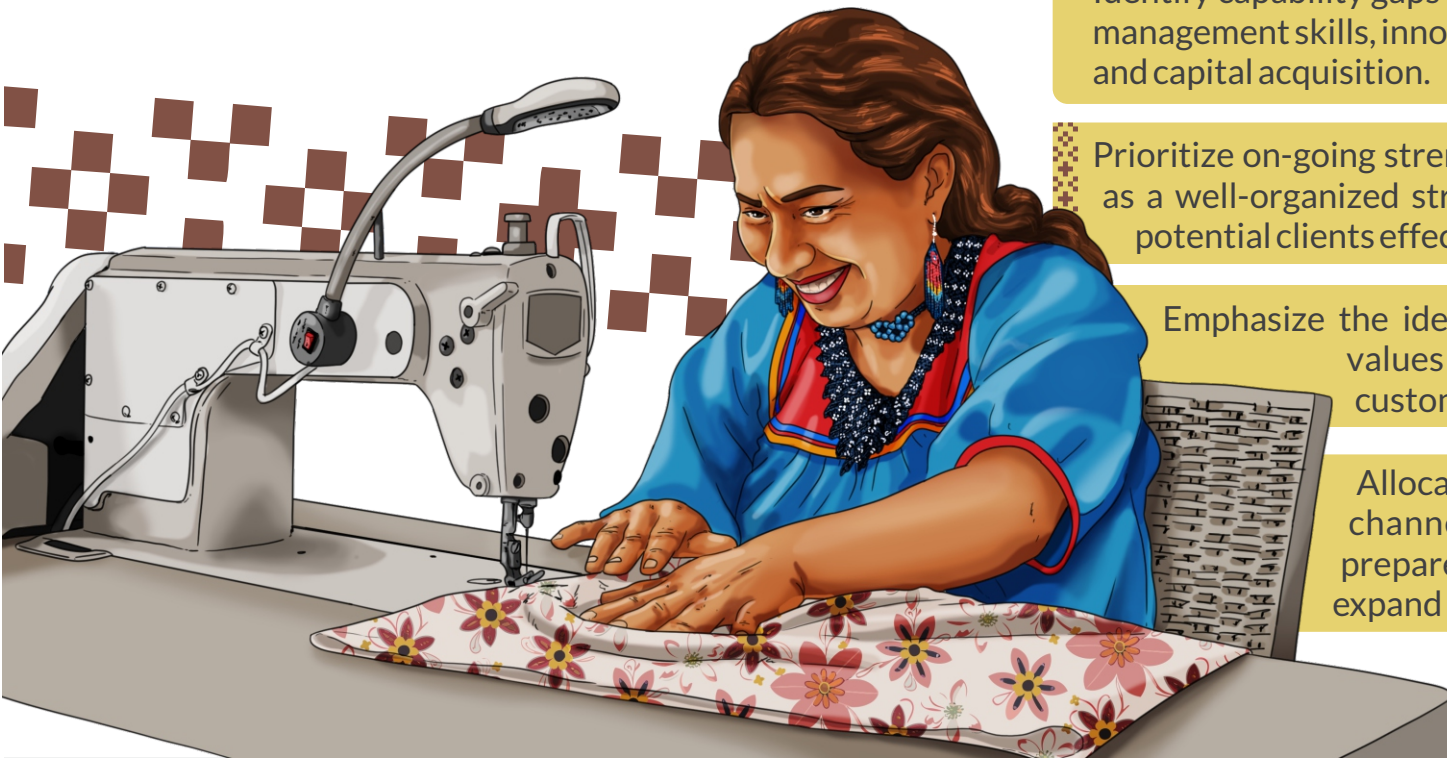
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Considerations to Prioritizing the Strengthening of Indigenous Enterprises

There are numerous areas requiring strengthening within indigenous enterprises, which may sometimes overwhelm the enterprises themselves, as well as their allies and partners. Here are some key considerations to help prioritize these areas:



Begin the strengthening process by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the entrepreneurs' skills, existing technical resources, communication barriers, and social context within the geographical area.

Identify capability gaps across four main domains: entrepreneurial and management skills, innovation and technology adoption, market access, and capital acquisition.

Prioritize on-going strengthening of the enterprise's commercial area, as a well-organized structure enables meeting the specific needs of potential clients effectively.

Emphasize the identification and communication of the unique values of the product or service in marketing and customer relationship management strategies.

Allocate resources to develop and strengthen digital channels for customer management and actively prepare for and engage in events and trade fairs to expand market reach and visibility.

