



HUMAN RIGHTS INTERVENTIONS

Building Bridges for  
Effective Environmental  
Participation: The Path  
of Law Co-Creation  
*The Chiquitano*  
*Multimodal Format for*  
*Disseminating the*  
*Escazú Agreement*

*Edited by*

MARGHERITA PAOLA POTO

GIULIA PAROLA

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# Human Rights Interventions

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The traditional human rights frame creates a paradigm by which the duty bearer's (state) and rights holder's (civil society organizations) interests collide over the limits of enjoyment and enforcement. The series departs from the paradigm by centering peripheral yet powerful actors that agitate for intervention and influence in the (re)shaping of rights discourse in the midst of grave insecurities. The series privileges a call and response between theoretical inquiry and empirical investigation as contributors critically assess human rights interventions mediated by spatial, temporal, geopolitical and other dimensions. An interdisciplinary dialogue is key as the editors encourage multiple approaches such as law and society, political economy, historiography, legal ethnography, feminist security studies, and multi-media.

Margherita Paola Poto · Giulia Parola  
Editors

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## FOREWORD

This is the first time I have written a foreword, and writing a foreword is a huge responsibility. I enjoy reading forewords, and most of the time, they help me decide whether I should start reading the book immediately or not. I think that the most important aim of writing a foreword is being able to express the feelings you experienced while reading the book. I feel so honoured—as a Latin American and as an environmentalist—to write this foreword. I remember before I met Margherita in person, I sent her an e - mail, because I wanted to read a first and shorter version of this book. Now I am writing this foreword. The book you have in your hands—or on your screen—is the result of a beautiful and meaningful project.

My first reflection is: what will go wrong if you combine—as Giulia and Margherita have done—science, Indigenous knowledge, and art? Nothing. The result is glorious. I think that one of the underlying, outstanding characteristics of this work is that Giulia and Margherita research not only about Indigenous peoples, but with and for them. This is one of the main reasons why this research is ground-breaking, outstanding, different, and proficient. Giulia and Margherita are two researchers who want to help vulnerable people through their work. They carry out active research; research which improves vulnerable peoples' lives. I am sure that they studied Law—as I did—believing that Law provides us with tools to defend human rights and vulnerable people. But Giulia and Margherita go a step further because they include these

vulnerable people—the Indigenous communities—in their research. As I have said before, they research with them, not about them. They co-create knowledge with Indigenous people. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a type of action research with focus on community, looking to impact directly on the lives of the people in the community. It is very illustrative that the Indigenous people’s images are in the cover of the book; this shows that they are the main characters of the project. As Margherita says in her publications, an effective democracy must include those groups of people who have traditionally been under - represented in participatory processes.

The book was developed during an elective course by the students of the Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) Post-graduate Law Program. As Giulia explains, the project relied upon the guidance of Silvano Chue Muquissai, an Indigenous member of the Chiquitano people and a graduate from the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso (UFMT), as well as other constituents of the Aldeia Vila Nova Barbecho (Nova Barbecho Village) in Mato Grosso, Brazil. The Chiquitano territory is not fully demarcated; consequently, the Chiquitano people are facing serious environmental threats while also suffering from gross human rights violations by State-sponsored actors. These actors are primarily landowners who have occupied their territory. Silvano explains that many villages are currently delimited by farms and therefore, it is impossible to build school buildings, hospitals, and other infrastructures that could enhance Indigenous peoples’ quality of life.

As Margherita concludes, in general, environmental laws are a great mystery, one that only legal experts may understand or reveal. Giulia and Margherita use Legal Design and Visual Law research methods to carry out their work, simplify law, and make law understandable to everyone. In this case, the 2018 Escazú Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (EA). Visual Law is an integrative and inclusive research method because it focuses on the recipients of the message, on people and their needs, not on lawyers or judges. As Giulia and Margherita argue, these tools can be applied to support the decolonisation of legal mind-sets and law itself. Visual Law is related to plain language; it needs short phrases. “If short, twice times better,” said Baltasar Gracián in 1647. I personally believe that language has to be as clear as water.

The 1998 Århus Convention (ÅC) on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and the EA prepared the terrain for the discourse of nature rights. In other words, recognizing legal personhood to nature. Nature-centred model of governance puts participation at the forefront. As Margherita says, environmental governance cannot solely rely on a top-down approach from government officials, corporations, and world leaders, as they have failed to meet any of the global environmental goals set in the last decade (i.e., Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030). The ÅC—the first international treaty implementing Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development—marks the recognition of environmental rights for non-State actors. The ÅC paved the way for the expansion of participatory rights to vulnerable groups, which include Indigenous peoples. This expansion was accomplished by creating space for the approval of the EA for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The purpose of this book is to explain the EA by Indigenous people to Indigenous people and the population in general. It should be noted that Giulia and Margherita have already published the comics in Portuguese and English, and now they have achieved publishing the book in Spanish as well, a widely spoken language in Latin America. The EA opened environmental decision-making to new actors and their views on nature. The EA gives voice to environmental defenders—be them Indigenous peoples or local communities—whose survival depends on nature and is threatened by large scale projects of resource extraction. The Indigenous way of approaching nature is intrinsically participatory and systemic at the same time. This feature emerges from Indigenous cosmovisions as a complex network of relationships, where everything is interconnected, and no element has a real chance of existing by itself. This expansion was catalysed by the legal recognition of environmental access rights—which is structured into three pillars: the right to access documents, to participate in decision-making processes, and to access justice—and is enshrined in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. Such a recognition facilitated the entry of new actors and contributed to a shift away from a centralised model in environmental decision-making, in which the States involved held the monopoly power.

You will enjoy and learn by reading the comics; they are so easily understandable. For instance, Silvano explains that the name “Escazú” also has Indigenous origins, meaning “resting stone.” He also claims that



Brazil signed the EA but has still not ratified it and explains that “ratification” means that the agreement is binding for all the people living in the country. He summarises that the objective of the EA is “to give access to information on the protection of the environment, so that everyone can help each other and help nature.” He also explains that thanks to the EA, people also have the right to participate in environmental decision-making, and to go before the court appealing environmental decisions that they disagree with. He says that the EA strengthens these participatory rights and helps people collaborate for the protection of the environment, which is for us, as well as for our children and our grandchildren. One of the Indigenous peoples in the comics concludes that “each and every one of us have access rights because the environment belongs to us all.”

Silvano explains what access rights and vulnerable groups are. Moreover, he uses Visual Law examples (the first one, himself opening a door) to show that the EA also ensures that our rights are easily exercised, like opening and closing doors. The comics also exemplify this by showing the image of a moon with water, demonstrating that it is just as easy to know that it is going to rain just by looking at the moon as it is to exercise these rights, thanks to EA. When some members of the Indigenous community doubt about the real application of the EA, or whether it is just “paperwork,” Silvano explains that the EA strengthens Indigenous knowledge and that justice will always work, whether the rights to information or participation are denied or anyone tries to destroy nature. He also enlightens the community that technical and legal support free of charge is available in case one needs to go to court to protect the environment, or if the problem cannot be solved before going to court, which is the ideal.

Regarding human rights defenders in environmental matters, Silvano explains that 7 out of the 10 countries with the highest number of murders of environmental leaders in 2019 are from the Americas. Silvano explains that America represents only 5% of the world’s population, but 40% of the victims are American. He proudly declares that the EA is the first international document protecting environmental defenders, so States will have to investigate and punish all those who try to pose obstacles to the fight for environmental protection.

Before finishing my foreword, I would like to comment about another case of Indigenous knowledge that has just been shown by international news. Four Indigenous Colombian kids were rescued in the Colombian

forest, where they survived five weeks after a plane crash, where they lost their mother. During the search, helicopters broadcasted messages from the children's grandmother, telling them they hadn't been forgotten, urging them to stay in one place, and dropping packets of food that may have helped them survive. The news highlighted that the education the children got from their grandmother—a respected elder in the Araracuara Indigenous territory—was almost certainly vital to their survival. Their Indigenous knowledge saved them. This book helps to spread Indigenous knowledge, and we have a lot to learn from it.

Kiel, Germany  
June 2023

Violeta Radovich

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is the culmination of three years of extensive research conducted in collaboration with various partners and beautiful people. Our research has been conducted in coordination with the students of the UNIRIO's Postgraduate Law Program (Brazil), under the guidance of Giulia Parola. The ECO\_CARE team coordinated by Margherita Paola Poto (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) has made significant contributions to the development of a robust methodological body of knowledge. This framework has been continuously tested and refined by team members and participants from Norway, Brazil, Italy, Canada, and Germany. We thank all of them for their continuous support and unwavering assistance. We also extend our gratitude to the Master's students from the Global Health Master Program in McMaster, Canada, for their valuable contributions over the past three years.

The success of this research has been made possible through the generous support and funding provided by the HKDIR (UTF-2020/10084), the Faculty of Law at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and the University of Turin, particularly the Law Department and Department of Management. Moreover, we are grateful for the financial assistance from the Library Funds, Open Access UiT The Arctic University of Norway and especially to Tone Mikkelsen and Grete Overvåg, whose work has enabled us to publish this book as an open-access resource.

Throughout this journey, we have received unwavering help from Lise Myrvang, Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, for which we are deeply thankful. Last but not least, we express our heartfelt appreciation to the Chiquitano communities in Mato Grosso for their collaboration, insights, and invaluable contributions to the research. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation for granting us permission to use their artistic patterns, which are traditionally used as body tattoos or artistic decorations. This permission was generously granted for Chapter V, brought to life by Gabrielle Natividad.

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Rio de Janeiro-Tromsø  
August 2023

Margherita Paola Poto  
Giulia Parola

## FUNDING AND PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS



# INTRODUCTION

Environmental law scholars and scientists have highlighted the conspicuous absence of awareness or obscured understanding of rights, particularly socio-environmental rights, within contemporary society.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there exists an urgent call for legal researchers to develop innovative strategies that can augment the comprehension of law, particularly targeting those who are most vulnerable and historically marginalized, such as Indigenous communities. Additionally, fostering the inclusion of ostensibly ‘unscientific’ knowledge into legal frameworks is deemed indispensable based on their expert signals and observations.

Legal Design (LD) and Visual Law (VL) are two instruments that can be used to pave new paths to achieve this goal and stimulate the co-creation of knowledge within the field of law. These tools are used to investigate how creativity can be effectively utilized to formulate legal solutions that are more suitable for law recipients and society in general. For instance, LD is a creative way of thinking about law that demystifies legal concepts for individuals who are not well-versed in such theories. LD is largely predicated on the concept of behaviour change, focusing on transforming thought patterns, thus enabling legal professionals to think in more inclusive ways. Conversely, VL is the manifestation of

<sup>1</sup> Elsawah, S., Filatova, T., Jakeman, A. J., Kettner, A. J., Zellner, M. L., Athanasiadis, I. N., ... & Lade, S. J. (2019). Eight grand challenges in socio-environmental systems modeling. *Socio-Environmental Systems Modelling*, 2.

this paradigm shift in legal thinking and encompasses the production of pieces and documents concerning law in an explicative and creative way. Currently, these instruments are being developed by large law firms to help clients comprehend the legal processes that affect them (Parola et al., 2022).

Now, legal scholars may wonder why these instruments should be used in environmental law and the academic world. In short, they rectify a vast knowledge gap. The general public's dearth of awareness about socio-environmental rights is an unfortunate reality. For much of the population, environmental laws are a great mystery, one that only legal experts (jurists) are knowledgeable of. There is an urgent need to create new methods to improve the general public's understanding, not only of law overall, but especially environmental law and its specificities. The introduction of tools such as environmental participation for its recipients—particularly for those who are most vulnerable—can help bridge the public unfamiliarity with legal language, or legalese. If brought to the academic world, LD would be an innovative resource that could be further studied and debated, thus becoming a method that is readily applied to empower vulnerable and marginalized peoples.

For this reason, the project *Legal Design and Visual Law in International Environmental Law: Conversion of the Escazú Agreement in Visual Materials for the Chiquitano People*, coordinated by Giulia Parola and Margherita Paola Poto. This was developed during a related elective course—taught throughout 2020—by the students of the UNIRIO's Postgraduate Law Program, while other researchers included the active participation of the Chiquitano people from Mato Grosso (Brazil). This project significantly relied upon the participation and guidance of Silvano Chue Muquissai, an Indigenous member of the Chiquitano people and a graduate from the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso (UFMT), as well as other constituents of the Aldeia Vila Nova Barbecho (Nova Barbecho Village) in Mato Grosso (Brazil).<sup>2</sup> The research was co-funded by the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HKDIR

<sup>2</sup> Acknowledgements: We are immensely grateful to the residents of the Chiquitano Village Vila Nova Barbecho and in particular: Adriano Boro Makuda, Alanis Valentina Rodrigues Urupe, Anderson Ferreira Rocha, Edleny Chue Muquissai, Elena Laura Chue, Elza Margarida Chue Akurudodo Arogiareudo, Florencio Urupe Muquissai, Francisco Xaviel Dorado Ferreira, Leiliane Chue Muquissai, Maria Chue Muquissai, Renivaldo Nezekemae, Samyla Chue Manaca, Silvano C. Muquissai.

Utforsk, 2020) through the project *An Exchange Program on Empathy, Compassion, and Care in Water Governance, from the Perspective of Integral Ecology*—(ECO\_CARE, HKDIR UTF n. 2020/10084),<sup>3</sup> the Faculty of Law UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Strategiske Midler, 2021), as well as by the UiT Library Funds for Open Access scientific publications (2022).

The objective of the project was to teach students, in practice, an efficient method to create understanding and engagement in environmental law. Simultaneously, the project aimed to support the co-production of didactic materials with the Chiquitano people, which could act as a tool for strengthening environmental participation. Silvano Chue Muquissai worked as the cultural mediator between the legal world and the Chiquitano reality. Members of the Chiquitano people participated in the step-by-step execution of materials, providing feedback about the choices made by working groups. They provided critical explanatory insights into what were and were not considered appropriate choices for the design and implementation of the legal tools. The integration of interested parties is fundamental to the project design process as it incorporates LD and VL. Active participation from all the involved parties resulted in a greater sense of inclusion, empathy, and commitment.

This book comprises five chapters organized as follows:

Chapter 1: The Foundations: ECO\_CARE explores the central pillars of the ECO\_CARE project, elaborating on the foundational ethics of its methodology, which is ultimately committed to decolonising research and education. This process of decolonising research and education has taken shape through the collaboration of researchers, students, and community members, along with the application of creative techniques to legal reasoning (Parola et al., 2022; Poto, 135 and ff., 2022). Within this context, researchers, educators, and community members have been applying a participatory methodology that focuses on the co-creation of comics based on legal documents (Escazú Agreement—EA) through a constant process of dialogue, validation, and implementation of the project results. Such methodology is considered essential to developing a conceptual framework for participatory environmental governance.

In Chapter 2: Legal Design and Visual Law: The Roadmap, an overview of the concepts of LD and VL will be provided in Section 1,

<sup>3</sup> Official website: <https://en.uit.no/project/ecocare> last access August 2023.



as they are both relatively unknown, even amongst legal scholars. In Section 2, the chapter illustrates the steps that puts LD into practice through the application of VL techniques.

In Chapter 3: The Stages of the Comic Book Co-creation and the Restitution to the Chiquitano Indigenous People, we delineate how the steps described in the previous chapters have been applied to the co-creation of the comic book and the transformation of the Escazú Agreement into educational and learning materials and the restitution to the Chiquitano Indigenous people, and finally, the restitution of the book to them.

In Chapter 4, we share some reflections on the importance to develop a Spanish version of the book in comics and of the methodology followed to co-create it.

