DIALOGUES OF VARIOUS WORLDS

SYSTEMATIZATION OF LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICES OF AFE MEMBER FOUNDATIONS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN COLOMBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DIALOGUES OF VARIOUS WORLDS

SYSTEMATIZATION OF LEARNING AND GOOD PRACTICES OF AFE MEMBER FOUNDATIONS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN COLOMBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Dialogues of various worlds
Systematization of learning and good practices of AFE member foundations with indigenous peoples in Colombia

Fundación Alpina
Fundaciones Celsia
Fundación Grupo Familia
Fundación Mayagüez
Fundación Promigas
Fundación Propal
Fundación Restrepo Barco
Sistema de Fundaciones El Cerrejón
Asociación de Fundaciones Empresariales, AFE

Autores del estudio y la publicación
María Victoria Rivera Páez
Nicolás Bermúdez Vélez
Fundación Capacitar

Coordinación editorial
Maria Carolina Suárez Visbal
Erika Marcucci Núñez
Asociación de Fundaciones Empresariales, AFE

Edición
Bernardo González

Diseño y armada electrónica
Azoma Criterio Editorial Ltda.

Fotografías
FotoRed
Fundación Promigas
Fundación Alpina
Fundación Celsia
Corporación Horizontes
Asociación de Fundaciones Empresariales, AFE
Carrera 7 No. 73- 55 Of. 1202-2
Tel: (1) 805 0277 – 805 0285
Bogotá D.C., Colombia
@afecolombia
contacto@afecolombia.org
www.afecolombia.org
For us, the Nasa, the wagas (white people) are going at a tremendous speed. That is the problem: you have to think. Between us, the elders debate and may not solve it ... then they think again, and suddenly solve it. That slow thinking matures things. That’s what foundations need to keep in mind. In addition, each village is different.

Aníbal Bubú, Workshop on Systematization of Experiences, AFE Foundations.
In AFE, we work to generate tools, good practices and knowledge that can be used by members and other organizations of civil society, the private sector and governmental institutions to have greater and better elements to build a genuine and transparent dialogue around Colombia’s social, economic and cultural development efforts.

That is why we consider it of the greatest importance to document and systematize the initiatives of AFE Foundations with indigenous peoples in Colombia as a way of learning from ourselves, our experiences and advancing in a respectful dialogue with vital peoples for inclusive and equitable development, as well as in the development of initiatives to accompany and strengthen their projects.

This executive summary presents two key aspects of the study “Dialogues of several worlds, Systematization of learning and good practices of AFE member foundations with indigenous peoples in Colombia”: the characteristics of the programs analyzed and a summary of the learning and the best practices identified there.

María Carolina Suárez Visbal  
Executive director  
Association of Corporate and Family Foundations, AFE Colombia
The study Dialogues of several worlds was oriented to document and systematize the initiatives of AFE Foundations with indigenous peoples of La Guajira, Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, Valle del Cauca and Cauca, to present a characterization of each of their projects, accompanied by good practices, lessons learned and achievements and difficulties experienced in the management of these initiatives.

The study, carried out in 2014 - 2015, was promoted, accompanied and financed by the Foundations Alpina, Antonio Restrepo Barco, Celsia, Mayagüez, Grupo Familia, Propal, Promigas and Sistema de Fundaciones el Cerrejón.

In the research, for which collective exercises were carried out between the foundations in each region, semi-structured interviews and a systematization workshop, The AFE Foundations and the Wayúu, Arhuaco, Embera-Chamí, Nasa and Kokonuko peoples participated, as well as the experts of the Capacitar Foundation, who led the work.

To advance it, an appreciative approach was implemented, rescuing the best that each corporate foundation has to contribute in the collective reflection and to enrich the shared dialogue and learning.

From the process of systematization and analysis of the experiences studied, their successes and difficulties, a set of learning and best practices emerged that are worth to highlight and which are summarized in this publication.

