

Territorial Cases: **Evidence of the Human Rights–Based Approach in Action**

Practices, decisions, and lessons learned developed in collaboration with Indigenous, afro-descendant, and peasant communities in Colombia, with a focus on biodiversity management and climate change adaptation





“I humbly ask young professionals to be the ones who begin to protect the territory based on what they have learned. We defend it through the word and through spirituality, but it is also necessary to write. We are disappearing, and we must leave things in writing, not only in people’s memory, but also in our mandates [...]”.

Bata Elvia Sigindioy,
Uaman Luar Foundation
Kamëntsa Inga Indigenous Resguardo of San Francisco,
Putumayo

If you would like to further explore the worldview of the Indigenous reserve and the lessons learned from the process supported by the Climate Promise and BES-Net initiatives, [you can access the full booklet in Spanish here.](#)



Glossary

Chagras	Ancestral spaces where people plant, learn, and honor the relationship between community, land, and spirit. They are a central part of the Indigenous identity.
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Commitments made by countries to address climate change and prevent the planet from continuing to warm.
HR	Human Rights. They guarantee the dignity of all people and guide development with justice and equity.
Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)	A way of working that places people at the center, caring both about outcomes and the process used to achieve them.
United Nations Common Understanding (UN Common Understanding)	Acuerdo entre las agencias de las Naciones Unidas para aplicar el EBDH en la cooperación para el desarrollo.
Greenhouse Gases (GHG)	Gases that warm the atmosphere. Reducing them is key to tackling climate change.
Iracá	<i>Carludovica palmata</i> , a palm used by the Inga people for weaving and for preparing traditional foods.
Mingas	Community work that brings people together to plant, solve problems, and strengthen collective bonds.
PLANET	A UNDP guide for applying a rights-based approach: participation, links to standards, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and transparency.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme. In Colombia, it supports community processes to address poverty, inequality, and climate change.



Prologue

This document is the result of a shared journey between the Climate Promise and BES-Net partnership and Indigenous, afro-colombian, and peasant communities, supported through efforts to strengthen biodiversity management and climate change adaptation.

It is built from a respectful vision of the territory and the ways of relating to it. In this process, the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) became evident as a way to promote projects that engage with local realities and strengthen their own dynamics.

The experiences gathered here show how this approach is reflected in decisions, agreements, and practices that promote participation, autonomy, and environmental stewardship.

These cases offer valuable lessons to improve future projects by integrating the HRBA from the outset and valuing the work built with and for communities.

By reading this prologue, a space for listening and learning is opened, recognizing that projects are strengthened when they include the voices of women, men, and youth who inhabit and care for their territories.

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**“Recovering the territory is
recovering our identity,
the very essence that
defines us as guardians of
biodiversity.”**

Proclama Wantuk

Indigenous women and men guardians of plants
Gran Tescual Indigenous Council of Puerres, Nariño.

01.

**An alliance for
biodiversity and climate
change in the territories
of Colombia**



The Climate Promise + BES-Net Alliance in Colombia

What is it?

The **Climate Promise** initiative is a global programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that supports more than 120 countries in strengthening and implementing their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement. In Colombia, its purpose has been to support the achievement of targets related to **reducing greenhouse gas (GHG)** emissions and increasing the country's capacity to adapt to climate change.

The **Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net)**, also implemented by UNDP, is a platform that promotes capacity development and global commitments for **biodiversity conservation**.

To learn more about the integration of biodiversity and climate change agendas, [click here](#).



The alliance between Climate Promise (funded by the Government of the United Kingdom) and BES-Net (funded by the Government of Germany and SwedBio) enabled the launch of the calls for proposals “Indigenous Communities for Forests” and “Rural Communities for Forests” in 2023 and 2024. Both focused on the sustainable use of biodiversity and climate adaptation, working through an ethnic and community-based approach.

To learn more about the calls, click the following links:

[Indigenous Communities for Forests call](#)

[Rural Communities for Forests call](#)



Why is it important?

This collaboration has been particularly significant in the departments of Caquetá, Guaviare, Nariño, and Putumayo, as it is the communities themselves that drive the integration of biodiversity and climate change. In these territories, these issues are not seen as separate agendas, but as everyday, deeply interdependent priorities that affect their lives, livelihoods, and the health of their ecosystems.