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Keys Considerations for a Successful Capacity-Building Process for Indigenous Enterprises



Provide initial resources to enhance the enterprises' technological infrastructure, including mobile devices, computers or laptops, internet connectivity, and training in Microsoft tools such as Word and Excel.



Consider the availability of resources for in-person workshops for indigenous enterprises. While online workshops efficiently reach entrepreneurs and transmit knowledge quickly, in-person workshops foster more effective learning outcomes.



Work plans developed in collaboration with enterprises should outline specific actions for engaging with investors and potential clients, such as participation in trade fairs and business networking events.



Deploy field personnel to closely monitor the progress of activities outlined in each enterprise's work plans, with regional/local indigenous organizations playing a pivotal role in this regard.



Increase the participation and engagement of indigenous organizations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of all capacity-building activities for indigenous enterprises. This ensures alignment with the organizations' vision and political guidance, fosters an intercultural approach, and strengthens organizational capacities.



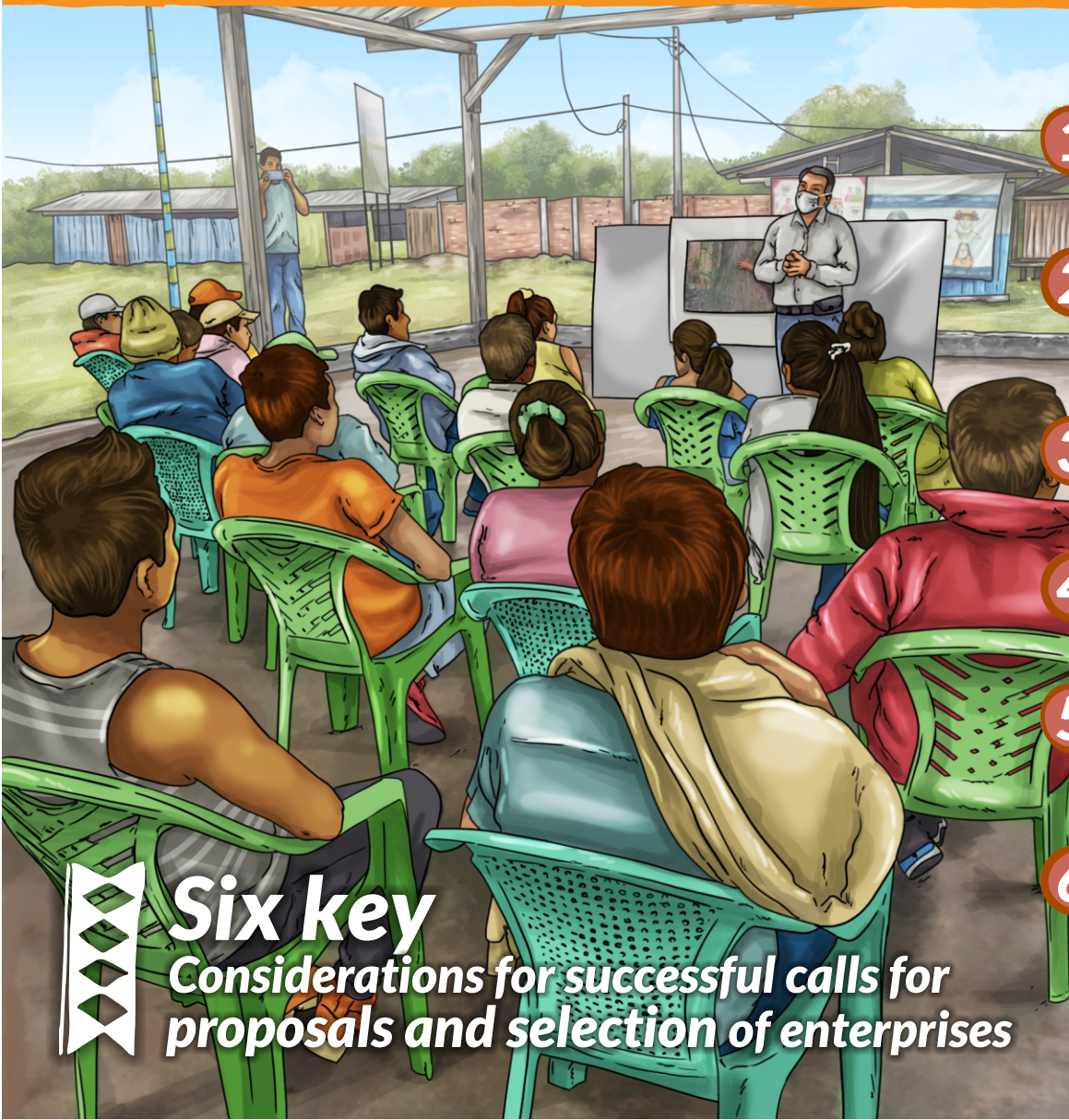
Document and systematize the capacity-building processes for indigenous enterprises, ensuring they are shared with their Governing Councils and effectively stored in both printed and digital archives.



