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## TERRITORIES OF LIFE

Strengthening indigenous communities' capacity to govern their territories, advocate for their interests, and implement peacebuilding initiatives.

### OVERVIEW

The Territories of Life activity strengthens the capacity of indigenous organizations and traditional authorities in the Amazon Basin to govern their territories. The activity provides technical assistance to five indigenous community organizations to establish and manage Indigenous Community Conservation Areas (ICCAs). The establishment of ICCAs upholds indigenous communities' right to territory and enables them to better manage the natural resources contained in their lands. ICCAs also contribute to the advancement of peace, self-governance, and sustainable development. This activity runs from April 2020-March 2023.

Colombia is one of the most ethnically, culturally, and biologically diverse countries in the world. The Colombian Constitution recognizes the importance of the country's diversity and guarantees indigenous peoples' rights. This includes the right of indigenous communities to govern their territory and to conserve their natural and cultural heritage.

PHOTO BY CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS MEDICOS INTERCULTURALES (CEMI)

## **COMPONENTS**

### **STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES**

Territories of Life strengthens five indigenous organizations' capacities to develop policies, procedures and management structures needed for improved self-management and institutional sustainability.

### **IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

Territories of Life trains indigenous communities and traditional authorities in the skills needed to communicate their successes and to identify and explain the challenges faced by their communities. The activity also encourages the active participation of women and youth in all programmatic efforts.

### **ESTABLISHING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AREAS (ICCA)**

Territories of Life supports 18 indigenous communities in Guaviare, Putumayo, and Vaupés to legally establish and manage ICCAs. The activity also trains ICCA committees on how to perform biological and biocultural monitoring; use management tools and planning; and foster intercultural dialogue.

## **RESULTS**

- Established five ICCAs in the Colombian Amazon;
- Created and disseminated ICCA Traditional Management Plans;
- Contributed to improved conservation of 200,000 hectares (494,000 acres) of forest;
- Started to develop an innovative intercultural methodology for biocultural monitoring;
- Helped create a Colombia ICCA Network and registered five ICCAs into the United Nations ICCA Global Network; and
- Promoted self-determination, increased community organization engagement, and improved social awareness on the value and impact of ICCAs.