The alliance supported Indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, as well as rural communities, in strengthening their livelihoods, productive systems, and traditional knowledge. It also promoted processes that reinforced environmental governance and highlighted the fundamental role of women and youth in conservation strategies, sustainable use of biodiversity, and climate adaptation.

Through these actions, the initiatives directly contributed to Colombia's compliance with its multilateral environmental commitments.

For more information on Climate Promise, [click here](#).



For more information on BES-Net, [click here](#).



In which territories was the alliance developed?

Climate Promise and BES-Net worked together in four departments of Colombia located in the Andean-Amazon region.



4 departments, one purpose

strengthening life and territories through the HRBA

Nariño

Nariño is the point where the Andean mountains meet the strength of the Amazon and the Pacific Ocean. In the highlands, the Páramo de Zonquer sustains life as a “natural water factory,” while on the coast women lead the restoration of mangroves as an extension of community care.



There, the five worlds of life—water, plants, animals, minerals, and sacred spaces—are interwoven to strengthen the biocultural self-determination of its peoples.

Putumayo promotes a vision in which territory, body, and spirituality are understood as a single weave.



Putumayo

The páramo is recognized as the maternal womb of water, and conservation is nourished by medicinal knowledge, planting guided by lunar cycles, and mingas that sustain community unity. The restoration of wetlands and mountains becomes an act of cultural continuity between generations.

Caquetá

In Caquetá, the chagra is more than a productive system: it is the center of collective identity.



Women safeguard seeds, medicinal plants, and knowledge that sustain the health of the territory. The restoration of waterways and lands promotes food sovereignty and encourages all community members to participate in caring for the forest, recognizing that its recovery is also a way of healing what has been damaged.

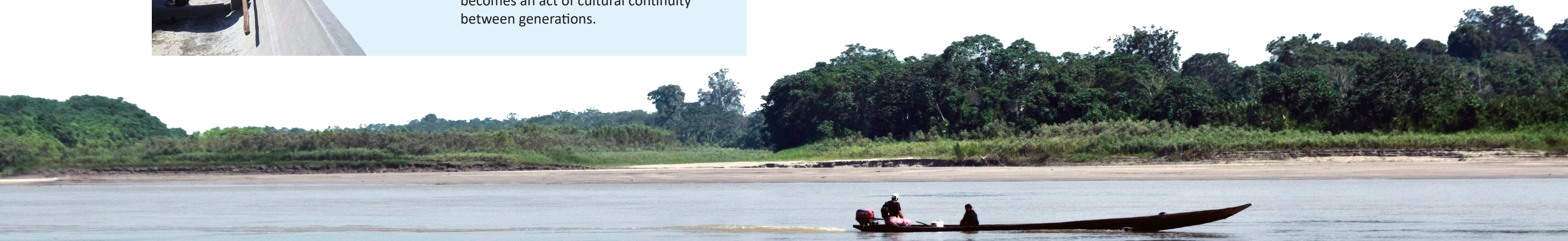
Guaviare strengthens its own knowledge systems as a basis for territorial planning and addressing climate change.

Guaviare

The community advances sustainable production models—such as beekeeping and agroforestry systems—that integrate culture and economy. Biodiversity monitoring and restoration with native species reinforce the protection of key ecosystems and ensure the continuity of peoples in balance with their environment.



To watch the results video of the Climate Promise and BES-Net process in the four departments, [click here](#).



22 communities that sustained and enriched this process

These are the organizations and communities that led the journey in each department:

Nariño



- Asociación de mujeres Concheras Raíces del Manglar ASORAISMANGLAR.
- Fundación de mujeres Emprendedoras del Pacífico FMEPAC.
- Asociación Indígena Agroecológica PUMA MAKI.
- Asociación Agroecológica SINCHIMAKI-ASOSINCHI.
- Asociación de Autoridades Indígenas de los Pastos ASOPASTOS.
- Cabildo Indígena de la Comunidad Gran Tescual.