The learning and best practices have been organized for presentation on topics such as participation and appropriation, relevance, relationship, capacity building, articulation with public institutions, management of alliances, knowledge management and sustainability.
According to UNDP, there is no consensus on how many are these peoples in the country: the Ministerio de Cultura legally recognizes 87, DANE records 93 based on the 2005 census and ONIC claims that there are 102. Likewise, there is a recognition of the existence of 64 spoken languages belonging to 14 linguistic families.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index shows that departments with a predominantly indigenous population, such as La Guajira and Cauca, have an MPI of 80% and 72% respectively, compared to the national average, close to 50%. Other departments such as Chocó, Vichada and Guainía have an IPM above 80%.
LA GAJIRA

The Guajira concentrates 20% of the indigenous of Colombia; 38% of this population belongs to the ethnicity Wayúu (close to 600,000 habitants), the largest of the indigenous ethnic groups in the country. There are also other villages like the Wiwa, Kogui, Arhuaco and Kankuamo.

In La Guajira there is a humanitarian crisis that has reached dramatic levels on issues such as lack of clean water in the communities, child malnutrition, high infant mortality rates, violence affecting the indigenous population and high levels of corruption, among many other factors.

Bilingual and intercultural ethnoeducation in Manaure
Promigas Foundation

The project was developed for about four years (2006 - 2009) in ethnoeducational centers (CEE) of the municipality of Manaure, contributing to the strengthening of the capacities of its management teams and teachers to make quality education with equity, prioritizing the approaches of bilingualism and interculturality, in order to link quality to relevance, facing the particularities of Wayúu culture and cosmovision.

The first phase (2006-2008) focused on the search for meanings and consensus around ethnoeducational work, the realization of agreements around the curriculum and the development of educational materials in Wayuunaiki. The second phase (2008) worked on the projection of the ethno-educational curriculum and the beginning of its application in schools. The third phase (2009) consolidated and institutionalized the advanced processes and designed strategies to ensure their sustainability.

Watta Ka “I - Self-care, food and nutritional health
Alliance of Alpine and Promigas Foundations

This initiative is aimed at strengthening the health and nutrition Children and schoolchildren of the Wayúu population in the municipality of Manaure, through education for self-care, care of others, identification of risks, food education and articulation, correct use and interlocution with services Health and Nutrition Locations.
The alliance seeks to re-establish or strengthen communication channels through an exercise in which all the actors involved achieve a shared understanding of the problem, combining traditional knowledge of the communities with the knowledge of the school and local supply, so that new knowledge emerges that facilitates self-managed solutions to the humanitarian crisis.

**Integrated productive model for social development in indigenous communities Wayúu**

*Alpina Foundation*

The project seeks for the improvement of the management of the ovine-goat herd and the strengthening of the associated productive and commercial activities; The production of animal fodder and pancoger food for families, as well as capacity building in educational institutions, local managers and communities, integrating Wayúu traditional knowledge and appropriate technologies.

Through technical assistance, continuous accompaniment and a demonstrative method for building community capacities and a network of local managers (created in project implementation), this “integrated productive model” aims at strengthening social, agronomic, livestock and agricultural indicators. Endowing of productive infrastructure.

From the study and analysis of the projects briefly described above, a set of learning and best practices emerged that are worth highlighting. Some of them emerged in the exercises of collective reflection between the foundations in each region and in the systematization workshop. Others were taken in count because the indigenous leaders and participants interviewed felt that they should be disseminated.

**THE SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA**

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is the highest tropical coastal mountain in the world (5,775 masl) and a sacred territory for indigenous peoples. It is a reservoir of water that supplies both the inhabitants of the middle and upper part of the mountain, as well as those of flat areas and cities such as Santa Marta, Riohacha and Valledupar.

At the present time, the high and middle lands of the mountain are inhabited by four indigenous towns: Ika, Kogui, Wiwa and Kankuamo; In the middle parts of the massif live migrant peasants.

Throughout history, different manifestations of violence originated in politics, narcotics trafficking, migrations and illicit crops have affected the region and its inhabitants.
Sierra Viva Program. Solid waste management and conservation of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta  
Familia Foundation

The program was born in 2008, on the initiative of a group of mamos and part of the thinking and organization of the Arhuaco people. Its mandate is to clean the garbage of the Sierra Nevada and thus to promote its conservation, establishing a system of permanent collection. It is about doing a physical and spiritual cleaning of the territory.