Finally, Chapter 5 contains the book in comics, as the tangible result of the process of co-creation, by making use of LD and VL.<sup>4</sup>

This composite project follows the ethical guidelines for research from the host and partner institutions,<sup>5</sup> establishing voluntary consent from students and community members with the right to withdraw at any time. Regarding open science, the project followed the EU Open Science Policy on data collection, handling, transfer, protection, and specific security strategy,<sup>6</sup> while ensuring a sound base for a powerful, sustainable, and valued data system. With specific regard to open access, the project supports the cOAlition-S initiative<sup>7</sup> and is dedicated to contributing to its development by publishing this research as a fully open-access resource. This will be accomplished through the dissemination and communication of its results to the relevant communities via key international conferences, workshops, social media, and outreach activities.

Finally, throughout the duration of this project, we have been drawing on an inclusive and co-created legal methodology to create possibilities for participation, plurality, and open spaces for transformative engagements in research. Consequently, as we continue engaging in innovative

<sup>4</sup> On the definition of these concepts and their application to university courses and research, see more in detail PART I.

<sup>5</sup> See [https://en.uit.no/research/ethics/art?p\\_document\\_id=723908](https://en.uit.no/research/ethics/art?p_document_id=723908) last access May 2023.

<sup>6</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science_en) last access May 2023.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.scienceurope.org/coalition-s/> last access May 2023.

research and education methodology for academic audiences and community members, we strengthen our commitment to empathy, compassion and care for the people and natural environment with whom we research.

Giulia Parola  
Margherita Paola Poto<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Both authors contributed equally to the design, writing, and editing of the section.

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# The Foundations: ECO\_CARE

*Margherita Paola Poto and Giulia Parola*

**Abstract** This chapter outlines the primary objective of the ECO\_CARE project: establishing a cooperative governance framework that legally recognizes water and communities as living entities with inherent rights. The chapter underscores the crucial role of water in sustaining life and argues for an ecologically integrated approach to water sustainability and governance, critically analysing the inadequacies of top-down approaches in meeting global environmental goals. Water-related challenges such as scarcity, contamination, and unequal distribution are identified, leading to environmental stress that adversely impacts community and biodiversity rights. The project proposes a water-centric legal response grounded

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Margherita Paola Poto is ECO\_CARE Principal Investigator and has set the foundations for the research; she co-wrote the chapter with Giulia Parola, who is the project coordinator for Brazil.

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in environmental law, advocating for an integral understanding of water value, interconnectedness, and the necessity of protective actions. The methodological approach of the project relies on legal research and ecological ethics, emphasizing empathy, compassion, and care to foster thoughtful relations within and between ecological communities. The chapter details the project's initial step in remodelling water governance by expanding participatory environmental rights from procedural to substantive positions. This transformative shift aims to amplify the voices of nature defenders and acknowledge nature's intrinsic value, challenging Euro and Western-centric perspectives.

**Keywords** Project objectives · Water governance · Innovative approaches to environmental rights · Law and emotions

The overarching goal of the ECO\_CARE project is to create a cooperative governance framework that recognizes water and communities as living entities under the law, thereby granting them the right to be safeguarded and protected.

Water stands as the fundamental element crucial for life's prosperity in any setting, serving as a potent medium for both living organisms and their habitats. As a result, prioritizing effective participation becomes of utmost importance in ecologically integrated strategies for water sustainability and governance models. Water governance cannot solely rely on a top-down approach from government officials, corporations, and world leaders, as they have failed to meet any of the global environmental goals set in the last decade (i.e., Paris Agreement,<sup>1</sup> Agenda 2030<sup>2</sup>). This concern forms the basic premise of the project: water governance must ensure that we are responsibly and collectively contributing to a functioning and healthy water system. Yet, we are increasingly faced with water-related challenges that impede such a premise: scarcity, contamination, and inequitable distribution.

<sup>1</sup> Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dec. 12, 2015, T.I.A.S. No. 16-1104.

<sup>2</sup> UN Resolution, AG, A/Res/70/1 published on the official website: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>, last access September 2022.

As a result, we observe detrimental environmental stress, which leaves communities and biodiversity in a vulnerable state, hindering their respective rights and reciprocal obligations towards one another. Given the alarming scenario at hand—in addition to how widespread this issue is—the project recognises the importance of re-evaluating the legal response of water governance from a water-centred perspective. This response is rooted in the field of environmental law as a means of conceptualizing and constructing a water-centric system that addresses the challenges through new legal environmental foundations (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, 2011). A water-centric system can be achieved by recognizing the value of water, its interconnectedness to all of life, and the importance of orienting our actions towards its protection (Pope Francis, 2015).

The conceptual framework for the project's methodological approach is predicated on legal research (Friedland & Napoleon, 2015), which provides the grounds for rethinking, reinterpreting, and modelling water governance through the ecological ethics of empathy, compassion, and care (Moriggi, Soini, Franklin, & Roep, 2020). Such an approach establishes thoughtful relations within and between ecological communities—composed of both human and non-human—by empowering them to care for themselves and each other. This goal is achieved by humans developing greater compassion and empathy within the overarching ecological community (Bandes, 2017).

The project's first step toward remodelling water governance through the aforementioned legal approach began with an assessment of the expansion of participatory environmental rights from merely procedural to substantive positions. From conceptualizing participatory rights as a substantive right consequently established a shift, which gave a platform and increased legitimacy to the voices of nature defenders and to nature itself.

The need for new participants in decision-making was first recognised in environmental law, which gradually expanded to administrative law. This expansion was catalysed by the legal recognition of environmental access rights—which is structured into three pillars: the right to access documents, to participate in decision-making processes, and to access justice—and is enshrined in Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, UN Doc. A/CONF.151/26 (vol. I), 31 ILM 874 (1992).

Such a recognition facilitated the entry of procedural rights holders and contributed to a shift away from a centralized model in environmental decision-making in which the States involved held significant power. The 1998 Århus Convention (ÅC) (Parola, 2013),<sup>4</sup> the first international treaty implementing Principle 10, marks the recognition of environmental rights for non-state actors. Widely enforced in the EU—although it was limited in content and regional extent—the ÅC paved the way for the expansion of participatory rights to vulnerable groups, which included Indigenous peoples. This expansion was accomplished by creating space for the approval of the 2018 Escazú Agreement (EA) for Latin America and the Caribbean (Poto & Enyew, 2021).<sup>5</sup> The EA carried forward the ÅC legacy,<sup>6</sup> expanding the environmental decision-making to new actors and their views on nature. By doing so, the EA broadened the horizons of rights from merely participatory to substantive. Passing the baton of environmental decision-making to those with nature-centred views, the EA allowed perspectives that encouraged the gradual recognition of the rights of nature at the global level (López-Cubillos et al., 2021).

By replicating the previously mentioned three pillar structure, the EA expands the discourse beyond Eurocentric views, broadening the spectrum of participants to those with nature-centred views. Article 9 clearly qualifies such participants as human rights defenders in environmental matters, “whose safe and enabling environment is to be guaranteed so that they are able to act free from threat, restriction and insecurity.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, the EA brings forward the discourse on actors involved

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *The Århus Convention: An Implementation Guide* (2nd ed. 2014) available at [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus\\_Implementation\\_Guide\\_interactive\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/Publications/Aarhus_Implementation_Guide_interactive_eng.pdf) last access May 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 4 March 2020, available at <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2018/03/20180312%2003-04%20PM/CTC-XXVII-18.pdf>, last access August 2023.

For updates on signature and ratification status see: <https://observatoriop10.cepal.org/en/treaties/regional-agreement-access-information-public-participation-and-justice-environmental>, last access August 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Moreover, as expressly mentioned in the Foreword of the EA, the year of approval marks the 20th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders: [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428\\_en.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428_en.pdf), last access August 2022.

<sup>7</sup> See Art. 9 EA: ‘1. Each Party shall guarantee a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters so that they can act free from threat, restriction and insecurity. 2. Each

in environmental decision-making.<sup>8</sup> Its beneficiaries are the populations of the concerned regions—the most vulnerable groups and communities in particular—recognized as human rights defenders that contribute to strengthening democracy, access rights, and sustainable development. EA gives voice to environmental defenders (Art. 9), whether Indigenous peoples or local communities, whose survival depends on nature and is threatened by large-scale projects of resource extraction, industrialization, and development.<sup>9</sup> Both the AC and the EA led to international legal recognition of effective participation in the environment, preparing the terrain for the discourse of nature’s substantive rights, which is also applicable to water. They apply to the environment as a whole—including human and non-human beings—and also pave the way for nature and water-centred voices.

Starting from the theoretical framework—and intending to model a collaborative water governance system—ECO\_CARE suggests a re-reading of these environmental rights by integrating Indigenous perspectives with the suggestions of students engaged in environmental learning and the creative help of school communities. To achieve this objective, the project team adopts a methodological integrated approach, through (i) critical legal research and (ii) empirical legal and anthropological research.

Party shall take adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect and promote all the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters, including their right to life, personal integrity, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and free movement, as well as their ability to exercise their access rights, taking into account its international obligations in the field of human rights, its constitutional principles and the basic concepts of its legal system. 3. Each Party shall also take appropriate, effective and timely measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer while exercising the rights set out in the present Agreement.’

<sup>8</sup> Before the EA, several initiatives—not all of them binding, however—have been conducted in Latin America to promote and protect participatory rights for nature and rights of nature. Here we may note the Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba, 20–22 April 2010, followed by the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth. See UNGA Resolution 73/235, <https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/04/A.RES.73.235.pdf>, last access May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> See UNDP (2018). What does it mean to leave no one behind? A UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation, available at [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Sustainable%20Development/2030%20Agenda/Discussion\\_Paper\\_LNOB\\_ENIRES.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Sustainable%20Development/2030%20Agenda/Discussion_Paper_LNOB_ENIRES.pdf), last access May 2023.

**Fig. 1** Logo of the project realized by Valentina Russo, Mucho Amor (Instagram: @mucho\_\_amor), 2021



This second step embraces and adapts principles and techniques of knowledge co-creation, LD and VL, visual communication and illustrated storytelling. This integrated approach is an effective tool for investigating complex systems, such as environmental governance, which simultaneously promotes the advancement of knowledge diversity. The first step was the creation of a visual identity for the team members, through the illustration of the project logo (Fig. 1). This is a representation of the blue planet Earth, embracing continents, waters, persons, and emotions. These emotions are represented by a heart hugged by the planet. These concepts are demonstrated within a continuum. The logo contributed to creating a cohesive visual aesthetic that not only unifies the project team, rationale, and activities in a visual manner but also lays the groundwork for a work environment that encourages creativity and spirited collaboration among the project members.

Co-creation of visual results has been continually pursued and has ultimately resulted in the publication of two comic books for law students and practitioners (Parola & Poto, 2021a, 2021b). This is in addition to a composite learning toolkit composed of an illustrated book, a handbook, and prototypes of a touching book and finger puppets (Porrone et al., 2021a, 2021b).

In the first year of the project, another multistep collaborative project was developed. This entailed co-created storytelling, illustrations, and

other visual communication techniques that were integrated as the result of the cooperation between the Indigenous communities of the Chiquitano people living near the Tarumã River and the Sámi people of the Tana River. The project comprised three steps. Step 1 was dedicated to the preparation of a collaborative questionnaire for the two target audiences (i.e., the two Indigenous communities living along the mentioned rivers) in Portuguese and English. The use of this questionnaire was intended to build trust with the Chiquitano teachers involved in the project in Mato Grosso and to gain an understanding of the relationship between the Sámi people and the Tana River, respectively. In Step 2, surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of the two groups, who gave voice to their struggles and built a comparative understanding of the challenges faced by water-centric communities. Step 3 involved the students from the course of LD and VL at UNIRIO (2021); based on the studies and research conducted on the two rivers, Matheus Goulart, a law student, designed the project's cover. This cover details the two rivers and their elements engaging in an imaginary conversation (Fig. 2).

The visual representation of this conversation prompted important cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, students, and Indigenous co-researchers, holding great promise for Indigenous and water knowledge promotion in academia and other communities. The many aforementioned steps contributed to improving the team spirit and reinforced the international team members' conviction of the potential of co-creation. Ultimately, these team members were able to understand how co-creation can lead to meaningful contributions to research processes, and how relevant knowledge is built and reusable, both within and outside the research itself and local communities. In line with ECO\_CARE's vision of increasing the research capacity of community members, and ensuring that they are co-researchers in every project, the project's results that have been co-created so far were shared with the communities involved, and book launch events have been organized and planned.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For a report on an activity of restitution, see the ECO\_CARE blog post: [https://en.uit.no/project/ecocare/blogg/innlegg?sub\\_id=795326](https://en.uit.no/project/ecocare/blogg/innlegg?sub_id=795326), last visited August 2023 as well as Sect. 6, Chapter 3.

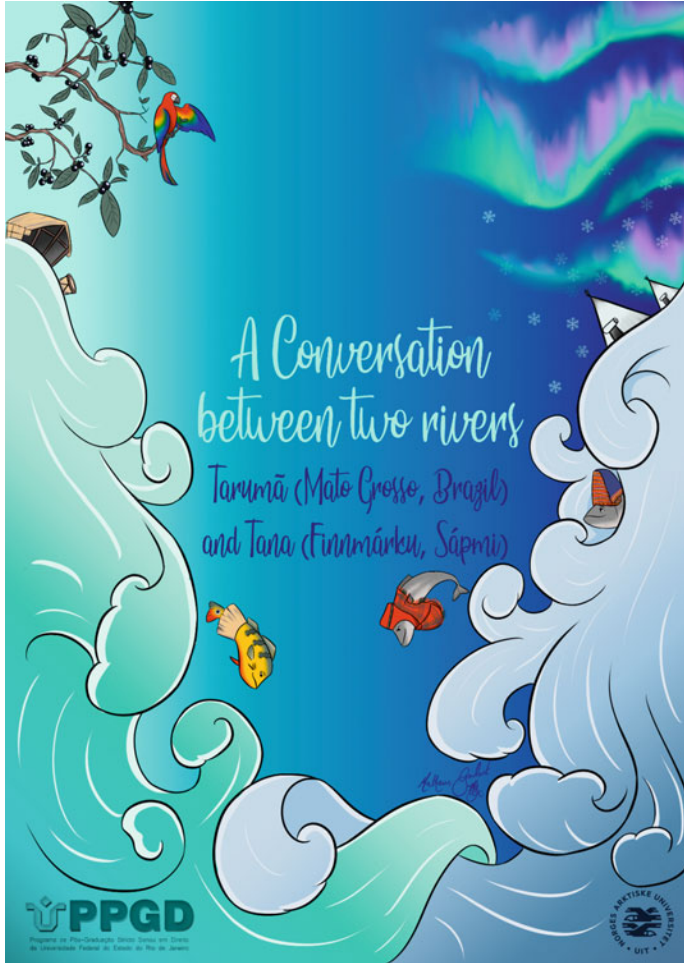


Fig. 2 Project cover created by Matheus Goulart (2021)

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# Legal Design and Visual Law: The Roadmap

*Giulia Parola and Margherita Paola Poto*

**Abstract** This chapter focuses on illustrating the steps of Legal Design (LD) and Visual Law (VL). Before delving into the process of comic book co-creation, the chapter provides an overview of LD and VL, emphasizing their relative unfamiliarity, even among legal scholars. LD, originating from an initiative at Stanford Law School, aims to simplify legal language by evaluating and designing legal business in a simple, functional, attractive, and usable way. It centers on people's needs, shifting focus from professionals to recipients, such as citizens, organizations, and communities. LD emphasizes ongoing interactions and feedback from recipients throughout the project, fostering empathy and active listening. While

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Giulia Parola developed the methodology at the basis of this chapter and co-wrote the chapter with Margherita Paola Poto who coordinated the project team and supervised the final version of the chapter.