Putumayo



- Cabildo Indígena Kamëntšá Biya de Orito.
- Resguardo Indígena Inga de Albania
- Fundación UAMAN LUAR.
- Resguardo Indígena Kamentsá Biyá de Sibundoy.
- Asociación Indígena Camentsa Sshnan Wabuatmeng.
- Fundación Waytamayu.

Caquetá



- Resguardo Indígena Huitoto El Quince.
- Resguardo Indígena San José del Cuerazo.
- La Asociación de Reforestadores y cultivadores de caucho del Caquetá-ASOHECA.
- Comité de cultivadores de cacao en sistemas agroforestales COMICACAO.
- Asociación de mujeres emprendedoras cimientos del hogar ASMUECH.

Guaviare



- Resguardo Indígena El Refugio.
- Resguardo Indígena de La Fuga.
- Resguardo Indígena Morichal Viejo.
- Asociación de productores, comercializadores y transformadores de cacao del Guaviare y sur del Meta ASOPROCACAO.
- Corporación comunitaria de prestadores de servicios turísticos de la Serranía de la Lindosa CORCPRESTURG.

To learn more about the participation of communities in each department, [click here](#).



**“When we restore
the land, we also
restore our hope as a
community”.**

Fundación de Mujeres
Emprendedoras del Pacífico
Tumaco, Nariño.

02.

Protecting the territory:

A key element for human rights



Human rights and community resilience: a key link

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is a key methodology for cooperation and development programming. Its purpose is to ensure that human rights are at the core of UNDP actions and those of its partners.



Why is it important?

Integrating the HRBA helps strengthen community resilience from a holistic perspective. The following four key points explain why this approach is essential in territories:

1. Address inequalities and vulnerabilities

HRBA is essential for tackling structural inequalities and deep-rooted vulnerabilities. It helps operationalize the principle of **Leaving No One Behind**, understand intersectional discrimination, respond to the conditions of populations through a differentiated approach, and ensure that programming does not generate harm or risks to human rights.

2. Strengthen governance and participation

This approach requires free and meaningful participation, empowers communities to exercise their rights, and reaffirms their autonomy in territorial governance. It also promotes the leadership of women and youth and integrates cultural and spiritual practices, as well as knowledge systems, into governance processes.

3. Integrate climate change and biodiversity

The HRBA makes it possible to connect both agendas as a single territorial priority. It promotes the right to a healthy environment, strengthens the sustainability of livelihoods linked to key ecosystems, and facilitates the inclusion of ancestral knowledge in climate adaptation and biodiversity management.

4. Ensure institutional and legal coherence

For UNDP, the HRBA is a cornerstone that underpins its mandate, guides its programming principles, and strengthens State accountability in relation to its international human rights obligations.

How did the approach become practice?

Using the UNDP Toolkit: The Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation

The UNDP toolkit is a simple and practical guide that helps integrate human rights into development work. It brings together tools designed for UNDP and its partners, and provides guidance on how to fulfill their responsibilities in this area.

Its purpose is clear: to improve how projects with communities are designed and implemented, offering concrete pathways to integrate the HRBA at every stage.

This tool draws on more than twenty years of UNDP experience in applying the HRBA and is based on the United Nations Common Understanding of this approach.



To access the UNDP toolkit, [click here](#).



What are the principles of the approach?

A.

Equality and non-discrimination

This principle affirms that all people are equal and have the right to the full enjoyment of their human rights. It places at the center those who are most left behind or at risk of marginalization, and promotes understanding of intersectional discrimination and its root causes.

B.

Participation and inclusion

It recognizes the right of all people to participate actively, freely, and meaningfully in processes that affect their lives. The toolbox emphasizes that such participation must take into account power dynamics and prioritize those most affected by decisions.

C.

Accountability and the rule of law

This principle distinguishes between duty-bearers—primarily the State—and rights-holders. It seeks to strengthen the accountability of those with responsibilities and empower people to claim and exercise their rights.

What will you find in the toolkit?