As of November 2014, 91,723 kg of waste had been lowered from the Sierra and 19 Arhuaco villages have been linked to the program.

The Sierra Viva program is an alliance in which the Familia Foundation, the Horizontes Corporation, the Tayrona Indigenous Confederation (hereinafter CIT), are the leaders, Tetra-Pak, Bavaria, Coca-Cola and Procafecol - Juan Valdez Café are also participants in this project.

VALLE DEL CAUCA

The percentage of the indigenous population in the Cauca Valley is insignificant (0.6%). 22,313 inhabitants of the Embera-Chamí, Nasa, Wounana and Eperara-Siapidara peoples are recognized as indigenous. 56.1% of this population is urban and 43.9% rural.

The indigenous population of the department is very invisible and shares with their peers in the country the situations of violence and displacement in their territories.

Vida del resguardo Nevera Drua Plan  
Celsia Foundation

The Foundation accompanies the Embera-Chamie indigenous community of the Navera Drua shelter in the Rio Bravo basin, Calima El Darien region, through an expert operator, in the systematic exercise of ‘thinking ahead’ to build their life plan. The accompaniment is oriented to provide methodological tools so that within an autonomous process and from their vision the indigenous build their own plan.

The Foundation is committed to supporting the formulation and implementation of life plans in ethnic territories as a strategy to generate social skills and conditions to improve the quality of life and achieve sustainability of the processes.

Building Relations  
Mayaguez Foundation

The Foundation’s Program for Leadership and Citizen Participation seeks to build capacity in the local population and a positive medium-term impact on the relationship
between business and communities. Participants are Afro-Colombian leaders from Candelaria, Pradera, Florida, Caloto and Jamundí.

Other new programs complement this strategy, among which the School of Training of Offices stands out, oriented to strengthen processes and entrepreneurial capacities (600 women participate per semester).

CAUCA

This department has been characterized by a history of territorial conflicts and peaceful resistance against large landowners, mestizos and colonists who arrived, armed groups outside the law and state policies such as mining exploitation in indigenous territories.

According to the 2005 census, about 40% of the Caucana population belong to indigenous and Afro-descendant ethnic groups that mostly living in rural areas. 71.7% of the population in Cauca is below the poverty line according to the Multidimensional Index, a percentage 22% higher than the national level. 87% of that poverty is in the countryside.

The population that is recognized as indigenous in the department according to DANE (2005) is the second largest in the country and consists of ten ethnic groups: Nasa-Páez, Misak-Guambiano, Kokonuko, Yanacona, Eperara-Siapidara, Inga, Kíső, Ambaló, Totoró and Polindara.

Social, economic and organizational development of small milk producers
Alpina Foundation

The Foundation began working with communities in the municipalities of Puracé and Rosas in improving the quality of milk, a basic condition to sell it to the company. Providing technical assistance for strengthening socio-business (administrative, financial, accounting) and the specific issue of quality control, in order to generate capacities that allow producers to work together, become competitive in their business and improve the living conditions of their families.

This project took place in agreement with Oxfam (2009 - 2014), and incorporated a working component with Patugó women, who associated and organized a granary to supply the community with food and basic necessities for both households and farms. The work with women was focused on supporting their empowerment.
Searching for relevance
Propal Foundation

For twenty-four years Propal Foundation has promoted social work with communities in northern Cauca. Initially, attempts were made to neutralize the resistance of the population to the industry through the Good Neighbor Campaign. Subsequently, this campaign became the Good Neighbor Program, which has sought to generate communication and co-responsibility between the Foundation and the communities, setting up community projects.

The social intervention focuses on four municipalities in the north of Cauca where the company’s production plants are located: Guachené, Puerto Tejada, Villarrica and Caloto, of which the latter is the only one with an indigenous population, with whom the relationship has been spontaneous and punctual.

Educational Transformation for Life
Antonio Restrepo Barco Foundation

The Educational Transformation for Life (TEV) program, implemented in alliance with ISA (Empresa de Interconexión Eléctrica), was created to design and implement a model for improving the quality of education in educational establishments and municipalities close to the infrastructure of ISA and its subsidiaries in Colombia.