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LD focuses on effective communication for the benefit of legal beneficiaries, VL serves as its visual manifestation. VL utilizes various visual elements, such as images, illustrations, videos, infographics, comics, and more, making legal documents more explanatory. LD and VL, initially tools for law firms to aid law firm clients understanding, have evolved for broader applications in legal education, research dissemination, empowering society to advocate for their rights, and supporting the decolonization of legal mindsets. The chapter discusses the interchangeable use of LD and VL in legal research, legal education, and as strategic tools for societal empowerment. Importantly, it highlights their potential role in decolonizing legal mindsets by involving participants outside the dominant Western legal doctrine and supporting knowledge co-creation. The chapter underscores the importance of LD and VL in contributing to the re-emergence of Indigenous perspectives and cosmovisions, ultimately facilitating effective participation in environmental matters.

**Keywords** Innovative methodology · Decolonising knowledge · Legal design · Visual law · Co-creation of project results

## 1 DEFINITION OF LEGAL DESIGN (LD) AND VISUAL LAW (VL)

Before describing the process of the comic book co-creation, an overview of the concepts of LD and VL will be provided. Both concepts are relatively unknown, even amongst legal scholars. LD was created through an initiative at the Stanford Law School that brought together three areas of design, technology, and law to simplify legal language. As defined by Margaret Hagan, creator of the concept and author of the book *Law by Design* (2021), this instrument is “the way we evaluate and design legal business in a simple, functional, attractive and usable way.”<sup>1</sup> LD, borrowing from the domain of design thinking,<sup>2</sup> is centred on people and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lawbydesign.co/en/home/>, last access August 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Design thinking is an approach that brings together tools, techniques, and knowledge to break down a complex problem into stages and design innovative ideas to forward solutions. The central idea is that the process is carried out collectively and collaboratively, to gather as many different perspectives as possible. In this way, design thinking is based

their needs. It shifts the focus from the professional viewpoint—mainly of lawyers and judges—to the recipients of the legal document. These recipients can include common citizens, private and public individuals, organizations, and communities. The aim is to create effective solutions following feedback obtained from ongoing interactions with the final recipients. Such feedback is continuously mapped and collected from the inception of the project until the implementation phase. In other words, in working with LD, the legal world can empathetically examine how to meet the needs of the recipients and legal entities through a process of hands-on communication and active listening.

While LD focuses on helping the legal community develop effective communication for the benefit of the beneficiaries and creating the foundations for creative legal reasoning, VL is the visual manifestation of this conceptual thinking. This distinction can be visualised with an iceberg,<sup>3</sup> wherein LD represents the hidden bottom, and VL represents the exposed top, which can be observed and experienced by all. Essentially, VL is the external manifestation of LD and serves to put into practice a non-conventional format that makes legal documents more explanatory. VL can be developed through features that include—but are not limited to—images, illustrations, videos, infographics, graphics, timelines, QR codes, flowcharts, bullet points, pictograms, comics, storytelling, maps, story mapping, links, music, gamification, and podcasts.

While LD and VL have their origins within law firms as tools to help clients understand the legal processes affecting them, they have been progressively adapted to achieve other goals (Hagan, 2018, 2019, 2020). First—which will be further elaborated on in the following sections—LD and VL can be developed as legal education resources to help stimulate the mindsets of future legal scholars, ultimately helping them thoroughly understand community needs. Second, in legal research, the outcomes of LD and VL can be used as practical tools to effectively disseminate and communicate project results. Third, these instruments are innovative strategic tools that can empower society to overcome the challenging and

on the ability to be intuitive, recognize patterns, and develop ideas that have an emotional meaning beyond functionality. Further, design thinking can facilitate expression through mediums beyond words or symbols (Brown, 2009). Design Thinking is divided into four stages: immersion (understanding); ideation (creation); prototyping (testing); development (application).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legalthack.com.br/>, last access September 2022.

often opaque process of advocating for their rights. Finally, these tools can be applied to support the decolonisation of legal mindsets and law itself (Poto, 2022). This is accomplished by involving research participants who are typically outside the dominant Western legal doctrine of environmental law, while also further developing techniques for knowledge co-creation. Hereinafter, the expressions West, Western-centric and Euro-centric are used interchangeably to denote those epistemologies founded on the coloniality of knowledge (Fonseca, 2019; Quijano, 2000). Coloniality of knowledge is defined as the epistemic violence perpetrated by the settlers at the ‘encounter’ with the ‘other.’ This practice is based on the invisibility, denial, silencing, expropriation, and extraction of non-Western knowledge, and largely remains the dominant rationality of Western value sets (de Sousa Santos, 2010).

Through knowledge co-creation supported by the collaborative use of LD and VL tools, it is possible to contribute to the re-emergence of Indigenous perspectives and cosmovisions,<sup>4</sup> ultimately weaving these into the scientific method (Saida, 2022). Unfortunately, Indigenous knowledge, value sets, and legal orders are historically considered inferior to the predominance of the ‘universalization of law’ (Colaço & Damázio, 2017), which supports a single and universal way to build legal rights and obligations. Ultimately, the objective of using LD and VL is to facilitate the effective participation of all parties involved in environmental matters. This can be accomplished by making all parties effective co-participants in environmental legal research. This explains the adoption of the expression ‘recipient/participant,’ used hereinafter to define the actors of our LD and VL co-created legal methodology.

An example of the effectiveness of LD and VL as legal tools is highlighted in the experience of the Escazú Agreement (EA) on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which has been transformed into a comic book (Parola & Poto, 2021a, 2021b). This transformation will be described in greater detail in Chapter III, regarding the project titled, *Legal Design and Visual Law in International Environmental Law: Conversion of the Escazú Agreement in Visual Materials for the Chiquitano*

<sup>4</sup> Definition of the term Cosmovision “means the conception that Indigenous peoples have, both collectively and individually, of the physical and spiritual world and the environment in which they conduct their lives.” Available at <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/cosmovision>, last access August 2023.

*People.* Our primary goal was to facilitate the Chiquitano understanding of environmental rights that are recognized in the EA (CEE/ONU, 1998), in tandem with improving environmental democracy. This is based on the three pillars mentioned in the Introduction: access to information,<sup>5</sup> participation,<sup>6</sup> and access to justice<sup>7</sup> in environmental matters. At the same time, the project sought to promote the co-creation of new knowledge by actively encouraging the Chiquitano participation.

## 2 STAGES OF LEGAL DESIGN AND VISUAL LAW

This section illustrates the steps that put LD into practice by applying the techniques of VL.

### 2.1 *Selection of the Recipient/Participant*

As explained above, the first step in LD and VL is to choose the creative project's target audience. Specifically relating to ECO\_CARE methodology, the target audience acts as co-participants in the research journey. This means the innovative term 'recipient/participant' refers to the active role that all parties play in the process of co-creation. Being able to define the target audience of the recipients/participants is a fundamental step that ensures accuracy in each step of the research, as well as ensuring the project's results are tailored to their needs. This way, process and results represent community-specific value sets and contribute to overcoming

<sup>5</sup> The right to access to information, which constitutes the first of the three pillars and is the fundamental starting point for any public involvement in decisions. This right guarantees that members of the public are conscious of what is occurring in their adjacent environment and ensures that the public is competent to participate in an informed manner. The first information pillar includes both the 'passive' (when the public access environmental information from public authorities) and 'active' aspects (when the government has the obligation to collect and disseminate environmental information).

<sup>6</sup> Public participation constitutes the second pillar, and it serves as an important link between the other two pillars as public participation cannot occur without sufficient access to information, or the possibility of enforcement.

<sup>7</sup> Access to justice, the third pillar, addresses with two situations. Firstly, it protects/strengthens the other two pillars by providing access to review procedures in relation to information, as well as access to review procedures to challenge decisions, acts, or omissions subject to the public participation provisions. Secondly the pillar provides the right to review procedures to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting environmental law in general.

Western centrism in research and law (Quijano, 2000). Having project results tailored to the needs of the target audience does not affect the reuse of data, as it allows researchers to analyse and publish findings based on the same data. As well, it greatly contributes to the emerging body of literature through the generation of new discussion and publications on the project's results.

## 2.2 *Study of the Needs of the Recipient/Participant—Empathy*

The study of the recipient/participant target audience marks the second stage of this process. This stage comprises an in-depth assessment and subsequent analysis of the targeted community's characteristics—their demographics—and needs, which includes cultural legacy, legal values, language, educational system, and access to digital technologies. These assessments and analyses are often typical of healthcare studies; however, this process provides significant insights and can serve as an innovative tool for legal scholars and researchers (Di Lallo et al., 2019).

The need for assessment and analysis within the community is fundamental to demarcate the study field. Building a field of study through dialogues and meaningful interactions with participants can help to develop a sense of collective purpose, while also advancing levels of active participation. When the study takes shape as a collective endeavour, this format can ultimately contribute to ingratiating empathy within education and research activities (Berardi, 2020). According to widely cited research, although empathy is an innate quality (Sofronieva, 2012; Hoffmann, 2000),<sup>8</sup> it can also be developed by practising positive social behaviours.<sup>9</sup> While using LD and VL, the process of promoting and strengthening empathy can unfold via two steps. First, a unilateral understanding of the needs of the project's recipients should be established. Second, in tandem with the elaboration of recipients/participants' needs, the effective involvement of the recipients in the co-creation process must be facilitated and strengthened. In both steps, reflexivity and empathetic thinking are practised and developed by all project participants, be

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190729111225.htm>, last access May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> <https://psyarxiv.com/es6wm/>, last access May 2023.

they students, researchers, or community members. Such an approach—while commonplace in healthcare studies and criminal justice (Hoffman, 2000)—is innovative in the field of environmental law research. In our case, the mutual connections and exchange helped grow empathy among the participants by fostering trust, friendship, and compassion.

### *2.3 Study of the Legal Issue and Choosing the Legal Materials*

In the third phase, three questions are posed to all the participants:

- (1) What is the problem or need that must be solved or addressed?
- (2) What is the legal problem that the recipient/participant must deal with?
- (3) Which legal materials can be transformed through LD?

After identifying the legal problem and/or the relevant legal materials, the creation phase can commence, with active facilitation from the recipients/participants.

### *2.4 Ideation and Options*

Two techniques are adopted in this stage: brainstorming and reverse brainstorming. Brainstorming is well-known in the field of design thinking (Thoring & Müller, 2011). As for the first technique, according to the Interaction Design Foundation, “brainstorming is a method design teams use to generate ideas to solve clearly defined design problems. In controlled conditions and a free-thinking environment, teams approach a problem by such means as “How Might We” questions. They produce a vast array of ideas and draw links between them to find potential solutions.”<sup>10</sup> In this phase, good and bad ideas are not assessed, instead, a discussion of all the ideas is presented and considered by the participants. Following this, any initial ideas are filtered and refined. Every idea is written down on a physical or virtual sticky note. Through this technique, the development of unorthodox and unachievable ideas is encouraged.

<sup>10</sup> Definition from The Interaction Design Foundation, <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/brainstorming>, last access May 2023.



The second technique—reverse brainstorming—requires foresight; specifically, mapping out potential risks and challenges that may undermine plans of action (Evans, 2012). The goal is to unlock the participants’ creative thinking, as it is often easier to criticise and identify gaps than to outline a strategy for success. As Hagen et al. (2016) put it,

“Using reverse-brainstorming as an idea generation tool, participants often find that identifying negative elements is easier than identifying positive elements [...] creating an exercise that is cognitively stimulating, interesting, and even somewhat silly [...]. After negative elements are identified, [...] instructors can turn the question into a positive, asking students to use the negative elements to provide a clearer solution to the problem, thereby engaging multiple levels of cognition and increasing creativity and idea generation. [I]nstructors may find that using reverse-brainstorming as a tool will engage students in deeper discussions that challenge them to generate ideas and turn those into workable, classroom- and content-appropriate solutions. Because students may find it easier and more engaging to identify negative elements, classroom collaboration and communication can improve.”<sup>11</sup>

Once the group has finished compiling the list of bad ideas, they are asked to turn these negatives into positive ideas. This is accomplished by looking into the failed suggestions and coming up with methods that achieve the opposite effect. In essence, the group seeks to reverse engineer the negative ideas to find novel solutions.<sup>12</sup>

To conclude this phase, the group selects the best idea based on a set of collaboratively produced implementation criteria. The criteria can include considerations regarding logical consistency and plausibility, generalisability, simplicity, efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility. As stated above, in the original LD process (Hagan, 2020), the recipients are not included in the final project results. In our approach, since recipients co-participate in every step of the co-creation process—therefore making them recipients/participants—they provide constant feedback and can effectively contribute to the project. Notably, in the case of the ECO\_

<sup>11</sup> Hagen, M., Bernard, A., & Grube, E., *Do it all wrong! using reverse-brainstorming to generate ideas, improve discussions, and move students to action*, *Management Teaching Review*, 1(2), 2016, pp. 85–90.

<sup>12</sup> Reverse Brainstorming, A Different Approach to Brainstorming, at [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT\\_96.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT_96.htm), last access May 2023.

CARE project, an Indigenous representative of the Chiquitano people worked back-to-back with the LD and VL students to assist in selecting the most appropriate and implementable project idea.

## 2.5 Prototyping

After the selection of a promising idea, the group starts developing the project prototype (Meinel & Leifer, 2012). Prototyping helps the process move forward efficiently. As Olsen (2015) puts it, “prototyping moves the Design Thinking project forward. By building simple models or drawing sketches before knowing the answer, prototyping helps the innovators to think. The goal of rapid prototyping is to make mistakes as fast as possible. By making multiple simple models of unsolved problems, the idea is that surprising discoveries will be encountered.” At this stage, the recipients/participants become active co-creators, contributing to the development of the prototype and, therefore, transforming the process of LD into a tangible VL, as the final product.

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# The Stages of the Comic Book Co-creation and the Restitution to the Chiquitano Indigenous People

*Giulia Parola, Margherita Paola Poto,  
and Gabrielle Natividad*

**Abstract** This chapter delves into the analysis of the methodological steps of the co-created process involved in producing a comic book, following the steps outlined in Chapter 2. Extensive research material, outlined at the end of the book, was utilized throughout the project in conjunction with co-creation stages and legal research. The project

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Giulia Parola contributed to the development of the research at the core of the section and co-wrote it with Margherita Paola Poto who edited and supervised the final version of it.

Gabrielle Natividad wrote the subsection 1.5.

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focuses on the Chiquitano people from Mato Grosso, Brazil, specifically the community in Vila Nova Barbecho, due to their precarious environmental situation and human rights violations.

**Keyword** Methodological steps · Co-creation of the final results · Involvement of the Chiquitano People

## 1 STEPS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS: THE CREATION OF THE COMIC BOOK

The steps outlined in Chapter 2 were followed during the creation of the comic book. Throughout the project, extensive research material was used—these materials are at the end of this book—in coordination with the previously outlined co-creation stages. Legal research material was consulted throughout the project’s duration, which concluded with the production of the final comic book.