1 The Human Rights-Based Approach and Sustainable Development

Human Rights Standards

Human rights obligations of governments, as established in international treaties:

1. Availability
2. Accessibility
3. Quality

2 Human Dignity and Human Rights Standards and Principles

Human Rights Principles

Elements that guide the design and implementation of development policies and programmes:

1. Universality and inalienability
2. Indivisibility
3. Interdependence and interrelatedness
4. Equality and non-discrimination
5. Participation and inclusion
6. Accountability and rule of law
7. Empowerment and capacity to act
8. Non-regression

3 Application of the Human Rights-Based Approach in UNDP programming

Pre-design stage

Human rights analysis in three steps:

1. Analysis of causes
2. Analysis of roles
3. Analysis of capacity gaps

Stage 3

Closure/Transition
P-L-A-N-E-T

Stage 1

Design
P-L-A-N-E-T

Stage 2

Implementation
P-L-A-N-E-T

Note:

What is P-L-A-N-E-T?

It is an acronym that defines the key components of the HRBA: Participation, Linkage (Link), Accountability, Non-discrimination and Equality, Empowerment and capacity development, Transparency.





“The páramo plant strengthens the spiritual dimension and provides healing. The womb of women is connected to the womb of the páramo, because both generate life. As a generator of life, it cannot be contaminated; it must remain sacred. For this reason, one should not go there unless necessary. The páramo knows our intentions.”

Mamita Esperanza Jacanamejoy
Resguardo Kamëntsa-Inga
de San Francisco, Putumayo.

For more information about the process supported by Promesa Climática and BES-Net with the Resguardo Kamëntsa-Inga of San Francisco, [click here](#).



“Where there is no *Resguardo*, there is deforestation, and that leads us to water scarcity. We have had dialogue with our neighbors and reached agreements to start reforestation in order to maintain a stable water supply”.

Resguardo Indígena
Huitoto El Quince
Solano, Caquetá.

03.

The Human Rights- Based Approach:

Stories of change from its protagonists



10 Key milestones of the HRBA in territorial governance

Transformations in organizations and communities

The strength of women and youth drove the process.

765 women

596 youth
participated actively.

Women represented 66% of participation in the territory

Female leadership strengthened governance

Traditional healers, knowledge holders, and technical women leaders played key roles in sustaining the organization and ensuring the continuity of territorial work.



Gender roles began to transform

Women and men in the Huitoto El Quince Resguardo reflected on **how to protect their environment from their worldview**. The active participation of women promoted a **redistribution of care work within households**.

Collective planning strengthened territorial autonomy

3

community-level plans

45

household-level plans

1

environmental management plan

were developed jointly with the communities, reflecting participatory and forward-looking decision-making.

Food sovereignty was strengthened

137 *chagras*

were consolidated, promoting agroecological practices and bio-inputs that **improved nutrition and the right to food**.

More equitable distribution of inputs

31 women

from the Pumak Association directly received inputs (such as seeds and tools) intended for their territory, strengthening their autonomy and agency.

The right to a healthy environment was made tangible

186

hectares were restored.

105.202

Native seedlings were planted in mangroves, high-Andean areas, and Amazonian ecosystems.

Ancestral knowledge as a collective foundation

Ancestral knowledge guided the process.

9 projects

Traditional practices of women knowledge holders were documented, including **chagras, planting, and language revitalization**.

Cultural transmission was strengthened

Elders shared knowledge about **chagras, planting practices, and native languages** with youth, girls, and boys, ensuring cultural and environmental continuity.

The body–territory connection opened new pathways

Women and men recognized the body as the first territory we inhabit, **linking conservation with self-care** and the development of new initiatives.

Note:

What are chagras?

Ancestral spaces where people cultivate, learn, and honor the relationship between community, land, and spirit.

3 experiences that show the approach in action



“In the mangrove we discovered that our rights emerge with the same force with which water sustains life.”

Association of shellfish women
Raíces del Manglar in Tumaco, Nariño
(ASORAIZMANGLAR)



“Among trees and seeds, we learned to decide our own path.”

Cocoa growers' committee in
agroforestry systems of the municipality
of San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá
(COMICACAO)



“When a community recognizes itself in its land, a right is born that no one can take away.”

Resguardo Indígena de la Comunidad
Gran Tescual (Pueblo de Los Pastos),
Nariño

To watch the video about the process of the Resguardo of the community of Gran Tescual, [click here](#).



