

CLIMATE SOLUTION:

Cultural and Local Climate Perspectives in Colombia

Type of action

Making visible the importance of the diverse local and traditional knowledge for the creation of a dialogue with expert knowledge that sustains the national adaptation policies.

Groups and organizations involved

Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad and the Investigation Group Cultura y Ambiente of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Andrea Prieto
andreaprieto@ambienteysociedad.org.co

Location

In eight (8) areas of Colombia: Valle de Tenza (Cundinamarca y Boyacá), Fosca (Cundinamarca), Timaná (Huila), Cumbal (Nariño), Chorrera and Villazul (Amazonas), Bogotá, Upper Guajira, and Upper Putumayo.

IN COLOMBIA, THE LOCAL POPULATION HAS DEVELOPED, since ancient times, knowledge systems on nature and its interaction with nature. Climate and natural phenomena like the rainbow, different classes of precipitation, atmospheric phenomena like frosts, and climate cycles such as wet and dry seasons have been well-known, perceived, and interpreted according to specific territorial and cultural features. Cultural perspectives related to weather and climate are an important part of the diversity of knowledge that coexists in the country, and so with the aim of constructing climate change “adaptation” strategies based on these cultural conceptions and practices, the project Cultural and Local Climate Perspectives in Colombia was carried out.

Over two years, indigenous researchers and an interdisciplinary team of students and professionals researched and made visible diverse knowledge, perceptions, relationships, and strategies that exist culturally in relation to environmental and climate transformations in different areas of the country. This initiative highlighted the importance of the diverse local and traditional knowledge that indigenous, small-scale farmer, and urban communities have in the creation of a dialogue with expert knowledge that sustains the national adaptation policies. In parallel, there was an analysis of the national and international scenarios on global climate change policies, in addition to decision making and the implementation of those policies.

Within the results, it is possible to emphasize some aspects addressed in the research which are particularly relevant to analyze climate change in Colombia: the inclusion of indigenous, small-scale farmer, and urban perspectives; the dialogue

with public policies; the inclusion of a gender perspective; the generation of intercultural and interdisciplinary methodological approaches; the projection of the research in national and international arenas; the consolidation of national and international research networks; the creation of contextual analyses; and the establishment of cultural strategies for territorial and environmental management.

In addition, some tangible results can also be highlighted: four (4) articles published in magazines (three indexed: Scripta Novate-Barcelona, Iberoamericana-Berlin, Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales, and one in Flora Capital). Two (2) book chapters. One (1) working paper published in the network DesiguALdades-Berlin. Two (2) books edited with a selection of the results and international guests (Perspectivas culturales del clima¹ and Culturas, conocimientos, políticas y ciudadanías en torno al cambio climático.² Eighteen (18) presentations and eight (8) posters presented at national and international events. Organization of two (2) national and one (1) international event. Creation of fourteen (14) information pieces sharing materials: Five (5) handbooks, one (1) video, eight (8) community posters. Three (3) international research networks were consolidated. Participation in two (2) trainings for government employees on research associated with climate.

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Astrid_Ulloa/publication/305653513_Perspectivas_culturales_del_clima/links/595fbff3a6fdccc9b1c1c49f/Perspectivas-culturales-del-clima.pdf

² https://www.academia.edu/10312199/2013-Estrategias_culturales_y_pol%C3%ADticas_de_manejo_de_las_transformaciones_ambientales_y_clim%C3%A1ticas_en_Colombia

Impacts of this action on...

Climate adaptation

It recognizes and disseminates local response to climatic change impacts, which can become examples to follow or practices to be supported and strengthened.