### *1.1 Selection of the Chiquitano People as the Project Recipients and Participants*

The recipients/participants group chose to work with the Chiquitano people from Mato Grosso (Brazil); particularly, they selected members of the Chiquitano community in Vila Nova Barbecho. The Chiquitano territory is not fully demarcated; consequently, the Chiquitano people are facing serious environmental threats, while also suffering from gross human rights violations by state-sponsored actors. These actors are primarily landowners who have occupied their territory. As reported by Silvano Chue Muquissai and Loyuá Ribeiro F. M. da Costa (2021), “many villages are currently delimited by farms [...] and therefore it is impossible to build school buildings, hospitals, and other infrastructures that could enhance their quality of life. In addition, many [I]ndigenous people depend on work and daily allowances on farm owners as their contractors, committing, often informally, to clear the pasture on farms and other services”<sup>1</sup> (p. 304). The authors make clear that “the lack of

<sup>1</sup> The original quote in Portuguese is translated by the authors.

access to their own territory hampers hunt, swidden planting, and access to water, threats that repercuss to a series of violations of human rights that put the existence of the [I]ndigenous population at risk.”

The reports from Silvano Chue Muquissai and Loyuá Ribeiro da Costa pose a critical question regarding the survival of the Chiquitano people within their villages. The answer to this question can be found in the reflection on what legal choices the Chiquitano people have in the face of this existential threat. Their situation involves intricate socioeconomic and legal complexities, spanning decades of human rights issues and environmental challenges.

While this book is not the sole solution to address the plight of the Chiquitano people, the premises that LD explores can effectively imbue the community with the necessary legal knowledge. This book establishes a process of both affirmation and emancipation, co-creating legal material that can be used to articulate the struggles the Chiquitano people have been facing since colonisation.

### *1.2 Study of the Needs of the Chiquitano People*

As aforementioned, one of the milestones of the creative process is the development of empathy within the participants, accomplished through the study, assessments, and conversations concerning the needs of the recipients/participants. This study helped the members of the working group understand each other’s perspectives, which encouraged a focus on an empathetic approach to law. As previously noted, before delving into empirical research, the group consulted the primary and secondary legal resources to understand the Chiquitano origins and the Chiquitano knowledge system. Moreover, further insights into the Chiquitano people’s value sets, cosmovisions, and legal principles were gained via ongoing conversations with Silvano Chue Muquissai. These conversations were developed via videoconference. Silvano provided essential information on the Chiquitano people through talks and his participation in course lectures. He thoroughly explained how and why the lack of access to Indigenous territories threatens the Chiquitano culture and knowledge system. As he put it, “Even today, some members of the Chiquitano people do not recognize their identity, because only then they can access

jobs in the farms surrounding their land.”<sup>2</sup> When secure access to land is missing, this leads to insecure access to water and raw materials that are needed for life, health, food security and safety. Ultimately, the Chiquitano people’s self-determination is jeopardized. Hence, as highlighted by the Chiquitano representatives who participated in the videoconferences led by Silvano, the community’s primary need was to gain visibility and enhance the legitimacy of the issue in the public’s eyes. Increasing visibility is predicted to lessen the likelihood of public authorities colluding with farmers, which is a common occurrence throughout Mato Grosso. The premise is that with greater visibility, the Chiquitano people will see authorities defend their rights.

The urgent need for visibility contributed to developing sentiments of accountability, cultural awareness, and mutual respect throughout the project. It is important to underline that in our project, the path travelled, comprised of knowledge exchanges and sharing, was mutual, where both sides—university researchers and Chiquitano community members—could cultivate reciprocal empathy (Fig. 1).

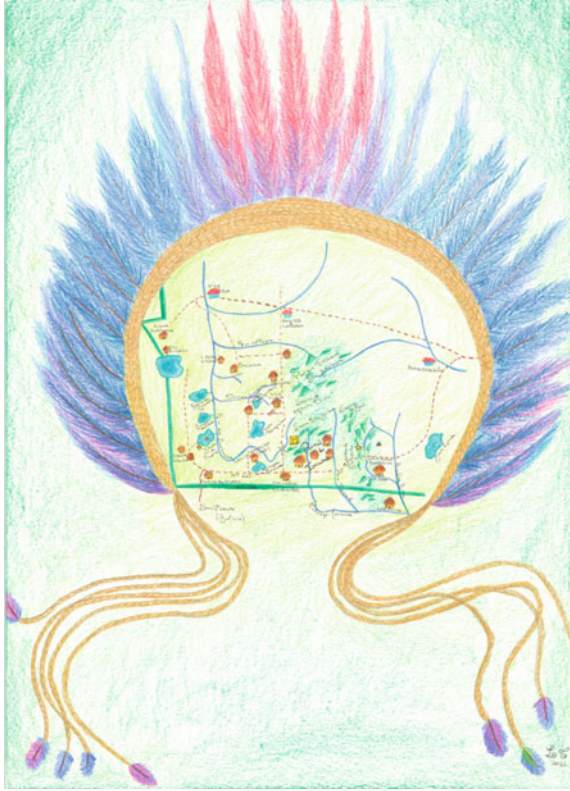
### *1.3 Study of the Legal Issue and Choosing the Legal Materials: The Escazú Agreement 2018*

On 4 March 2018, in the city of Escazú, Costa Rica—twenty years after the signature of the Århus Convention (ÅC) on *Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (CEE/ONU, 1998)—after six years of negotiations,<sup>3</sup> twenty-four countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

<sup>2</sup> Interview during the first online meeting, 18 November 2021. Translation by the authors.

<sup>3</sup> In November 2014, the countries launched the negotiation phase of the regional agreement and established a Negotiating Committee with a view to concluding the negotiations by December 2017. The Negotiating Committee was composed of the signatory countries with the significant participation of the public and met for the first time in Santiago (May 2015). At that meeting, it adopted its organization and work plan, which established that countries would continue with their national consultations on the preliminary document of the regional agreement prepared by CEPAL and submit language proposals on the document by 31 August 2015. The Committee met again in Panama City (October 2015), Montevideo (April 2016), Santo Domingo (August 2016), Santiago (November 2016), Brasília (March 2017), Buenos Aires (August 2017), and Santiago (November 2017) and in March 2018 in Escazú whereby the Agreement was adopted.





**Fig. 1** The Chiquitano indigenous territory, illustrated by L. F. M. Da Costa (2020)

adopted the Escazú Agreement (EA) on *Access to Information, Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and Caribbean* (CEPAL, 2018). The EA is the first legally binding treaty on environmental rights in the region, which was enacted on 22 April 2021.<sup>4</sup>

The Agreement was negotiated by 24 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean but the signature and ratification are open to the 33 countries of the region.

<sup>4</sup> To date, 24 countries have signed it, and 15 of which have also ratified it: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and

The negotiating parties of the EA were inspired by the ÅC, which was the first international treaty that implemented Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environmental Access Rights.<sup>5</sup> The ÅC established a process of assessments that includes individuals and their right to exercise control over acts of government, thereby participating and contributing to decision-making in environmental matters. The ÅC represents the first international treaty aimed at creating transboundary environmental procedural rights of individuals and NGOs—access to information, participation, and access to justice—previously referred to as the three pillars, which constructs an Environmental Democracy.

Being inspired by the ÅC, the EA is also an implementation of Principle 10. It aims to “move a step closer towards making equality,”<sup>6</sup> and to “leave no one behind” (Agenda 2030).<sup>7</sup> The EA seeks to accomplish these goals by removing socioeconomic barriers that hinder access rights to persons that have been underrepresented in participatory processes

Uruguay. At <https://observatoriop10.cepal.org/en/treaties/regional-agreement-access-inf-or-mation-public-participation-and-justice-environmental>, last access May 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Principle 10 provides that: “Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.” Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, UN Doc. A/CONF.151/26 (vol. I), 31 ILM 874 (1992).

<sup>6</sup> In the words of Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC): “Visionary and unprecedented, it is an agreement reached by and for Latin America and the Caribbean, reflecting the ambition, priorities, and particularities of our region. It addresses key aspects of environmental management and protection from a regional perspective (...) The strong regional commitment to environmental protection and human rights is expected to lead to the Regional Agreement’s prompt entry into force. By joining this landmark treaty, the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean will not only continue to strengthen environmental democracy, but will also move a step closer towards making equality, sound economic growth and sustainable development for all a reality” (Barcen, 2018, p. 5).

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57b6e3e44.html>, last access May 2023.

and to combat inequality and discrimination. The EA was chosen as the legal material used within the co-created project of LD and VL, primarily because of its specific focus on improving the three pillars amongst groups of people in vulnerable situations, such as Indigenous peoples or traditional communities. Throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, there are sectors of society that have historically been marginalised from decision-making on environmental issues. Consequently, the EA defines these individuals in Article 2 as “those persons or groups that face particular difficulties in fully exercising the access rights recognised in the present Agreement, because of circumstances or conditions identified within each Party’s national context and in accordance with its international obligations.” ‘Persons or groups in vulnerable situations’ are not just recognized as the focus of the Agreement, but the text itself requires governments to take action to ensure that these populations can effectively exercise the three access rights. In particular, Article 4, paragraph 5 states, “each party will ensure guidance and assistance to the public—especially to the people or groups in vulnerable situations—in a way such that the exercise of their rights to access is facilitated.” To this end, steps have been taken in the EA—both before and during the drafting process—to build the capacity of persons that, historically, have been underrepresented in participatory processes. The States that negotiated and signed the EA are committed to finding ways to facilitate the rights of the three pillars. Moreover, there are specific paragraph(s) for each right outlined in the agreement—access to information,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> With regards to passive access to information, Article 5 of the Escazú Agreement in paragraphs 3 and 4 ask each party to “3. facilitate access to environmental information for persons or groups in vulnerable situations, establishing procedures for the provision of assistance, from the formulation of requests through to the delivery of the information, taking into account their conditions and specificities, for the purpose of promoting access and participation under equal conditions. 4. Each Party shall guarantee that the above-mentioned persons or groups in vulnerable situations, including indigenous peoples and ethnic groups, receive assistance in preparing their requests and obtaining a response.” Concerning active access to information, Article 6 (6) also requires the government to favour access by groups in vulnerable situations to information that particularly affects them and also includes the directive that each Party shall also endeavour “where applicable, to ensure that the competent authorities disseminate environmental information in the various languages used in the country, and prepare alternative formats that are comprehensible to those groups, using suitable channels of communication” (Parola, 2018). It is important to add that in 2022, the website of CEPAL was updated to include the Quechuan version of the Escazú Agreement. Quechuan languages are the languages of the former Inca Empire and the principal native languages of the central Andes today,

participation,<sup>9</sup> and access to justice<sup>10</sup>—concerning a corresponding action that increases support.

which consists of a large Indigenous population, many of whom are monolingual. Encyclopedia Britannica, Quechuan languages, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Quechuan-languages>, last access May 2023.

<sup>9</sup> The agreement essentially follows the AC but adds, (Parola, 2019) in Article 7 (10) and Article 7(11), new aspects, as it affirms that each Party must adapt the environmental decision-making processes to the public, taking in account “the social, economic, cultural, geographical and gender characteristics of the public” (10). Moreover, paragraph 11 specifies that if the affected public primarily speaks a language that differs from the official language, “the public authority shall ensure that means are provided to facilitate their understanding and participation.” Moreover, Article 7 (13) outlines that, in order to facilitate participation, the parties shall establish “appropriate spaces for consultation on environmental matters or the use of those that are already in existence in which various groups and sectors are able to participate” and also “promote regard for local knowledge, dialogue and interaction of different views and knowledge, where appropriate.” Finally, concerning the persons and vulnerable groups, paragraph 14 of Article 7 affirms that the public authorities will identify and support those persons or groups “in order to engage them in an active, timely and effective manner in participation mechanisms. For these purposes, appropriate means and formats will be considered, in order to eliminate barriers to participation.” Additionally, paragraph 15 talks about the implementation of the Agreement, and requires that “each Party shall guarantee that its domestic legislation and international obligations in relation to the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are observed.”

<sup>10</sup> Concerning article 8 (2) of Escazú, it is important to highlight that this article goes beyond Aarhus in the following paragraphs so as to better remove barriers that undermine vulnerable communities’ ability to exercise access to justice. Paragraph 3 provides that: “To guarantee the right of access to justice in environmental matters, each Party shall have, considering its circumstances: (...) (e) measures to facilitate the production of evidence of environmental damage, when appropriate and as applicable, such as the reversal of the burden of proof and the dynamic burden of proof.” In fact, the agreement adopted the reversal of the burden of proof and the dynamic burden of proof following the doctrine and jurisprudence from different Latin-American states (In Brazil we can cite the following decision by the Superior Tribunal Justiça 2a Turma. Resp 1071741/SP. Rel. Min. Antonio Herman Benjamin, j. 16.12.10. Cappelli, 2018, p. 133).

Then paragraph 4 of Article 8 provides that to facilitate access to justice, each Party shall establish: “a. measures to minimize or eliminate barriers to the exercise of the right of access to justice; b. means to publicize the right of access to justice and the procedures to ensure its effectiveness; c. mechanisms to systematize and disseminate judicial and administrative decisions, as appropriate; and d. the use of interpretation or translation of languages other than the official languages when necessary for the exercise of that right.” Requirement (d) is the most important for Latin American society as it states that each Party shall take due care to help individuals who do not speak the official languages. This obligation is linked to paragraph 5: “In order to give effect to the right of access to justice, each Party shall meet the needs of persons or groups in vulnerable situations

To conclude, the EA aims to help people and/or groups in vulnerable situations to effectively exercise their rights to access, and the co-created project of LD and VL sought to achieve this objective within the context of the Chiquitano community of Mato Grosso. By converting the referred rights and legal concepts into visual materials, this project enabled the active participation of the Chiquitano people. Advancing both the understanding of environmental rights and active participation of the Chiquitano people has created different avenues to voice the community's struggle, continuing the development of co-created legal projects and, ultimately, increase empathy amongst all participants.

#### *1.4 Ideation and Options: Creating Proposals, Requesting Feedback, and the Comic Book*

After studying the Chiquitano people and their needs, and choosing the legal material, the next step was to establish ideas on how to convert the EA into an easily accessible document. In our project, a collaborative effort integrated all stakeholders in the creative process that generated the final content. Much of the project's value was derived from this cross-cultural learning experience. Hence, Silvano participated in each step of the idealization process. Additionally, to support the provision of constant feedback on the proposals made by the group, Silvano led our efforts to understand which choices were most suitable for the Chiquitano people. Towards the end of the idealization process—composed of brainstorming and reverse brainstorming—the group came to a consensus to convert the EA into a series of comics.

by establishing support mechanisms, including, as appropriate, free technical and legal assistance.”

### 1.5 *Prototyping and Finalizing the Proposal of an Illustrated Agreement in Comics (2021)*<sup>11</sup>

In LD, the first rule for creating an accessible document, essay, or composition that readers can easily understand is to use short sentences. Writing for the final recipient requires translating legalese into colloquial language that accounts for the target population's age range, level of education, profession, experience, and other characteristics. In this case, these characteristics may include the appearance of Indigenous ethnicity. The likelihood of the legal document being understood and utilised by the intended party increases when the above methods are implemented, especially with clear writing and limited use of complicated language and jargon. Accordingly, the first step in creating the comic book was drafting a script about the EA between Silvano and other community members of the village Vila Nova Barbecho. This approach transformed the articles of the Agreement—written in technical legal language—into an easily accessible dialogue, readily comprehensible by everyone.