ASORAIZMANGLAR

Shellfish Women's Association Raíces del Manglar, Tumaco (Nariño)

On the coast of Tumaco, shellfish-gathering women have made the mangrove their home, their livelihood, and their classroom. ASORAIZMANGLAR brings together those who have learned to read the tides, care for the piangua, and sustain life that emerges among roots and saltwater. Their initiative combined ecological restoration, food security, and women's leadership to strengthen an ecosystem on which their livelihoods and cultural identity depend. From the community nursery to planting activities, the process reaffirmed that conservation is also an exercise in dignity and rights protection.

Results of the process from the HRBA principles

These are some of the results showing how the process took shape based on principles that place participation, governance, and autonomy at the center.

01. Participation and inclusion

Mangrove restoration became a space where women and youth took voice and leadership, ensuring active and meaningful participation.

30

women beneficiaries directly participated in project activities.

34

women trained and participated in mangrove restoration actions.

15

young people engaged in training and planting processes.

02. Equality and non-discrimination

- The project focused on the **direct participation of afro-colombian women**, historically excluded from decision-making over the territory.
- Women's leadership in mangrove restoration was promoted, reaffirming that **conservation is also an exercise of dignity and rights protection**.
- The initiative made visible and strengthened their traditional role in shellfish gathering and ecosystem management, helping to close gender gaps.



03. Accountability and rule of law

- An **Environmental Management Plan was developed** for the El Raizal estuary, built in a participatory way with the community, based on their knowledge and traditional practices.
- A **network of mangrove guardians** was consolidated, responsible for the ongoing care of the ecosystem.

What reflection does the process leave?

The work of ASORAIZMANGLAR reaffirmed that restoring the mangrove means defending essential rights: a healthy environment, food security, and economic autonomy. Through their leadership, the shellfish-gathering women transformed conservation into an exercise in dignity and community governance.



COMICACAO

Committee of cocoa growers in agroforestry systems in the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán (Caquetá)

In the rural villages of San Vicente del Caguán, farming families decided to strengthen their relationship with the forest while **improving their agricultural production**. From cocoa grown in agroforestry systems to the restoration of degraded areas, COMICACAO turned collective planning into a tool **to ensure food security, care for the territory, and build a shared path toward resilience**. Women and men added knowledge and community work, showing that production and conservation can move forward hand in hand.

Results of the process from the HRBA principles

These are the results that show how the process took shape based on the guiding principles of human rights.

01. Participation and inclusion

3

sustainable rural development plans (vereda-level)

45

farm-level plans strengthened families' ability to guide land use.

The initiative created spaces for reflection on climate, biodiversity, and **sustainable land management**.

Women and youth were actively included, as they are essential for the sustainability of the process and for ensuring collective decision-making with multiple voices.

02. Equality and non-discrimination

- Territorial planning enabled peasant families—often left behind in governance processes—to exercise their right to participate in organizing their territory.
- Actions sought to reduce gender and generational inequalities by actively involving women and youth in decision-making.
- Strengthening productive capacities helped reduce gaps in access to livelihoods, promoting more equitable development.



03. Accountability and rule of law

- A **community environmental group** was formed to monitor biodiversity, increasing local ownership of the territory.
- The process strengthened community environmental governance, allowing the organization to plan the territory into the future.
- The monitoring and planning tools developed provide inputs to address land-use changes with greater clarity, support, and capacity to influence decision-making.

What reflection does the process leave?

COMICACAO showed that planning the territory is an exercise of rights. By strengthening participation, improving production systems, and consolidating governance tools, peasant families combined conservation and wellbeing. Caring for the forest also became a way to ensure autonomy, food security, and a future.



Indigenous Resguardo

of the Gran Tescual Community, Puerres (Nariño)

In the mountains of Puerres, where the Zongoz páramo breathes mist and frailejones safeguard the origin of water, the Pasto people understand their territory as a living organism. The Gran Tescual Resguardo has **woven its care through spirituality, collective speech, and community organization**. Its initiative “Camino del Bastón y los Cinco Mundos de Vida” strengthened intergenerational leadership and allowed the biodiversity of the resguardo to be understood from its own perspective: water, plants, animals, minerals, and sacred places. Each action reaffirmed that protecting the territory is protecting life in all its forms.