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Six key Considerations for successful calls for proposals and selection of enterprises

- 1 Ensure indigenous organizations participate in co-designing the entire process, guaranteeing ownership, participation, and reaching leaders in prioritized indigenous territories.
- 2 Establish a support committee comprising technical staff as well as an Indigenous Economy Committee primarily composed of political members or decision-makers from indigenous organizations.
- 3 Adapt the call's dissemination strategies to the conditions and infrastructure of the Indigenous Amazon to ensure the message reaches the target population.
- 4 Include in the call's terms and conditions a section detailing permitted uses and restrictions of non-reimbursable funds for project support.
- 5 Introduce an intermediate phase, between enterprise evaluation and selection, to validate environmental permits according to product categories, avoiding delays in supporting enterprises with outdated permits.
- 6 When determining the amount of non-reimbursable funds necessary to support the enterprises, include all costs related to identification and selection, taking into account geographic dispersion and access conditions, and ensure the possibility of visiting them during the selection process.

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Some project practices can have broader significance by ensuring their replicability in other contexts or at other times

From this first year of project implementation, we want to highlight three practices that have the potential for replication in other contexts:

The design process for the School for Indigenous Governance and Amazonian Development (EGIDA). Highlighted are three aspects that can be replicated:

Clear leadership by an indigenous organization (AIDSESP -Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana-) with the political resolve to create this sort of platform to provide various educational opportunities linked to the development of their own strategic agenda.

The successful convening of stakeholders from various cultures, philosophies, and organizations to support the consolidation of the idea and its implementation; and

Seizing the opportunity put forth by the project to launch the School through a specific course whose content is relevant to achieving results under the umbrella of this project.



The advocacy strategy designed by DAR (Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) and COICA (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica). The standout and replicable elements of the process are:

The combination of DAR's many years of experience in advocacy work and COICA's influence and experience in addition to their already-established mutual recognition and trust;

The logic and complementarity of the strategy's components, which are: identification of the interests and needs to be positioned, establishment of the roles and implementers, definition of communications content and political relations strategies, and post-event follow-up strategies; and



The model of learning by doing; going through each step constitutes a pedagogical, political, and strengthening exercise, obviating the need to have the capacities prior to implementation.

The project's governance bodies serve as spaces for capacity-building, not just advising and decision-making.

The convergence of a diversity of actors in the project's governance bodies offers a unique opportunity for multicultural approaches to issues and for mutual learning. The process of establishing the governance bodies is an exercise in dialogue and agreement that strengthens the capacity of the actors involved, given that they must begin by agreeing on who is to be part of this space, its scope, objectives, and functioning.

Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources (AIRR)



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By Putting The Lessons Learned Into Practice, We Can Correct The Course