Furthermore, each sentence in the comic dialogue was paired with an illustrated description of the village. These descriptions represented places and actions that different individuals could recognise and relate to within the story. Additionally, Silvano and Edmundo Nicolau Chue Muquissai—another resident of the village and project team member—took several photos following this descriptive dialogue. The group then transformed these pictures into cartoons by using an app named *Comica*, which converts photographs into cartoon-style images. It then finalises the comic book by including the corresponding speech bubbles to each image (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The two books were published in 2021 and delivered to the Chiquitano villages on 29 August 2022. A book launch event was organised in Vila Nova Barbecho to accomplish this delivery. A workshop was held on the same date that contributed to building understanding and consensus

<sup>11</sup> Parola, G., Poto, M. P. (2021) (ed. by) *The Escazú Agreement in Comics with and for the Chiquitano People. A Co-Created Project of Legal Design and Visual Law*, ISBN/EAN 978-88-921-4266-4 (English version), pp. 1–80, Giappichelli, Torino; Parola, G., Poto, M. P. (2021) *O Acordo de Escazú Em Quadrinhos Feito Pelo e Para o Povo Chiquitano Um Projeto Co-criado de Legal Design e Visual Law* ISBN/EAN 978-88-921-4267-1 (Portuguese version), pp. 1–80, Giappichelli, Torino.



**Fig. 2** Three examples of pictures taken by Silvano Chue Muquissai and Edmundo Nicolau Chue Muquissai and transformed into comics



**Fig. 3** Three examples of pictures taken by Silvano Chue Muquissai and Edmundo Nicolau Chue Muquissai and transformed into comics

**Fig. 4** Three examples of pictures taken by Silvano Chue Muquissai and Edmundo Nicolau Chue Muquissai and transformed into comics



on the importance of these tools—the books themselves—and how these tools can strengthen community knowledge of environmental rights and duties. The books were also disseminated to the other Chiquitano communities in Portão do Encantado (Fig. 6).<sup>12</sup>

### *1.6 An Integrated Volume With Realistic Images of the Comics*

After the book launch, during which we shared the results of the EA in comics with the Chiquitano villages, we realized that our methodological approach had become more robust and well-structured. This led us to the decision to create the current work, in which the comics are integrated into a methodological framework, detailing all the steps taken to empower effective participation in environmental matters. During this process, we also decided to enhance the comics' version by making it more realistic, accurately representing the people and places as they exist in reality. Additionally, we included new pictures and involved the protagonists of the restitution phase who appeared during the book launch. In the new edition, the same pictures were transformed using a web app called PicsArt. Additional pictures from Chiquitano territory were also used in the new version, demonstrating the natural environment in which

<sup>12</sup> For a report of the restitution journey see <https://en.uit.no/project/ecocare/blogg>, Last access August 2023.





**Fig. 5** The two book covers of the comics edition 2022 (*Cover Description* From Left To Right: Adriano Boro Makuda, Alanis Valentina Rodrigues Urupue, Anderson Ferreira Rocha, Elena Laura Chue, Silvano C. Muquissai, Edleny Chue Muquissai, Elza Margarida Chue Akurudodo Arogiareudo, Florêncio Urupe Muquissai, Francisco Xaviel Dorado Ferreira, Leiliane Chue Muquissai, Maria Chue Muquissai, Renivaldo Nezokemae, Samyla Chue Manaca. Original Photos by Edmundo Nicolau Chue Muquissai)

these communities live. This was deemed important, as the importance of the environment is heavily emphasised throughout the comic book and the EA. Using Canva, the edited photos and their associated speech bubbles were added. From there, the final pages of the comic book were created and assembled. While each version is distinct from the other, they both accomplish the overall goal of educating readers about the EA (Figs. 7, 8 and 9).



**Fig. 6** Book launch in Vila Nova Barbecho, 2022



**Fig. 7** The new version of the comics embodying a more realistic portrayal of people and places



**Fig. 8** The new version of the comics embodying a more realistic portrayal of people and places

**Fig. 9** The new version of the comics embodying a more realistic portrayal of people and places



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# Toward a Spanish Version of the Escazú Agreement in Comics: Needs, Research Background, and Methodological Steps

*Giulia Parola, Margherita Paola Poto, Arianna Porrone,  
and Natasha Koessl*

**Abstract** This chapter delves into the project's evolution after the successful publication of books on the Escazú Agreement in English and Portuguese. The initiative shifted focus towards disseminating the

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Giulia Parola and Margherita Paola Poto co-designed and co-wrote section 1, supervised the entire project and edited the final version of the chapter.

Arianna wrote section 2 and 3.

Natasha contributed to section 2 and wrote section 4.

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knowledge contained in these works to the Chiquitano communities in Mato Grosso and sharing project results in academic fora and international conferences. The reception of these books was enthusiastic among both indigenous and scientific communities, garnering positive feedback. One notable suggestion emerged prominently: the urgent need to develop a Spanish version. This recommendation was driven by the widespread prevalence of Spanish as a major language in Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Bolivia, where the majority of Chiquitano communities reside. Therefore, this chapter explores the process of expanding the initiative to include a Spanish version, emphasizing its significance and implications for promoting indigenous rights and environmental protection. Adapting the project to this crucial language aims to ensure broader and more effective access to information about the Escazú Agreement, thereby strengthening indigenous community participation and fostering environmental protection in the region.

**Keyword** Project development · Inclusion · Spanish language

## I ADVANCING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS: EXTENDING THE REACH THROUGH LANGUAGE

### *1.1 Introduction*

After successfully publishing our books on the Escazú Agreement in English and Portuguese, our initiative focused on disseminating the knowledge contained within these works to the Chiquitano communities in Mato Grosso and sharing our project results in academic fora and international conferences. The reception of these books was met with enthusiasm from both indigenous and scientific communities. The feedback we received was resoundingly positive, with one prominent suggestion standing out: the urgent need to develop a version in Spanish. This recommendation was driven by the widespread prevalence of Spanish as a major language in Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Bolivia, where the majority of Chiquitano communities reside and speak

Spanish.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this chapter delves into the process of expanding our initiative to include a Spanish version, with a focus on its importance and the implications for promoting indigenous rights and environmental protection.

### 1.2 *The Significance of a Spanish Version*

The call for a Spanish version of our books holds immense importance for several reasons. Firstly, Spanish is the dominant language across Latin American and Caribbean nations, serving as a unifying linguistic tool for disseminating knowledge and fostering collaboration among diverse communities. By offering a version in Spanish, we can effectively broaden the reach of our work to engage a wider audience, empowering more individuals and communities to access vital information about environmental human rights and legal protections.

Secondly, a Spanish version is particularly pertinent for the Chiquitano communities in Bolivia. Despite the preservation of their indigenous language, the reality is that Spanish serves as the primary mode of communication in many spheres of their lives. Therefore, making these valuable resources accessible in Spanish directly addresses the immediate needs of these communities, ensuring that they can fully comprehend and engage with the content, ultimately strengthening their capacity to advocate for their rights and preserve their environment.

### 1.3 *Addressing Socio-Cultural Gaps*

By embracing a Spanish version, we aim to bridge socio-cultural gaps that can sometimes hinder effective communication and collaboration. While our books in English and Portuguese made significant strides in promoting environmental awareness and socio-environmental rights within the Chiquitano communities in Mato Grosso and the scientific international community worldwide, there remains a sense of empowerment that a Spanish version can uniquely provide. Language holds the key to unlocking understanding, connection, and cooperation, and by

<sup>1</sup>Weber, K. (2013). Chiquitano and the Multiple Meanings of Being Indigenous in Bolivia. *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 32(2), 194–209; Weber, K. (2013). “We are all Chiquitano”: Struggles over Territory and Sovereignty in Lowland Bolivia. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 18(2), 314–336.



presenting our research and project findings in Spanish, we offer a more accessible pathway to engagement.

### *1.4 Empowering Indigenous Voices*

One of the core principles driving our initiative is the empowerment of indigenous communities. With a Spanish version, we foster a sense of ownership and empowerment among the Chiquitano community members in Bolivia.

### *1.5 Conclusion*

The development of a Spanish version of our books signifies a crucial step in the ongoing journey to advance indigenous rights and environmental protection. By embracing this initiative, we strive to strengthen our commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that the invaluable knowledge co-created by the community of researchers, student and indigenous representatives resonates with the hearts and minds of the Spanish-speaking countries, communities, and researchers from Latin America, the Caribbean, and beyond.

As we reflect on Alicia Bárcena’s profound words during the signing of the Escazú Agreement, we find ourselves united in the endeavour of leaving no one behind: “With the determined support of all, the Escazú Agreement will soon become synonymous with greater democracy, transparency and well-being. The countries and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean will always be able to count on ECLAC to assist in this noble and necessary endeavor.”<sup>2</sup>

Our project, driven by the principles of environmental justice and the empowerment of indigenous communities, seeks to contribute to the vision set forth in the Agreement. By expanding the reach of our work through the development of a Spanish version, we strive to bridge linguistic gaps, ensuring that knowledge and awareness are accessible to all interested parties and earth defenders. As we work together towards a prosperous, inclusive, and equitable region, we are reminded that the

<sup>2</sup> Bárcena A. (2018), The Escazú Agreement: An Environmental Milestone for Latin America and the Caribbean, [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/article/files/op-ed\\_escazu\\_final\\_english\\_final.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/article/files/op-ed_escazu_final_english_final.pdf); available also in Spanish: [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/article/files/op-ed\\_escazu\\_final\\_.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/article/files/op-ed_escazu_final_.pdf). Last access August 2, 2023.

Escazú Agreement serves as a guiding light, inspiring transformative change and progress on our shared path to sustainable development with equality. The countries and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean can indeed count on our unwavering commitment to this vital mission, bolstering the Escazú Agreement's legacy of greater democracy, transparency, and well-being.

## 2 THE SPANISH VERSION: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In the following sections, we will delve into the process of co-creating a Spanish version of the Escazú Agreement in comics, presenting the viewpoints of both researchers based in Europe who have been involved in the project. The comic book's assembler and Spanish translator will share their experiences, highlighting the key elements of their contribution, as well as the opportunities and challenges encountered during the final stages of the comics' co-creation.

Section 3 focuses on the composition of the comic book in Spanish. It provides technical details about the editing, formatting, and layout of the comics. Moreover, it emphasizes that the book, particularly the vignettes, should not be seen as a research product in and of itself, serving as the final output of research activity. Instead, the comics serve as a platform to explore and disseminate crucial issues. They act as a medium that amalgamates material, spatial, and temporal aspects while interweaving subjective experiences and structural elements (Cancellieri, 2023, 107)—such as environmental and social injustice, and the coloniality of modern Western epistemology (including law).

Section 4 centers on the Spanish translation of the comic book. Given that constant dialogue and the active engagement of the Chiquitano peoples were fundamental elements of the methodology employed in creating the comics, the translation into Spanish emerged as a crucial step. By doing so, we aimed to extend the reach of the acquired knowledge, especially its embodiment in the form of a graphic product, to a broader audience. Through the translation of the comics into the most widely spoken language in Latin America and the Caribbean, the comic book now becomes accessible to a larger and more diverse audience. This effort ensures that the valuable insights and experiences shared within the comics can resonate with a greater number of people, furthering the commitment to promoting environmental human rights and empowering communities across the region.

### 3 THE COMPOSITION OF THE COMIC BOOK

#### 3.1 *Storage and Organization of the Research Material*

The graphic product of the comic in Spanish has been developed following a process slightly different from the two versions in English and Portuguese (2021)<sup>3</sup> and from the version featured in this volume. It is the result of the work conducted both in the field by the participants/recipients of the project result—the Chiquitano People (as illustrated in Chapter 3)—, and remotely by an ECO\_CARE team member based in Italy (hereinafter: the assembler), with the aim of transferring the scientific findings and legal content into an accessible verbo-visual form (the comic book). As above described, the comic material was produced following the principles of LD by applying the techniques of VL, throughout the research activity conducted at Vila Nova Barbecho, in Mato Grosso (Brazil) with the active engagement of the Chiquitano People, whose involvement was ensured by the mediation of Silvano Chue Muquissai—community member, and graduate at the Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso (UFMT). The vignettes were co-created as part of the legal research (see details in Chapter 3 a, b, and e) on the field, they were collected and stored in a shared folder on *Microsoft Teams*, to connect all the ECO\_CARE team members and ensure a thorough and methodical sharing of the research material. The material was organized into two main folders: (1) the comic dialogue (the script) which was structured into sections (short sentences), one or two for each vignette; (2) the vignettes which were organized into sub-folders, namely an “Introduction to the Escazú Agreement”, and 9 chapters composing the comic book, one for each article of the Escazú Agreement chosen by the participants/recipients (Chapter 5).

<sup>3</sup> Parola, G., Poto, M. P. (2021) (ed. by) *The Escazú Agreement in Comics with and for the Chiquitano People. A Co-Created Project of Legal Design and Visual Law*, ISBN/EAN 978-88-921-4266-4 (English version), pp. 1–80, Giappichelli, Torino; Parola G., Poto M. P. (2021) *O Acordo de Escazú Em Quadrinhos Feito Pelo e Para o Povo Chiquitano Um Projeto Co-criado de Legal Design e Visual Law* ISBN/EAN 978-88-921-4267-1 (Portuguese version), pp. 1–80, Giappichelli, Torino.

### 3.2 *Assembling the Vignettes for the Spanish Version*

The digital platform chosen for the Spanish version is *Comic Life*.<sup>4</sup> The program was chosen for its accessible and intuitive interface, which allowed a smooth advancement into comic creation, thanks to its pre-existing full-page templates and panel layouts, ready-made “bubble speeches” to apply to each vignette and appropriate fonts for the chosen research result. The comic book was assembled following a chronological order (from the introduction to the Escazú Agreement to Article 9 of the Agreement, “Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters”), combining each vignette with its relevant dialogical section. Each dialogical section was placed into a white “balloon”, and associated to a character. The comic book’s layout was then refined through *Adobe InDesign*.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.3 *Assessing the Research: Knowledge Decolonization*

The process of transforming the Escazú Agreement into comics in different languages (English, Portuguese, Spanish) holds profound implications in the ongoing process of decolonizing knowledge. Firstly, it empowers the Chiquitano voices and faces, placing them at the very heart of the investigation. By co-creating and co-validating the comics, the indigenous communities themselves become active participants in shaping their narratives and advocating for their rights. Moreover, the comics play a pivotal role in broadening the audience and impact of the message they convey. Not limited to indigenous communities alone, these graphic representations reach a wider public, including non-indigenous individuals. As readers and researchers engage with the comics, they develop empathy, compassion, and care towards the struggles that indigenous peoples endure in their quest for the recognition of their human and environmental rights. The multilingual approach further enhances the global reach of this transformative endeavor. By rendering the Escazú Agreement into various languages, the comics transcend linguistic barriers, allowing diverse communities to connect and engage in conversations about environmental justice and indigenous rights. This process, in turn, fosters a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between human beings

<sup>4</sup> <http://comiclif.com/>, Last access May 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Ottavia Ferraris for the technical support.

and their natural surroundings, leading to a more inclusive and equitable approach to environmental protection.

In summary, the transformative process of turning the Escazú Agreement into comics in multiple languages embodies a powerful act of decolonization, centering indigenous voices, and promoting inclusivity. By creating a platform that encourages dialogue, understanding, and collective action, these comics serve as a catalyst for positive change, bringing us closer to a world that upholds and protects the rights of all, regardless of cultural background or origin. This leads to three significant outcomes that bring benefits to the involved community, legal researchers, and comic book readers simultaneously.

Firstly, it provides the Chiquitano Peoples with the opportunity to represent their social, temporal, and spatial world in their own terms, ensuring the utmost accuracy in delivering a research product that truly reflects their cosmovision and daily habits.

Secondly, it enables the research team to adhere to the principle of “avoid[ing] abstractionism and determinism and observing and representing human action as a socially and politically situated embodied practice,” as highlighted in the quote (Cancellieri, 2023, 112).

Thirdly, it prevents the romanticisation of the indigenous group, their customs, and traditions, as the comic book portrays real people and the socio-ecological struggles that profoundly impact their lives and prospects for survival and prosperity.