Results of the process from the HRBA principles

These results show how the guiding principles of human rights shaped participation, governance, and the strengthening of cultural identity within the *resguardo*.

01. Participation and inclusion

40

people formed the eco-guard, ensuring intergenerational participation

Women knowledge-holders

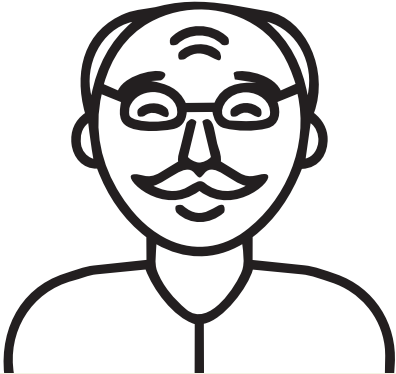
played a central role, becoming the strongest indicator of the process.

The First Meeting on Health Care and Plants

was held, highlighting the role of women as weavers of life.

02. Equality and non-discrimination

- Female participation—as eco-guards, knowledge holders, and trainers—**strengthened equality** within community spaces.
- The presence of young women in training and governance activities was promoted, expanding their role in territorial care.
- The methodology made it possible to **highlight traditionally marginalized knowledge systems**, integrating them as an essential part of conservation.



03. Accountability and rule of law

- The community advanced in the recognition of its territory as an **ICCAT** (Indigenous and Community Conserved Territory).
- Rituality guided territorial protection, understanding water as a spiritual and life-creating being.
- The process contributed to the **Municipal Development Plan of Cumbal** on ecosystem and watershed issues.

What reflection does the process leave?

For the **Gran Tescual Resguardo**, protecting the territory also meant strengthening their right to decide over it. The eco-guard, ritual practices, and the characterization of the world of life consolidated their self-determination and their capacity to safeguard water, biodiversity, and their own way of inhabiting the mountains.



To learn about the diagnosis of the Five Worlds of Life of Gran Tescual, [click here](#).





3 shared learnings: When paths intersect

A. When communities participate, their rights find a path

Across the three processes, participation ceased to be a requirement and became a transformative force. Women, youth, knowledge holders, and Indigenous, afro-descendant, and peasant families made decisions about the use of land, water, forests, páramos, and mangroves. This active involvement strengthened local autonomy and showed that defending rights — to land, to a healthy environment, to culture, and to food — begins with knowing one's territory.

B. Territorial planning is also about exercising governance and claiming rights

Environmental, land-use, and community-level plans, as well as biodiversity assessments, demonstrated that when communities develop their own tools, they can demand greater accountability and envision a shared future. Whether through eco-guards, mangrove guardian networks, or peasant monitoring groups, the three cases confirmed that governance emerges from the territory and has the power to influence local, municipal, and broader environmental decisions.

C. Conservation strengthens life when it is linked to dignity

Restoring 15 hectares of mangrove, planting 20,500 seedlings, rehabilitating degraded areas, or characterizing five “worlds of life” were not only environmental achievements — they were actions that reinforced food security, livelihoods, local economies, and cultural identity. In each case, caring for nature translated into caring for people, showing that sustainability is inseparable from dignity, economic autonomy, and community well-being.



“Where there is *iraka* [...] there is food and shelter for animals, and biodiversity that has been lost is restored: if there is *iraka*, *guacharacas* come to feed, and other birds use it for nesting”.

Resguardo Inga Albania
Puerto Umbría, Putumayo.

To see the teachings of the Resguardo Inga Albania about *iraka*, [click here](#).



"The restoration allowed us, as women, to come together, share our knowledge and wisdom in how we plant, and also to teach young people the importance of caring for and protecting water."

Sinchimaki Association
Cumbal, Nariño.

04.