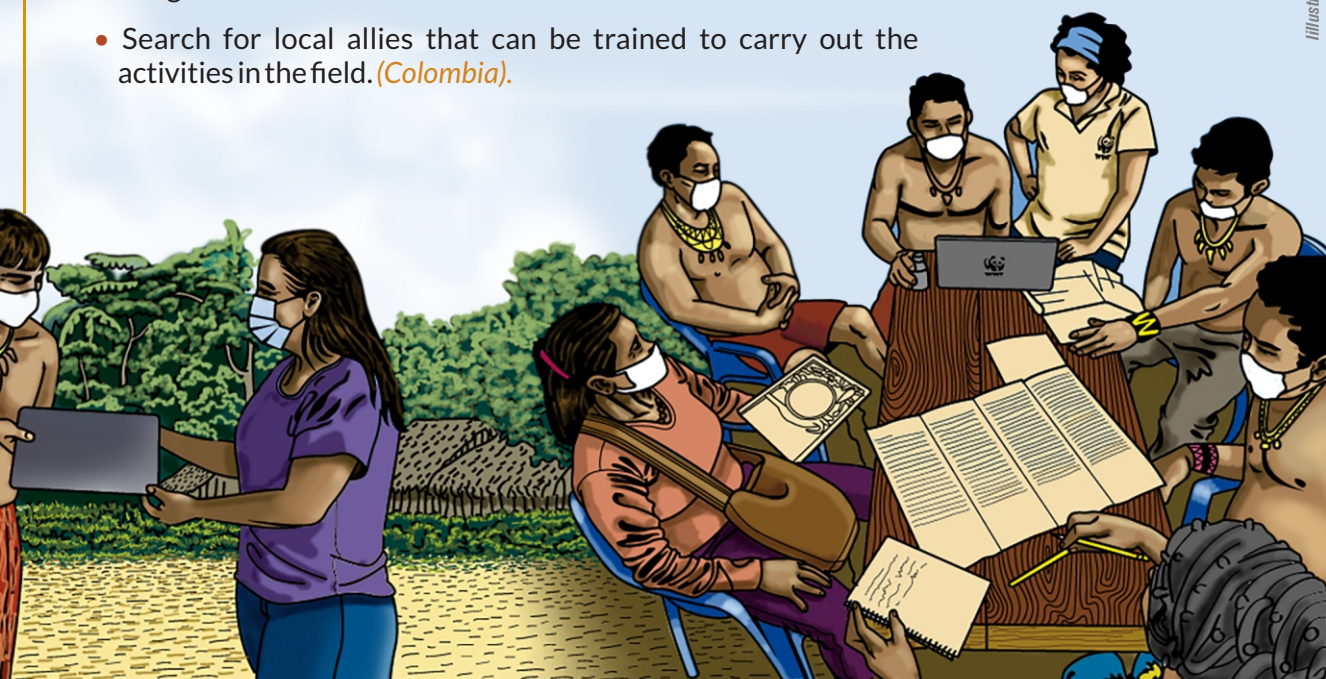
- During the first year of the pandemic, adjustments were made to the project, based on technology know-how:
 - Computer equipment, cellphones, batteries, and data packages were purchased and distributed.
 - Training on the use of online tools was ensured.
- At the beginning of the project's second year, we learned that the use of online tools was not as favorable as we had anticipated and decided to start developing other actions, so that not all the work would be conducted through online mediums, thus contributing to the protection of the cultural and political rights of the participating indigenous communities and organizations:
 - The production of culturally focused communications materials.
 - The implementation of face-to-face work with communities.



Going Beyond The Online Environment To Adapt Learning To A Face-To-Face Setting

Even amid the conditions imposed by the pandemic, the work teams designed strategies to adapt the project to face-to-face activities. Included among these are:

- Strengthening competencies and skills, of technical staff and leaders of subnational indigenous organizations in Peru, for the implementation of activities in the field. *(Initially, activities were to be implemented by non-indigenous partners in this country).*
- Hiring consultants willing to go live in the indigenous territories in Ecuador and Colombia. *(Maintaining biosafety measures for both them and the communities).*
- Train young indigenous communicators to support and work with communities in Brazilian indigenous territories.
- Search for local allies that can be trained to carry out the activities in the field. *(Colombia).*



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Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources (AIRR)





Good practices inspired by EGIDA

School for Indigenous Governance and Amazon Development, by AIDSESP

Co-creating concepts

- It is important that during the training sessions we dedicate time and space to work together, in a horizontal way, to develop the key concepts related to each topic.
- We try to keep in mind that each participant has his or her own valid way of understanding the concepts from his or her individual and collective experience.
- In the context of EGIDA's teaching and learning process, working together to develop concepts such as government, governance, leadership, development, communications, politics and indigenous economy has proven invaluable. It has reinforced the students' sense of ownership of the shared knowledge and their recognition of its relevance.



From the inside out and the outside in

EGIDA's educational approach involves beginning the reflection on each thematic module from the students' perspectives, from the problems that their communities and organizations experience. They analyze and seek solutions to difficulties in their territories from different perspectives. One way of enriching this critical perspective has been through seminars with international guests, who have contributed ideas from a global perspective to the analysis of the students' own context.

Karla Zafra
Educational support EGIDA

Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources (AIRR)



All In
for Development



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Good practices inspired by EGIDA