In this context, the result of a book in comics aims to make a non-Western experience accessible to a hybrid audience, bridging cultural gaps. By mainstreaming this experience, it normalizes a struggle that may directly impact some, but concerns everyone, fostering a sense of empathy that unites readers, researchers and community members of all ages and backgrounds. On the one hand, for indigenous readers, the mainstreamed experience allows them to relate to the content or learn how to respond should they encounter similar situations. On the other hand, non-indigenous readers have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the struggle and empathize with the protagonists. Indeed, comics serve not only as an effective means of communication but also as a medium for exploring alternative perspectives, encouraging readers to think, imagine, and see the world differently from the norm (Atalay et al. 2019; Cancellieri 2023, 109).

## 4 THE TRANSLATION INTO SPANISH

### 4.1 *The Importance of Understandable Legal Documents and Information*

Understanding the rules of a game results in the possibility to navigate it. In our modern society, the rules of the game are our law systems consisting of the national frameworks and the international frameworks that depend on each other. When asking the question what the rules of the game are we must define what law is and especially what it is not.

A legal norm is a rule imposing how reality *should* be.<sup>6</sup> Starting from that standpoint it is crucial to identify the following components of such a written norm: Who is the addressee of the norm? What is the goal of the norm? What is the consequence if the rule isn't complied with? Are there any exceptions?

Oftentimes, these components can only be understood by individuals with great legal knowledge creating a system in which the accessibility of legal information and enforcement of rights is bound to the individual possibility of affording a lawyer. This results in the problem that the field of environmental law exists as an uneven playing field making the most vulnerable that need judicial intervention in their favour powerless.

In the context of this co-creation, it is important to understand that a rule that isn't obeyed is worthless, resulting in the responsibility to not only impose rules but to make them understandable for the addressees. This obligation is catalyzed if we discuss laws granting rights to certain groups.

Thus, it is crucial to not only translate norms into the language of the norm addressees but also translate it into an understandable language to ensure that they can enforce and understand their rights to navigate the everlasting contradiction of economic growth and protection of the environment. Because only the law that is understood can be enforced and therefore be effective.

The Escazú Agreement aims to not only provide understandable environmental information that is accessible, but it also entitles the local societies to participate in the process of sustainable development.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Alexy, 'Theorie der Grundrechte' p. 46. Robert Alexy states that a normative sentences indicate how things should be while norms are expressed through them.

<sup>7</sup> FES Briefing, *Acuerdo de Escazú ¿Qué hace especial al Acuerdo de Escazú?*, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mexiko/19256.pdf>, Last access July 25, 2023.

addressees of this international law treaty are the people living in the Caribbean and Latin America with a focus on environmental defenders and vulnerable groups.<sup>8</sup> This project aims to facilitate access by using the concepts of LD and VL. The translation into Spanish ensures linguistically that most norm addressees of the treaty know their rights and understand their role in this context.

#### 4.2 *The Process of Translation*

The biggest difficulty in translating is to deliver the meaning of the written word in another language to the addressee while also trying to keep the “style” of the writing of the author. In our case, we also aimed to translate the text into understandable Spanish that isn’t academic. Because the addressees of this co-creation are people from Latin America and the Caribbean the next difficulty is that Spanish isn’t Spanish. The “Castellano” from Buenos Aires isn’t the same as the one from Bogotá or Santiago de Chile. The attempt to translate into neutral Spanish was made even though some words or structures are going to be in Argentinian Spanish.<sup>9</sup> The translation process took place in four steps: (1) Reading and understanding the message of every sentence, (2) Using translation tools like *DeepL* to compare to the personal translation, (3) Translating in the sense of writing the translation and (4) Reading only the Spanish version to make sure if it is understandable.

#### 4.3 *Inclusive Language: Progress Over Perfection*

Since it was the goal to create an addressee-appropriate comic book, it was also discussed if and how we would use inclusive language. In Spanish, there are different ways to gender an expression for example tod@s, todes, todxs.<sup>10</sup> Because the Spanish language offers so many “genderable” words because of the use of the masculine “o” and the feminine “a” in nouns, articles, and adjectives we faced the problem that the sentences would be much longer if we gendered by using both (todos y todas). At

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The translator is of Argentinian descent.

<sup>10</sup> Fundéu, *La x, la @, la -e*, [www.fundeu.es/lenguaje-inclusivo/la-x-la-@-la-e.html](http://www.fundeu.es/lenguaje-inclusivo/la-x-la-@-la-e.html), Last access July 25, 2023.

the same time, we didn't want to compromise our goal to create an understandable source of knowledge by using very unknown and politicized ways of gendering like the ones mentioned.

Hence, we decided to use the “o” and “a” if we felt like the noun, article or adjective was especially emphasized in the context of the sentence. We know that using inclusive language is a key to mirroring gender justice in the linguistic context. Thus, we want to clarify that this comic book is for everyone regardless of their gender identity.

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- Cancellieri, A., Scienze sociali a fumetti. Caratteristiche e affordances di un campo emergente, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 1, 2023, pp. 105–123.

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# The Comic Book

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**Abstract** This chapter contains the comic book, realised following the methodological steps analysed in the previous chapters. The participants in the comic format close the book.

**Keyword** Book in comics · Escazú Agreement · Environmental Participation · Chiquitano indigenous people

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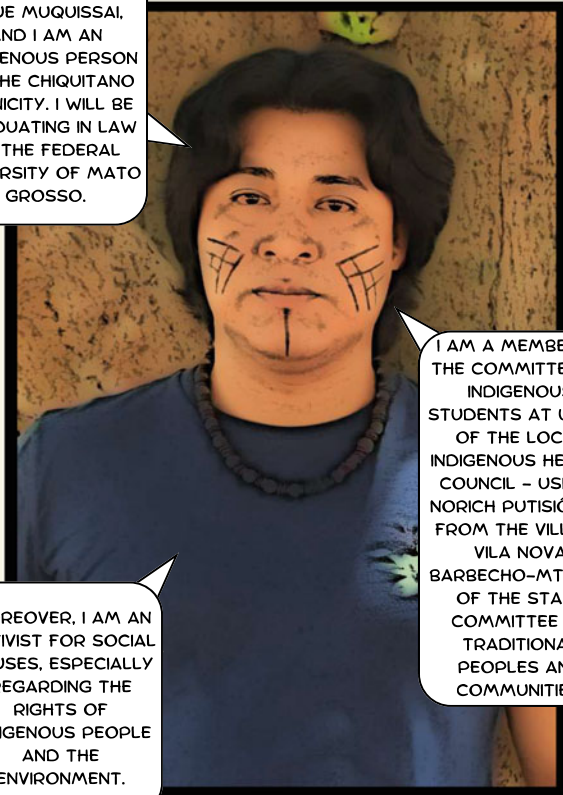
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## INTRODUCTION TO THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT

THIS COMIC BOOK IS ABOUT THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT, AN AGREEMENT WITHIN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, WHICH HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE REGIONAL COUNTRIES. IT IS A SOURCE OF GREAT PRIDE.

MY NAME IS SILVANO CHUE MUQUISSAI, AND I AM AN INDIGENOUS PERSON OF THE CHIKUITANO ETHNICITY. I WILL BE GRADUATING IN LAW AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF MATO GROSSO.



I AM A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS AT UFMT; OF THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH COUNCIL - USINHÁ NORICH PUTISIÓRCH, FROM THE VILLAGE VILA NOVA BARBECHO-MT; AND OF THE STATE COMMITTEE OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES.

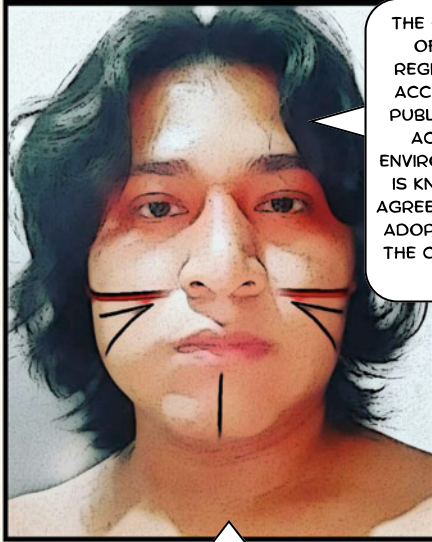
MOREOVER, I AM AN ACTIVIST FOR SOCIAL CAUSES, ESPECIALLY REGARDING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS IS THE FIRST AGREEMENT IN THIS REGION TO DEAL WITH ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES AND SEEK THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS. THIS CONTINUES TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO US, THE CHIQUITANO, CONSIDERING HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO DEFEND THE ENVIRONMENT AND LAND, OUR CULTURE AND TRADITIONS OVER HERE.



ELENA LAURA CHUE IS AN ELDER FROM THE VILLAGE VILA NOVA BARBECHO. SHE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVIST HER WHOLE LIFE, ALWAYS FIGHTING AND STRUGGULING FOR THE COMMUNITY IN THE VILLAGE AND ANY ENVIRONMENT SHE LIVED IN. SHE HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AS WELL AS FOR ALL LESS FORTUNTE PEOPLE

HER DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE CONTRIBUTED TO HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS, SUCH AS THE CREATION OF THE LOCAL HEALTH COUNCIL.



THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT'S OFFICIAL NAME IS THE REGIONAL AGREEMENT ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS. IT IS KNOWN AS THE "ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT" BECAUSE IT WAS ADOPTED MARCH 4, 2018, IN THE CITY OF ESCAZÚ, COSTA RICA.

LOOK AT THIS COINCIDENCE: THE NAME ESCAZÚ ALSO HAS AN INDIGENOUS ORIGIN AND MEANS RESTING STONE. WILL WE GET A BREAK FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FROM NOW ON? LET'S HOPE SO!

IT TOOK SIX YEARS TO BE FINALIZED AND WAS THE ONLY AGREEMENT THAT CAME OUT OF RIO+20—THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT—WHICH TOOK PLACE IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN 2012.



BUT WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO...



RECENTLY-MORE SPECIFICALLY, ON JANUARY 22, 2021-ARGENTINA AND MEXICO JOINED OTHER COUNTRIES IN RATIFYING THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT THAT ENTERED INTO FORCE ON APRIL 22, 2021.

HOWEVER, WHILE BRAZIL SIGNED THE AGREEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2018, IT HAS YET TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT.

BUT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE IMPACTS.

SOME COUNTRIES HAVE FORMALLY SIGNED THE AGREEMENT BUT THERE IS NO CONFIRMATION OF IT IMPACTING THE LAWS WITHIN THEIR LEGAL SYSTEM. IN OTHER WORDS, RATIFICATION MEANS THAT THE AGREEMENT IS BINDING FOR ALL THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE COUNTRY.



WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE SO MUCH HOPE AND MANY EXPECTATIONS THAT THIS AGREEMENT WILL SOON BE BINDING AND VALID HERE IN BRAZIL.



ALL THAT IS MISSING IS A LITTLE PUSH.

NOW, LET'S SEE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT.

## ARTICLE 1 OBJECTIVE



THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS AGREEMENT IS TO GIVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, RESULTING IN EVERYONE HELPING EACH OTHER AND HELPING NATURE.



PEOPLE WILL ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE TO ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING.



ADDITIONALLY, PEOPLE WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO GO BEFORE A COURT TO APPEAL ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS THEY DISAGREE WITH.

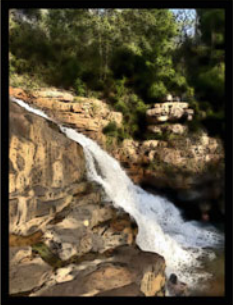


THIS AGREEMENT STRENGTHENS THESE PARTICIPATORY RIGHTS AND ENCOURAGES COLLABORATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

THIS PROTECTION IS FOR US, AS WELL AS FUTURE GENERATIONS; FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR GRANDCHILDREN.



IT IS IMPORTANT TO LIVE IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUSTAINS OUR LIVES, BUT IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO PROTECT NATURE AROUND US.





FOR THIS REASON ALONE, COUNTRIES FROM LATIN AMERICA SIGNED THE AGREEMENT.



THIS DOCUMENT SAYS THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US HAS ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS BECAUSE THE ENVIRONMENT BELONGS TO US ALL!



THAT IS WHY, IN BRAZIL, LEADERS ARE OBLIGATED TO RESPECT, PROTECT, AND PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

ALL BRAZILIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION, PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER, RELIGION, POLITICAL OPINION OR ANY OTHER CONDITION.





THE PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA ARE DIFFERENT. WE HAVE DIFFERENT CULTURES, BUT ALL SEEK THE SAME THING: TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH EACH OTHER AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

SILVANO, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT ACCESS RIGHTS ARE. CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT TO ME?

### ARTICLE 2 DEFINITIONS



YES, I CAN!

ACCESS RIGHTS GIVE YOU THE POSSIBILITY TO KNOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES, AND ALLOWS YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS...



...REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT, AND THE ABILITY TO GAIN ACCESS TO JUSTICE WHICH ENSURES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION!



SILVANO, WHO ARE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES?



SIMPLE! IT IS ANY INDIVIDUAL WORKING IN PUBLIC SERVICE!

NOW, "ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION"...

...IS ANY INFORMATION OR NEWS—AUDIBLE OR WRITTEN, IN ANY WAY—THAT UPDATES US ON THE SITUATION...



...OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ITS NATURAL RESOURCES!



THE EXPRESSION "PUBLIC" MEANS "THAT WHICH BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE; TO EVERYONE, TO A COUNTRY, TO A CITY"



WHAT IS A VULNERABLE GROUP? IS THAT REALLY HOW YOU SAY IT?

HAHA... THAT'S HOW IT IS PRONOUNCED!



WE CAN SAY THAT THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTIES IN EXERCISING THEIR FULL RIGHTS. PEOPLE THAT ARE EXPOSED TO VIOLATIONS AND SUFFERING.

### ARTICLE 3 PRINCIPLES

THIS AGREEMENT IS BASED ON VALUES THAT ARE COMMON AND IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US, NO MATTER OUR ORIGIN OR ETHNICITY. WE ARE ALL EQUAL, WHICH MEANS WE DESERVE TO BE TREATED EQUALLY AND TO ALWAYS HAVE OUR INDIVIDUALITY BE RESPECTED.





NO ONE SHOULD BE DISRESPECTED FOR BEING DIFFERENT.



ANOTHER ASPECT REFERS TO TRANSPARENCY, WHICH IMPLIES THAT OUR RIGHTS MUST BE AS CLEAR AS WATER.

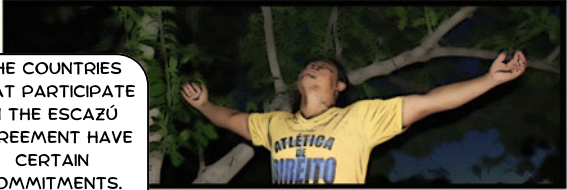


FURTHERMORE, NOBODY CAN TOUCH OUR RIGHTS. WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN CANNOT BE TAKEN FROM US.


THIS IS BECAUSE WE ACTED IN GOOD FAITH, WITH A KIND HEART, AND WE HOPE THAT EVERYONE WILL ACT IN SUCH A WAY WITH US, AS WELL.




## ARTICLE 4 GENERAL PROVISIONS



THE COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT HAVE CERTAIN COMMITMENTS. THEY MUST, FOR EXAMPLE, ENSURE THAT THEIR PEOPLE LIVE IN HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS.



THEY MUST ALSO ENSURE THAT OUR RIGHTS ARE EASILY EXERCISED, LIKE OPENING AND CLOSING A DOOR.