Social and economic factors

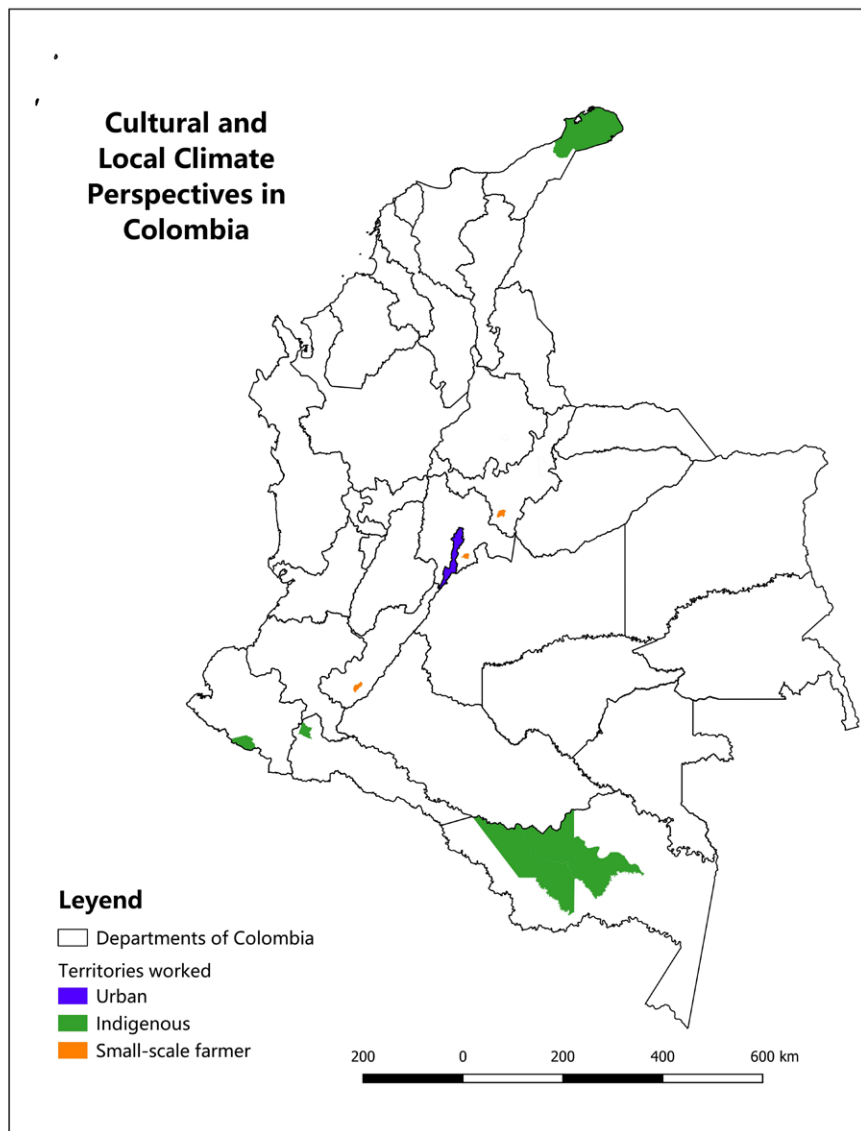
Respecting how local communities relate with nature and their responses to climate change, without an imposition of other visions and other socioeconomic practices, favors their well-being and survival.

Food security

Many of the local responses from rural areas are associated with a differentiated management of crops, which is why recognizing, making visible, and promoting these practices would help to maintain and improve the sustainability of rural families and food production.

It positions traditional and local knowledge and strengthens climate policies:

It recognizes other kinds of “knowledge” on climate, opening the door for an exchange of knowledge to create policies that are more rooted in territorial realities. This knowledge must be incorporated into forest management as a part of monitoring, under similar conditions as those used in western science. Accordingly, Ambiente y Sociedad began a community monitoring process with the participation of indigenous peoples from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and black communities from the rivers of Buenaventura. This experience was published in a document called Propuesta de Lineamientos de Monitoreo Forestal Comunitario Participativo (Proposal for Participatory Community-based Forest Monitoring Guidelines).





Trabajo con Indígenas Pasto en área de páramo. Cumbal, Nariño, Colombia. Foto: Andrea Prieto, 2012.

This action is transformational because...

On the international and national level it is more and more important to take into account local knowledge and its connection with the expert knowledge of climatologists and meteorologists, among others, in the production and analysis of strategies regarding national and global climate transformations. This is because cultural perspectives, practices, and responses are not homogeneous as they respond to diverse cultural histories and experiences, the same is true for policies and actions. They cannot be addressed in a homogeneous way. Nevertheless, taking this process to a practical level is not an easy task. Therefore, it contributes in this path, by expanding and making visible the knowledge and actions of different indigenous peoples, small-scale farmer communities, and urban populations who have not been included in the national climate change discussions, but have important knowledge on and responses to the impacts they face due to climate transformations.

This action could be scaled up through...

...structured dialogue with InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group leads. No one disputes the use of climate science as a guide to understanding the scale of the mitigation and adaptation responses needed; at the same time, diversifying the sources of inputs and perspectives to the climate modeling community regarding culturally- and territorially-grounded perspectives on the implementation of responses would greatly improve both social inclusion and scientific predictive capacity. Increased funding, dissemination, and dialogue in academic and governmental spaces would be required, as well as longer research timelines, and increased coordination with and input from community organizations.

The CLARA network includes climate justice advocates, faith groups, conservation groups, land-rights campaigners, agroecologists, and representative of peoples movements around the globe. Our commitment to social justice brought us into the climate debate and informs our approaches to climate solutions. For more information about CLARA, visit climatelandambitionrightsalliance.org.

CLARA
Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

Contact / For Further Information

Andrea Prieto, andraprieto@ambienteysociedad.org.co

Contact CLARA

Media:

Don Lehr (CLARA) / dblehr@cs.com / +1 917 304 4058

Network Coordination:

Peter Riggs (Pivot Point) / peteriggspivotpoint@gmail.com / +1 360 426 0959

Twitter: @CLARA_Alliance