School for Indigenous Governance and Amazon Development, by AIDESEP

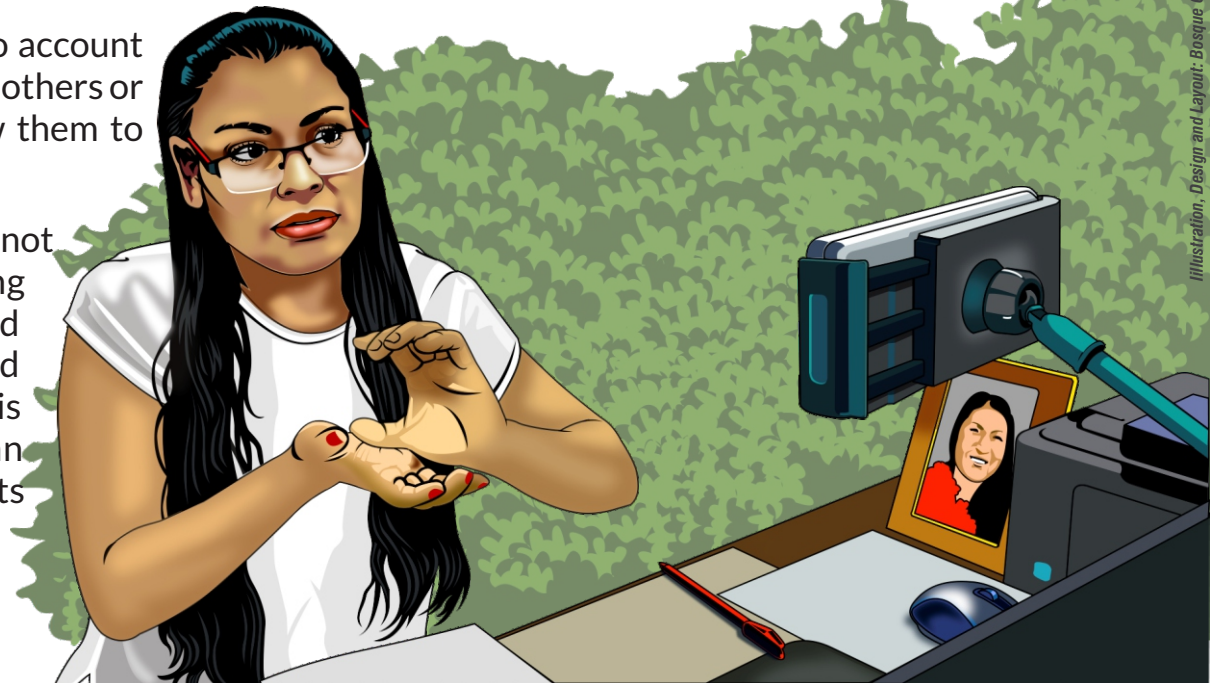
Flexibility

To carry out the training program and its complementary activities, EGIDA developed an effective strategy to address difficulties related to technology, connectivity, and Internet access that were encountered during the pandemic.

This strategy involved striking a balance between planning and flexibility. This flexibility was applied in various ways to facilitate the training process:

- Combining the teaching format so that sometimes students and teachers are connected at the same time (synchronous classes) and others allow students to access class materials at their own pace and time (asynchronous classes).
- Class schedules were coordinated with students to take into account their day-to-day lives, understanding that some of them are mothers or have household chores or responsibilities that do not allow them to connect.
- We made it viable to reorganize activities. Rigid scheduling, not open to change, would likely have resulted in eliminating courses altogether because they could not have been carried out within the scheduled time. Instead, there was flexibility and openness to postpone, extend, or scale back activities. This allowed these courses to be carried out differently than planned, while still meeting the goal of serving the participants in their training process.

Karla Zafra
Apoyo pedagógico EGIDA



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Amazon Indigenous Rights and Resources (AIRR)





EGIDA: An Example of Successful Inclusion with an Intersectional Approach

In Peru, guaranteeing a budget and logistical conditions for the participation of women with small children in all EGIDA in-person meetings proved effective. Women were able to travel to the meeting venue with their small children and, upon arrival, leave their children in a "nursery" where individuals looked after them and engaged them in activities in a safe environment.

We credit the success of the strategy to the fact that it was developed together with these women, addressing what they identified as the main bottlenecks to their continued participation in this type of training process, analyzing possible solutions with them before implementation and assessing them after each in-person meeting to make adjustments in a timely manner. To address this need, additional funding was made available, to respond to the immediacy of this need and corresponding response. However, it was only provided upon receiving prior approval from the donor.

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DERECHO
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RECURSOS
NATURALES



Organización Nacional de los
Pueblos Indígenas de la
Amazonía Colombiana



Instituto
Centro
de Vida



The monitoring of the impacts achieved through educational programs is exemplified by the experience with the network of young communicators of the Floresta em Rede program in Brazil:

- ✕ This monitoring is done by a person hired to manage communication with the members of the Network through a WhatsApp group.
- ✕ There are also online meetings every two weeks and monthly training courses to try to sustain the participants' interest.
- ✕ The person in charge of tracking the network is responsible for managing a spreadsheet that reports each member's location and their activities over a specific period of time.
- ✕ There are also focal points located in each State.
- ✕ The responsibility of each participant is made clear. Each person must understand that s/he is instrumental in passing on important information to others.
- ✕ They keep the motivation going by assigning tasks to each person, according to his or her background. The assignments are then shared on social media so that each person can see the importance of his or her work. Network participants are compensated financially for their work and are given equipment such as cameras, computers and cell phones.



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