AS EASY AS IT IS TO KNOW THAT IT IS GOING TO RAIN BY LOOKING AT THE MOON, IT SHOULD BE JUST AS EASY TO HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT.



BUT FOR US TO EXERCISE OUR RIGHTS, WE NEED TO KNOW THEM FIRST.



WHICH WILL GIVE US THE MEANS TO COMPLAIN IF OUR RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED.



THE INTERNET SHOULD BE USED TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE POSSIBLE IN ALL LANGUAGES, WITHOUT DIFFICULTIES.



THERE ARE 3 RIGHTS IN THE AGREEMENT. LET'S TALK ABOUT THE FIRST ONE: THE "RIGHT OF ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION!"

## ARTICLE 5 ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS







DID YOU HEAR THAT? EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK AND RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT!

WHO IS ALLOWED TO REQUEST THIS INFORMATION?



EVERYONE CAN ASK FOR INFORMATION; YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO PROVE YOU HAVE AN INTEREST! IN ADDITION...



...THE MOST VULNERABLE SHOULD BE INFORMED ABOUT IMMINENT ENVIRONMENTAL OR HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS...

...ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT INVOLVE THEM! BEYOND THAT...

...THEY SHOULD ALSO BE TOLD HOW TO GO TO COURT WHEN INFORMATION IS NOT GIVEN!



ALL COUNTRIES THAT HAVE SIGNED THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT MUST ENABLE ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION!



THEY MUST ASSIST THE MOST VULNERABLE...

...BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND PARTICIPATING IN DECISIONS THAT INVOLVE THEIR INTERESTS!



WHAT IF WE ARE DENIED THE INFORMATION?



SINCE "ACCESS TO INFORMATION" IS A "HUMAN RIGHT," IT CANNOT BE DENIED!



ACCESS TO INFORMATION CAN ONLY BE DENIED IF THERE ARE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS INVOLVED, SUCH AS A LEGAL OR JUDICIAL PROHIBITION WITH A WRITTEN AND EXPLICIT REFUSAL.



IF THIS OCCURS, THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY MUST GUIDE THE APPLICANT TO...

CHALLENGE OR APPEAL IT!

HOWEVER, IF ANY COUNTRY HAS NO EXCEPTIONS WRITTEN IN THEIR LAW, IT MAY REFUSE TO GIVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION WHEN THIS MAY...



PUT PEOPLE...

OR THE COUNTRY ITSELF AT RISK!

IT ALSO INCLUDES WHEN IT PUTS THE ENVIRONMENT ITSELF AT RISK!



HOW CAN INFORMATION PUT THE ENVIRONMENT AT RISK?



WHEN THE INFORMATION IDENTIFIES A PLACE WHERE PLANTS OR ANIMALS ARE BEING PROTECTED FROM PREDATORS...

THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT! THEREFORE, IT HAS TO BE RESPECTED!





INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED QUICKLY, AND IT MUST BE CLEAR AND FREE!

IN ADDITION, THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES MUST TELL US HOW WE SHOULD ACT, WHERE TO GO, AND WHO TO LOOK FOR WHEN ACQUIRING THE INFORMATION!

WHEN AN AUTHORITY REFUSES TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION FOR SOMETHING REQUESTED, IT MUST FOLLOW THE REASONS FOR DENIAL! THEREFORE...



...THE INTEREST OF ALL PREVAILS OVER THAT OF THE PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL!



WE, FOR EXAMPLE, MUST KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IN OUR REGION, WITH OUR FORESTS, RIVERS, AND ANIMALS...



INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED PROMPTLY, CLEARLY, AND COMPLETELY FREE...



ESPECIALLY IF AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!

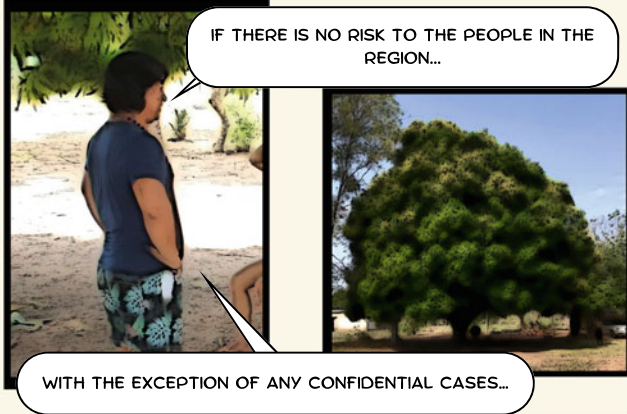


HOW DO WE KNOW WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLLUTING A REGION?

AFTER CHECKING THE COMPANIES' ACTIONS, THE AUTHORITIES ARE OBLIGED TO INFORM THE PEOPLE...

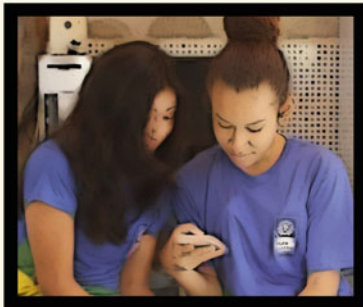


...WHO LIVE NEAR THESE ACTIVITIES ABOUT WHAT COULD HAPPEN IN RELATION TO THESE ACTIVITIES!





WE GET TO CHOOSE HOW THIS INFORMATION COMES TO US!



TO MAKE THIS EASIER, THE COUNTRIES THAT SIGNED AND RATIFIED THE AGREEMENT MUST USE VARIOUS COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND PROVIDE INFORMATION IN SEVERAL LANGUAGES!

IN ADDITION TO THESE COMMUNICATION FORMATS AND TECHNOLOGIES, THE INFORMATION MUST BE GIVEN WITHIN 30 DAYS AT THE LATEST!





...IT CANNOT EXCEED 40 DAYS,  
EVEN IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS!



INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT IS CRITICAL FOR ALL OF US!



IF THE AUTHORITIES SAY THEY DO NOT KNOW THE INFORMATION, OR  
THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE IT, THEY MUST PROVE THESE STATEMENTS!



BUT SILVANO! WHAT IF THEY  
DO NOT WANT TO GIVE US  
THIS INFORMATION?

THAT CANNOT BE THE CASE! IF THE AUTHORITIES DO NOT HAVE THE REQUESTED INFORMATION, THEY MUST...



...PROVE IT, OR DIRECT US TO SOMEONE WHO HAS IT!

BUT DENYING INFORMATION, NEVER!



SILVANO, ARE YOU POSITIVE THAT THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE GIVEN FREE OF CHARGE?



YES! AND ESPECIALLY IF THERE ARE PEOPLE IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS!

HOWEVER, DELIVERY COSTS ARE CHARGED ONLY TO THOSE ABLE TO PAY, NOT TO THE MOST VULNERABLE.



WELL, WHAT YOU DESCRIBED SEEMS DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE!

OF COURSE NOT! MANY COUNTRIES ALREADY PARTICIPATE IN THIS AGREEMENT!



ALL OF THEM MUST CREATE A SYSTEM THAT FACILITATES ACCESS TO INFORMATION, WHICH IS GUARANTEED FOR EVERYONE!

FURTHER, THIS SYSTEM MUST GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS!



**ARTICLE 6  
GENERATION  
AND  
DISSEMINATION  
OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
INFORMATION**

BY THE WAY, ENVIRONMENTAL  
INFORMATION MUST ALWAYS BE  
UPDATED...



...AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE AND...

MUST COME IN A VARIETY OF ACCESSIBLE FORMS!



SILVANO! DO WE HAVE ANY WAY OF  
KNOWING IF THERE IS CONTAMINATION OF  
THE ENVIRONMENT IN A CERTAIN AREA?



YES! GOOD QUESTION!

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES MUST PUBLISH A LIST OF CONTAMINATED SITES AND WHAT TYPE OF CONTAMINATION IT IS!

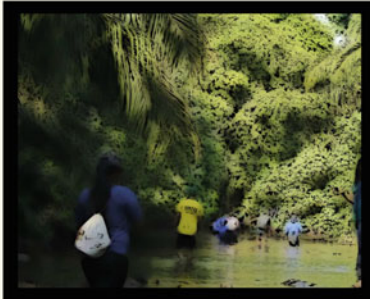
THESE AUTHORITIES MUST DISCLOSE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FACTORIES CONDUCTING ON-SITE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE DANGEROUS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT...

...AND WHETHER OR NOT THEIR ACTIVITIES POSE ANY HARM!



THIS INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETE, WITH EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES...

...PRESERVATION, PROBLEMS, THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS AND HOW THEY ACT...



IF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY POSES RISKS OF POLLUTION OR IS POLLUTING...



THE AIR, THE SOIL AND THE WATERS OF THE RIVERS OR THE SEAS...

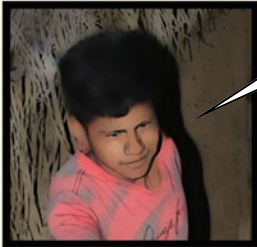


...WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW!

EVERYONE MUST BE INFORMED IF AN ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN...



...BECAUSE, ONLY THEN, DOES IT BECOMES POSSIBLE TO PREVENT DAMAGE!



...TO PROTECT OURSELVES OR TO ESCAPE, RIGHT, SILVANO?

YES!





THE COOLEST THING ABOUT THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT IS THAT IT MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO THE LANGUAGES OF VULNERABLE PEOPLES!

THE CONTENT OF THE AGREEMENT AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION MUST BE COMPLETE...



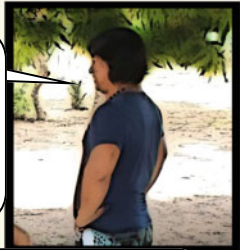
...AND MUST INDICATE NUMBERS, GRAPHICS, AND RULES TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT!



...AND MUST EVEN SHOW THE PROGRESS OF OUR RIGHTS TO ACCESS!



IN SHORT, ANY FACT RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING MUST BE MADE KNOWN!



HERE IT SAYS THAT THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES MUST INFORM THEIR PEOPLE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC POLICIES!

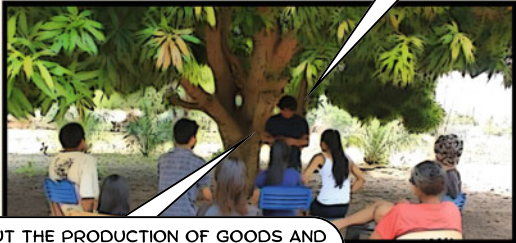
SILVANO, THIS ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION THAT YOU JUST TALKED ABOUT ALSO INVOLVES US WHEN WE USE THE WATER FROM A RIVER, RIGHT?



OF COURSE, YES! EVERYTHING!

WE HAVE TO KNOW IF THE WATER OF A RIVER IS NOT SAFE FOR CONSUMPTION, AND IF THE AIR OR SOIL ARE CONTAMINATED!

THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES ALSO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION...



...ABOUT THE PRODUCTION OF GOODS AND SERVICES IF, IN THIS PROCESS, THERE IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL RISK, RIGHT?



FOR EXAMPLE, IF COMPANIES DISPOSE OF THEIR WASTE IN A SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER...

...OR IF THEY ENSURE FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS AND RESPECT LABOUR LAWS...





...THEY EVEN HAVE TO INFORM US IF GOODS AND SERVICES MIGHT CAUSE POLLUTION OR HARM THE HEALTH OF CONSUMERS!

IN SHORT, ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION MUST ALWAYS BE KEPT UP TO DATE...



...AND ALSO MADE AVAILABLE WHEN ARCHIVED!

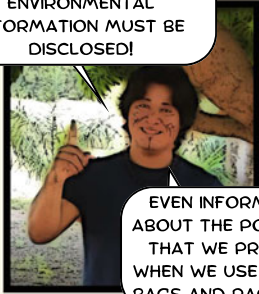


FOR EXAMPLE, WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF WASTE DISPOSED ON LAND, IN RIVERS, IN THE SEAS...



EVEN THOSE AGROCHEMICALS IN THE AIR?

YES! EVERYTHING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION MUST BE DISCLOSED!



EVEN INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLLUTION THAT WE PRODUCE WHEN WE USE PLASTIC BAGS AND PACKAGING!



IN ADDITION, PRIVATE PARTIES MUST ALSO INFORM US ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES AND THE POSSIBLE RISKS TO HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH!

AND MORE! PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMPANIES MUST PRODUCE AND DISCLOSE THEIR REPORTS...



...ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES THAT AIM TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY!

EVERYONE HAS A SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY...



...AND EVERYONE IS OBLIGATED TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE THEY CAUSE TO THE ENVIRONMENT!



IN CONCLUSION, DID YOU ENJOY LEARNING ABOUT THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT AND OUR RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION INVOLVING THE ENVIRONMENT?

WE HAD NO IDEA ABOUT OUR RIGHTS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION, SILVANO!



YOU BRING US HOPE!

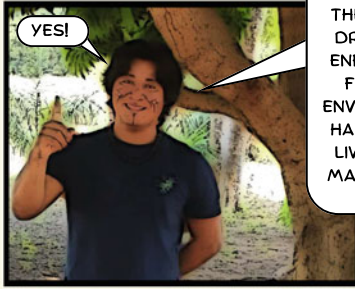
THANK YOU!

NOW, WE WILL TALK ABOUT THE SECOND RIGHT: "PARTICIPATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS!" DID YOU KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING THAT IMPACT NATURE AND OUR COMMUNITY?



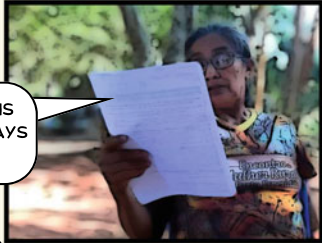
REALLY? HOW?

**ARTICLE 7  
PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION  
IN THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
DECISION-  
MAKING  
PROCESS**



THE AGREEMENT SAYS THAT EVERYONE WHO HELPED IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT—WHICH INCLUDES DRAFTING LAWS AND RULES, AND ENFORCING THEM—CREATED WAYS FOR US TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON NATURE, OUR LIVES, AND EVEN ON OUR HEALTH, MAKING OUR OPINIONS AND VOICES HEARD.

HOW COOL IS THAT! BUT WILL THIS WORK? AND WHAT ARE THESE "WAYS CREATED FOR US"?



WELL, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT ANYTHING THAT MAY AFFECT US OR THAT IS DONE IN OUR INTEREST.

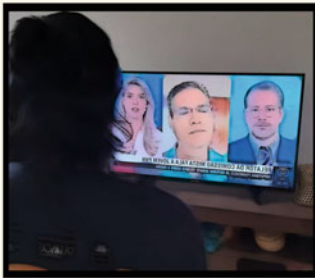


AND—AS IT IS OUR RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE AND BE HEARD—WHEN THERE IS A MEETING TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, WE NEED TO BE INFORMED OF THE DATE, TIME, AND ADDRESS. THESE MEETINGS CAN BE VIRTUAL, OVER THE INTERNET.



JUST TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA: NOWADAYS, BEFORE THE CENTRAL OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAKES A DECISION, PEOPLE NEED TO BE INFORMED THROUGH A PUBLIC CONSULTATION. THIS IS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED ON THE INTERNET, SO THAT ANYONE INTERESTED CAN GIVE THEIR OPINION. THIS WAY, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO GIVE OR WITHHOLD CONSENT ABOUT A PROJECT, AND OFFER ADDITIONAL ADVICE.

ANOTHER WAY PARTICIPATION IS GRANTED IS BY HOLDING AN OPEN PUBLIC HEARING, WHERE ANYONE CAN TALK AND SHARE OPINIONS ABOUT THE THEME OF THE HEARING.