What these cases teach for the future:

Key lessons for moving forward





10 essentials to keep moving forward with a rights-based approach

Each process left clear signs of what works when projects listen, respect, and work alongside those who care for the land. These are the lessons that must not be missing going forward:

- 01** **That communities decide with their own voice.** Their participation is not consultation: it is direction.
- 02** **Plan from territorial knowledge.** Ancestral uses and customs provide better guidance than any external manual.
- 03** **Create real space for women and youth.** Their presence transforms processes and sustains change.
- 04** **Include them in all stages.** Designing, implementing, and evaluating with them ensures continuity and ownership.
- 05** **Strengthen youth leadership.** Youth-led groups, such as monitoring teams and eco-guards, reinforce the present and sow the future.
- 06** **Fund where the impact is.** Resources must reach those who protect forests, water, and livelihoods.
- 07** **Connect global agendas with local life.** Climate and biodiversity targets gain meaning when grounded in the territory.
- 08** **Share management tools.** Strengthening community organization prevents setbacks and fosters autonomy.
- 09** **Protect the transmission of knowledge.** The voices of elders and knowledge holders are a compass for adapting without losing roots.
- 10** **Recognize diverse ways of storytelling.** Oral traditions, narratives, and memory are as valid as any written report.

Good Practices

strengthening community work through a Human Rights-Based Approach

The initiatives supported by the Climate Promise + BES-Net alliance showed that when rights guide processes, communities find stronger pathways to decide, care for, and sustain their territories. These are the good practices identified and organized according to the principles that guide the HRBA.

Equality and non-discrimination

- **Key role of women's leadership:** women were the main guardians of the territory, ensuring sustainability and the protection of biodiversity.
- **Transmission of ancestral knowledge:** women knowledge holders shared their wisdom on medicinal plants and land management, reaffirming their role as leaders.
- **Living language and culture:** speaking their mother tongue enabled communities to connect traditional knowledge with biodiversity management needs and climate change adaptation.

Participation and inclusion

- **The power of minga and collective work:** the mingas brought everyone together, reviving traditions and creating shared pathways to restore the territory.
- **Voices across generations:** youth and elders shared knowledge, strengthening the community and its connection to the land.
- **Spirituality as guidance:** spiritual practices and rituals guided decision-making, linking everyday life with the natural environment.

Accountability and rule of law

- **Local territorial planning:** the development of environmental management plans reflected community governance, respecting local worldviews.
- **Community monitoring:** eco-guards and youth groups ensured continuous oversight of the territory.
- **Participation in decision-making:** projects included communities in planning processes, ensuring transparency and justice.

Final reflections on rights and sustainability

In every step taken with communities, reflections on respect and active participation open the door to a future where resilience and human rights are the fundamental pillars.

HRBA and cultural sustainability

Including women's voices from the very beginning of projects ensures that initiatives are sustainable. When communities actively participate in processes, results are more long-lasting and more closely connected to their realities.

The body as the first territory

For women, the protection of biodiversity goes hand in hand with caring for their health and their bodies. In this way, ecosystem conservation becomes an act of both community and personal well-being.

Ancestral knowledge as a management tool

Ancestral knowledge—covering the use of plants, the management of chagras and natural cycles—is fundamental for the sustainable management of territory and must be valued as the basis of any conservation strategy.

Governance as a political demand

Communities must have a voice in decision-making spaces regarding their territories. Strengthening their organizational structures enables them to demand active participation in policies that affect their lives.

Recognition of duality and complementarity

The knowledge and actions of women must be understood as a whole, where culture, nature, and daily work complement each other to transform gender and intergenerational relations and improve community life.

Viability and ecosystem resilience

When the resilience of key ecosystems—such as mangroves, páramos, or forests—is strengthened, the well-being of the communities that depend on them for food and livelihoods is also secured.

Spirituality as a guiding axis of the process

The spiritual practices of communities are essential for territorial protection. These worldviews must be included in projects in order to respect cosmologies and ensure integral management of their territories.

Territory as the basis of daily life

Territory is not only a physical space; it is the foundation of community identity and culture. Its care is central to daily practices, and therefore it must be treated as a fundamental right for all.

Continuity of community processes

Projects must adapt to existing community processes, recognizing that each step taken along the way is part of a longer process that communities themselves have already been leading.

Valuing local forms of communication

It is essential to recognize and respect traditional forms of communication, such as oral storytelling, in Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural communities. This not only ensures inclusion but also that their voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

May what has been learned here continue to guide decisions that respect life, territories, and rights, as part of a shared path that honors those who inhabit, care for, and sustain the land.