The model proposes strategies to intervene in a relevant and sustainable way in the beneficiary communities. In Cauca, it focused on three indigenous schools.
LEARNINGS AND BEST PRACTICES TO HIGHLIGHT

From the study and analysis of the projects briefly described above, a set of learning and best practices emerged that are worth highlighting. Some of them emerged in the exercises of collective reflection between the foundations in each region and in the systematization workshop. Others were taken into account because the indigenous leaders and participants interviewed felt that they should be disseminated.

They have been organized for presentation on topics such as participation and appropriation, relevance, relationship, capacity building, articulation with public institutions, management of alliances, knowledge management and sustainability.

PARTICIPATION AND APPROPRIATION

▷ **Relationship for empowerment.** To transform the welfare relationship into one that contributes to generate processes of empowerment and capacity building in the communities to promote their own development visions in their territories.

▷ **Working through co-responsibility agreements** in the initiatives favors the appropriation and awareness of the responsibility of the communities.

▷ **Generate spaces and mechanisms for decision-making** by the community and its authorities on the management of projects.

▷ **Do not pay for the manpower required in the projects.** Several projects have included and secured collective cultural practices such as yanama and minga. It has also incorporated the demand of counterparts of the community or the association in productive projects, to stimulate commitment, co-responsibility and ownership.

▷ **Support initiatives that are born from a reflection within the community.** Being conceived, thought, and set in motion from its own knowledge, there is no need to promote ownership of the project.
Prioritize and encourage the active participation of community members in all times and areas of the project. Particularly in the initiatives that have not arisen from the community.

RELEVANCE

Adopt explicitly and consciously an approach that values diversity. This implies making the foundations’ procedures more flexible so that they can look at each community in a different way and read the context in order to respond in a relevant way and taking into account the contextual particularities, previous knowledge and existing capacities of the community.

Take care of the way the activities of a project are initiated. Opt for an attitude of openness to dialogue and learning, a position devoid of prejudice, plus the intention to consult and interact to understand what may be relevant.

The massive socialization of a proposal at large meetings is not a successful procedure. It is better to spend more time on a relaxed socialization where interaction and dialogue fit into different local contexts.

The experience and the system of knowledge of the community offer valid elements to orient the action, as much in the concrete and conjunctural as in the structural and strategic.

Make a critical reading of the context as a methodological principle to approach a territory or community and to advance the management of initiatives and projects in all its stages is a way not to impose external criteria, but to understand the cultural context in its own terms, without imposing the Western or institutional logic.

Consult the spiritual authorities in different phases of relationship and project management. Hearing the advice of these authorities has made it possible to improve the relevance of actions.

Betting on an intercultural perspective. Reaching intercultural dialogue to build a response that emerges from respectful and participatory work between cultural systems.

Integrating elements of the symbolism and the indigenous worldview into activities and collective views facilitates participation, appropriation and relevance, while allowing to re-characterize the problematic aspects of an experience.
Use the indigenous language in the relationship and in different areas of project management. The relevance of the actions of the foundations is increased giving priority to bilingualism.

**RELATIONSHIP**

- **Approach communities with openness to dialogue** and the basic premise of respect for the other. It is essential to recognize the legitimacy of different forms of self-government and territorial management, as well as the validity of indigenous organizational processes at different levels.

- **Recognize the indigenous view of land management.** This includes the spiritual domain that governs the cultural practices expressed in the holistic, environmental and spiritual management of the territory.

- **Relationship related to compliance and trust.** Strive to fulfill the given word and the commitments agreed upon; On this basis, it is possible to build relationships of trust in indigenous contexts.

- **Living with communities in their everyday spaces and times.** It creates links and relationships of trust, where dialogue is promoted in their own spaces, calmly, interacts with the communities in their own spaces and the parties learn to know each other.

- **Permanent communication** between accompanying technical teams and key people in the communities.

- **Maintain quality spaces for interlocution.** These spaces allow decision-makers to enrich their vision and better understand the dynamics of relationships.