THIS CAN ALSO BE DONE DIGITALLY. SO, WITH A COMPUTER OR A CELLPHONE, YOU ALREADY HAVE ACCESS TO THE HEARING AND CAN PARTICIPATE.



THESE PARTIES WILL NEED TO TAKE ALL OF OUR OBSERVATIONS INTO ACCOUNT. TO DO SO, THEY WILL HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE EXACTLY HOW WE CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS.

AND HOW WILL THEY DO THIS?

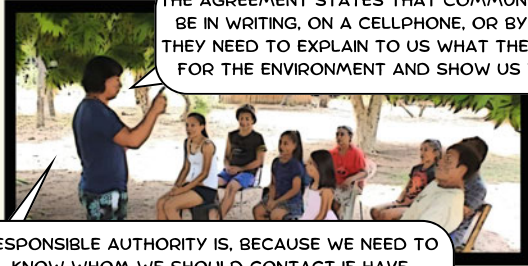


BY LEAVING PLENTY OF TIME FOR US TO GET ORGANIZED.

WILL WE NEED TO PAY FOR THIS ACCESS?



NO, THE WHOLE PROCESS IS FREE. AND THEY NEED TO TELL US EVERYTHING IN DETAIL!



THE AGREEMENT STATES THAT COMMUNICATION CAN BE IN WRITING, ON A CELLPHONE, OR BY SPEAKING. THEY NEED TO EXPLAIN TO US WHAT THE DECISION IS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SHOW US WHO THE...

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY IS, BECAUSE WE NEED TO KNOW WHOM WE SHOULD CONTACT IF HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO PARTICIPATE AND WHAT THE DATES ARE FOR THE PUBLIC HEARINGS.



DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT A PUBLIC HEARING IS? IT IS AN OPEN MEETING, THAT ALLOWS EVERYONE'S PARTICIPATION, WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO SPEAK AND GIVE OUR OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECT. IT CAN BE DONE DIGITALLY, BY CELLPHONE, OR COMPUTER. WE WILL BE INFORMED OF THE DAY, TIME, ADDRESS, AND WHETHER THE MEETING WILL BE DIGITAL OR NOT!

AS FOR LANGUAGE, REST ASSURED THAT THE AGREEMENT STATES THAT THE COUNTRIES GUARANTEE THAT THE LANGUAGE WILL BE AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE, AND EVEN HAVE LOCAL OR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES, IN CASE IT IS NEEDED.



DO YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING INTERESTING? WE CAN PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RIGHT HERE IN OUR VILLAGE, BUT WE ALSO HAVE THIS AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS!



INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION CAN BE GRANTED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FORA.

WHAT ARE THEY?



THEY ARE THE INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS WHERE LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES MEET TO DISCUSS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THAT ARE OF INTEREST TO EVERYONE THERE, I.E. THE WHOLE WORLD.



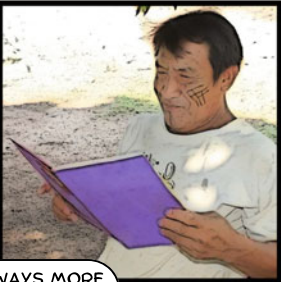


AFTER THIS, THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES HAVE TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE GROUP SO THAT PARTICIPATION IS EASIER AND HELPFUL.



THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES HAVE TO BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHO WILL BE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE ACTIVITY AND, IN OUR CASE, WHETHER SUCH AN ACTIVITY CAN HARM OUR PEOPLE.

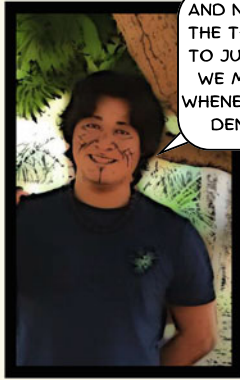
THE AGREEMENT STRENGTHENS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE...



...BECAUSE OUR POINT OF VIEW IS ALWAYS MORE VALUED...



...AND WE ARE ABLE TO SHARE AND SHOWCASE OUR VISION.



AND NOW WE TALK ABOUT THE THIRD RIGHT: "ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND COURTS!" WE MUST GO TO COURT WHENEVER OUR RIGHTS ARE DENIED OR VIOLATED.

## ARTICLE 8 ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

JUSTICE WILL ALWAYS WORK...

...WHETHER OUR RIGHTS TO INFORMATION OR PARTICIPATION ARE DENIED...



...OR ANYONE TRIES TO DESTROY NATURE.



WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IS NICE, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING ONLY ON PAPER...

NOBODY LISTENS TO OUR VOICE...



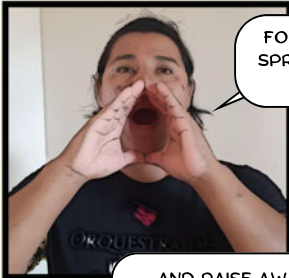


OF COURSE, THEY SHALL LISTEN TO IT! JUSTICE IS THERE TO ENSURE THAT; TO MAKE SURE THE LAW IS RESPECTED.

YOU BECAME A DOCTOR, RIGHT?



HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO ALL THIS?



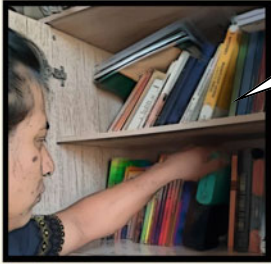
FOR THE TIME BEING, I AM FIGHTING TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT...

AND RAISE AWARENESS OF ITS IMPORTANCE.

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE WILL BE ABLE TO PUSH THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT, ENFORCE IT, AND APPLY THESE PARTICIPATORY PRINCIPLES.



WHEN THIS HAPPENS, I WILL NOT HAVE TO BECOME A "DOCTOR" TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.



OKAY, SILVANO; I UNDERSTAND THAT WE CAN GO TO COURT IF THE AGREEMENT IS NOT RESPECTED.

BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT OUR PROBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED?



ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAN SOLVE SOMETHING! JUSTICE IS THERE TO GUARANTEE THE REPARATION OF NATURE.



WHOEVER CAUSES DAMAGE TO THE PLANET MUST REPAIR IT...



AND IF THEY DON'T, THEY HAVE TO PAY A SUM OF MONEY TO COMPENSATE THE DAMAGE...



...AND A FINE FOR THE MISTAKE THEY MADE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SILVANO? ONLY THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE LAW CAN GO TO COURT, AND WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A LAWYER.



THE AGREEMENT SEEKS TO REDUCE THESE BARRIERS!

WE SHALL RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT OUR RIGHTS AND THE DECISIONS CONCERNING US.

OBRIGADA!

TCHAPIÉ!

GRACIAS!

GRAZIE!



THANK YOU!

MERCI!

FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, THE STATES HAVE TO BE COMMITTED TO TRANSLATE EVERYTHING INTO LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES, INCLUDING OURS, THE CHIQUITANO LANGUAGE.



THE BEST PART IS THAT WE WILL HAVE TECHNICAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT—FREE OF CHARGE—IN CASE WE NEED TO GO TO COURT TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.



OF COURSE, IDEALLY, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE EVERYTHING BEFOREHAND, WITHOUT HAVING TO GO TO COURT.

NO JUDGE SHOULD BE INVOLVED, UNLESS NECESSARY. IT IS UP TO US TO DECIDE WHAT IS BEST FOR OUR PEOPLE.

## ARTICLE 9 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

I DON'T KNOW... ALL I HEAR IS THE STORY OF PERSECUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS.



WHAT IF SOMEONE TRIES TO DO SOMETHING AGAINST US?



THIS IS WHY THE AGREEMENT PROTECTS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES!

IT ALSO STATES THAT EVERYONE FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS PROTECTED AND NOT THREATENED, NOR ARE THEIR ACTIONS RESTRICTED.

SOMEBODY IS FINALLY CARING ABOUT US!



DID YOU KNOW THAT OF THE 10 COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF MURDERS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS IN 2019, SEVEN ARE FROM THE AMERICAS?

WE ARE ONLY 5% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, YET REPRESENT 40% OF THE VICTIMS!

THIS CANNOT GO ON LIKE THIS!



OF COURSE NOT!  
THE AGREEMENT IS THE FIRST  
INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENT THAT OFFERS  
PROTECTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDERS.

IT HAS BECOME LAW: STATES WILL HAVE TO  
INVESTIGATE AND PUNISH ALL THOSE WHO TRY TO  
POSE OBSTACLES IN THE FIGHT FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.



NOT ONLY THAT, BUT THE STATES WILL ALSO HAVE  
TO PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO LIFE, FREEDOM OF  
SPEECH, PHYSICAL INTEGRITY, AND RIGHT TO  
ASSEMBLY, AMONG OTHER RIGHTS.



OH SILVANO! YOU HAVE CONVINCED ME! I WILL  
HELP YOU SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE ESCAZÚ  
AGREEMENT!



## PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



HI! I'M FLÁVIA FERNANDES. I'M A LAWYER, PROFESSOR, AND I HOLD AN LL.M IN LAW AT UNIRIO. I REALLY ENJOYED HELPING OUT IN THIS PROJECT!

HI! MY NAME IS LUIZ FERNANDO GIESTA. I'M A LAWYER IN RIO DE JANEIRO. I HOLD A LL.M IN CORPORATE LAW FROM THE FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS, AND A MASTER IN LAW - CSR, ECOLOGY AND ECONOMICS.



HELLO! I'M ALINE FRANCA. I'M A LAW PROFESSOR. I'M HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS PROJECT!

HI! MY NAME IS MARCELA AGUIAR. GRADUATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, I WORK AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST FOR SUSTAINABILITY.





HI! I'M GISELLE CARDOSO. I'M A MASTER STUDENT IN LAW, RIGHT TO THE CITY AT THE UREJ AND A LEGAL ADVISOR AT THE INSTITUTO ESTADUAL DO AMBIENTE.

HI! MY NAME IS ADRIANA MOLINA. I'M A LAWYER AND I WORK WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. I LOVED TAKING PART IN THIS PROJECT BECAUSE IT AIMS AT REACHING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.



HI! MY NAME IS BEATRIZ STORINO. I HOLD A LL.M IN LAW. I STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES IN THE AMAZON, AND WORK IN THE JUDICIARY OF RIO DE JANEIRO. I HOPE THAT THIS COMIC HELPS YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS!

I'M MARIANA PAUZEIRO, MASTER STUDENT AT UNIRIO, AND MOTHER OF GABRIEL AND MIGUEL. I FIGHT FOR A BETTER WORLD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.





"ORCHINHA" (HELLO IN CHIQUITANO)!!! MY NAME IS LOYUÁ COSTA! I'M AN ILLUSTRATOR. I HOLD A LL.M IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW (UFF), AND I'M A LAWYER FOR LAND RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN MATO GROSSO. IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRO DE DIREITOS HUMANOS DOM MÁZIMO BIENNÉS.

HI! MY NAME IS IGOR KALL AND I'M A MASTER STUDENT IN LAW AT UNIRIO. I LIVE IN NITERÓI-RJ.



HELLO, MY NAME IS CAROLINE! I'M A LAWYER, GRADUATE IN LAW AT THE UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL RURAL DO RIO DE JANEIRO, AND I HOLD A LL.M IN LAW AND PUBLIC POLICIES FROM THE UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO ESTADO DO RIO DE JANEIRO.

### THE PROTAGONISTS



ADRIANO BORO MAKUDA



ALANIS VALENTINA RODRIGUES URUPE



ANDERSON FERREIRA ROCHA



EDELYN CHUE MUQUISSAI



FLORENCIO URUPE MUQUISSAI



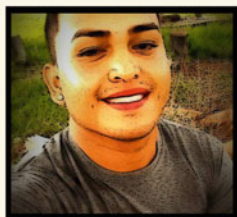
FRANCISCO XAVIEL DORADO FERREIRA



LEILIANE CHUE MUQUISSAI



MARIE CHUE MUQUISSAI



REIVALDO NEZOKEMAE



SAMYLA CHUE MANACA



ELZA MARGARIDA CHUE AKURUDODO  
AROGIAREUDO



ELENA LAURA CHUE



CLEMÊNCIA MUQUISSAI



HESTER PEREIRA DA SILVA



SAMILA CHUE MANAUS



ISABELLA FERNANDA RODRIGUES  
DE OLIVEIRA

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## CONCLUSION

The experience and results of this collaborative, multidimensional and ecologically oriented project stem from a comprehensive and inclusive approach that encompasses various methodological steps, collaborative work with the community, and the co-creation and validation of outcomes. This comprehensive approach is geared towards developing impactful visual legal material, a well-crafted multilingual offering, and a robust methodological package grounded in effective community participation. At the heart of this endeavour lies a meticulous process of engagement with the Chiquitano community. Through active involvement and dialogue, the research team and community members collaboratively identify critical issues, challenges, and aspirations related to environmental human rights and legal protections. This inclusive approach ensures that the project is rooted in the genuine needs and perspectives of the community, amplifying their voices and experiences.

The co-creation and validation of project results play a pivotal role in shaping the final outputs. By involving the community in the development of visual legal material, the team strives to produce impactful representations that resonate with the Chiquitano people on a personal level. Through shared experiences and collective decision-making, the comics and other visual materials become vehicles for effectively conveying complex legal concepts and societal challenges.

The project's commitment to multilingualism is another key facet of its success. By translating the materials into multiple languages, i.e.

English, Portuguese, and Spanish, the team ensures that the knowledge and insights generated are accessible to diverse audiences across Latin America and beyond. This approach not only fosters cross-cultural understanding but also widens the reach of the project's message, promoting solidarity and awareness among global communities.

A critical component of the project's efficacy lies in its sound methodological package rooted in effective participation. The team implements rigorous research methodologies while prioritizing the active involvement of community members at every stage of the process. This engagement not only generates robust data but also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among the Chiquitano community.

Moreover, the choice to develop the Escazú Agreement into comics in different languages and in this multimodal (visual and multi-lingual) format, along with the construction of a robust knowledge base of the methodological steps followed, fulfils also the legal requirement stated in Article 6.6 EA.<sup>1</sup> This demonstrates our commitment to making information available in comprehensible and alternative formats, promoting broader understanding and participation.

Through this comprehensive approach, the project emerges as a potent tool for advancing environmental justice, indigenous rights, and community empowerment. By synthesizing legal knowledge into impactful visual materials and facilitating cross-cultural exchange through multilingual offerings, the project paves the way for transformative change. The co-creation and validation of results ensure that the narratives and experiences of the Chiquitano community are accurately portrayed, resonating with both indigenous and non-indigenous readers alike. Ultimately, this collaborative endeavor challenges conventional thinking and fosters a shared sense of responsibility in addressing global environmental challenges and protecting human rights for all.

In conclusion, the project's integration of knowledge co-creation, participatory approaches to research, by adopting the methods of LD and VL has yielded tangible outcomes in the form of illustrated books,

<sup>1</sup> Art. 6.6 EA states that «6. In order to facilitate access by persons or groups in vulnerable situations to information that particularly affects them, each Party shall endeavour, where applicable, to ensure that the competent authorities disseminate environmental information in the various languages used in the country, and prepare alternative formats that are comprehensible to those groups, using suitable channels of communication.» Available at: <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/2018/03/20180312%2003-04%20PM/CTC-XXVII-18.pdf> last access August 2023.



while also opening up new possibilities for transformative engagements in research. By prioritizing empathy, compassion, and care within the research process, the project team has laid the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Ultimately, the project has harnessed an inclusive and co-created legal methodology to foster participation, plurality, and open spaces, laying the foundation for transformative engagements in environmental research and education.

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