- **Stable, interdisciplinary teams with capability** to promote intercultural dialogue. A constant interdisciplinary team allows to deepen the understanding of diverse situations of the context and to make decisions that integrate different points of view.

- **Inclusion of indigenous professionals and technicians in the advisory,** accompanying and knowledge management teams, as long as they have the training and experience to facilitate dialogue and intercultural construction.

- **Link operators with experience in working with indigenous people** when it is necessary to expand the team of the foundation or when there is no experience in working with indigenous communities.
Conflict-sensitive approach. The conflict is left out and priority is given to the relationship based on points of encounter between the parties; Thus achieving a joint work that benefits everyone.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The method of learning by doing. Most of the experiences demonstrate the strength of the capacity-building approach by incorporating participatory methodologies for active and experiential learning, and understanding from practice and from one’s own.

Training of local or community managers on key issues. Managers become leaders multipliers of knowledge and skills secured, appropriating the technical contributions of foundations to socialize them in community contexts.

Formation of networks of managers that provide spaces - physical or virtual - to expand and give continuity to the training processes through horizontal mechanisms of exchange of experiences and mutual support.

Integration of the social and the technical. Articulate the different dimensions of the relationship with communities and grassroots organizations in the accompaniment, as complementary dimensions.

School as a space to mobilize change. Focus the school as one of the important actors in the territory, while supporting the formation of the young population and the indigenous teachers as agents of learning and change in the community.

ARTICULATION WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Work with the public institutions in the territory to enforce the rights approach and the sustainability of actions. It is about the association in the fulfillment of its responsibility; Not to replace it, nor to execute its resources, nor to finance it.

The planning and coordination of the execution must consider the times and procedures of the public institutions.

The responsibilities assumed by each party must be clearly established.
ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT

▷ Joint focus of the contexts in which to work. A joint reading of the context between the allies allows one to understand the social complexities and the cultural particularities to make the decision to focus certain communities.

▷ Periodic meetings of all members of the alliance. They allow to follow up the development of the project, take corrective action when it’s necessary and keep all the members of the alliance informed. Those who participate must have the power to make decisions.

▷ Clearly define the purpose that unites allies.

▷ Adopt a name that gives identity to the project, beyond the institutional identity of each of the foundations. With clear agreements on how to manage the image of the alliance of each foundation and / or company in relation to the project.

▷ Explain the agreements between the allies on the dedication of the people in the teams, the logics and dynamics of institutional action, as well as the joint planning of the work schedule.

▷ Harmonize rhythms, logics, and expectations among allies. And generate spaces to deal explicitly with the problems that arise.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

▷ Implementing institutional strategies of knowledge management produced in projects with indigenous communities has allowed timely identification of successes and mistakes.

SUSTAINABILITY

▷ Focus on processes rather than specific interventions or projects, coupled with a comprehensive view and capacity building.

▷ Develop microfinance strategies that aim to facilitate the sustainability of efforts and processes, encouraging self-management in projects.

▷ Social observatories as participatory mechanisms for knowledge management and capacity building.
## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

They have been grouped into four blocks: sociocultural relevance, participation and relationship, adaptation within the foundations, and impact and scaling. The table mentions and summarizes to a large extent the lessons learned already exposed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociocultural relevance</th>
<th>Approach to cultural relevance in the commitment to equity and inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approach on intercultural dialogue in relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural values and worldviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articulate institutional actions with life plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Territorial aim to give coherence and integrality to the actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and relationship</td>
<td>Respect and relationship with indigenous traditional authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative relationship of joint construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships of trust based on permanent communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support community-led initiatives and promote participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow the communities themselves to manage the resources provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spaces for collective reflection and exchange of experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exchange of experiences between AFE foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exchange of experiences among indigenous communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation at the interior of the foundations</td>
<td>Inclusive and comprehensive approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility in approaches and in technical and administrative processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualify ways of addressing capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitability and stability of the teams implementing the projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operators with specific experience working with indigenous peoples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact and scaling</td>
<td>Knowledge management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptive Replica with Gradual Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New initiatives that integrate systematized learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work in alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articulation with territorial entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability visions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural and environmental sustainability in economic alternatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>