

2020 SCIOA STORIES

Strengthening the Capacities of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon

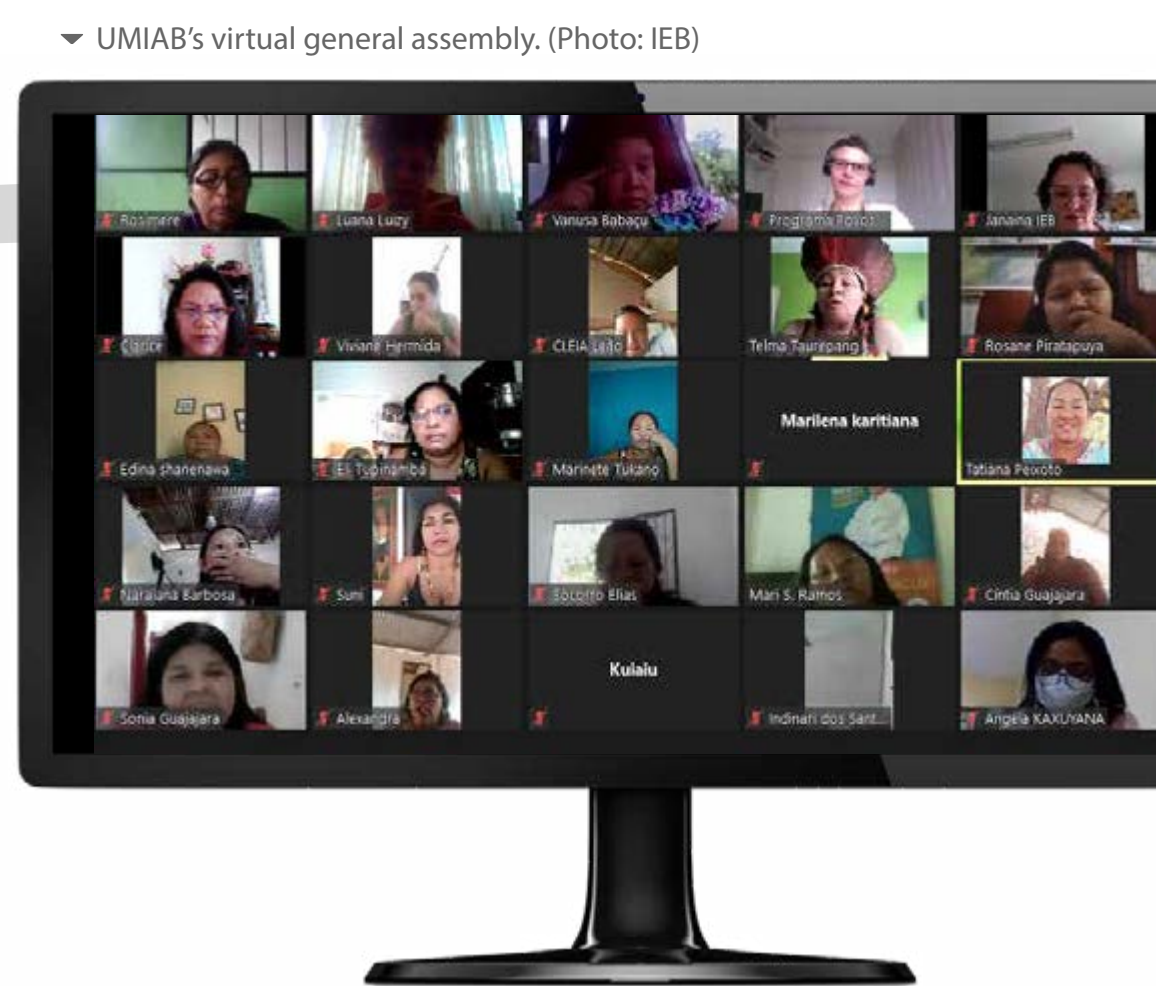
With funds from USAID, SCIOA supports the **capacity building** of 12 indigenous organizations in 5 countries (Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Suriname and Guyana). During 2020, despite the innumerable challenges the pandemic brought, these organizations **reacted resiliently** to achieve their planned objectives, all of which we want to make visible with this newsletter.



CIR leader during the capacities' self-assessment workshop. (Photo: Mónica Romo)

Preservation of tradition BRA | Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR)

In rural communities, the transmission and preservation of ancestral traditions and knowledge weaken with each generational change, as young people are every time more immersed in western urban culture. During 2020 and as part of the institutional strengthening process, the CIR focused its efforts on **the consolidation of a Youth and sustainability committee**, by carrying out a diagnosis and designing various projects to promote the preservation and update of its indigenous culture.



UMIAB's virtual general assembly. (Photo: IEB)

Virtual cooperation in pandemic BRA | Organization of the Indigenous Peoples of Alta Madeira (OPIAM)

Under 2020's pandemic context, indigenous communities have been one of the most vulnerable population groups as they are located far from medical centers and because of their connectivity limitations. Within the SCIOA project, OPIAM **received technological communication equipment** that allowed them to articulate and promote coordination initiatives with other community-based organizations and local government agencies, **to support and execute emergency actions**.

Virtual mobilization of indigenous women BRA | Union of Indigenous Women of the Brazilian Amazon (UMIAB)

Coming from the 9 states of the Brazilian Amazon, more than 60 indigenous women got together virtually for the first time to hold the **first virtual general assembly of the UMIAB**, where **the coordinating committee of the organization was elected**. Despite mobility restrictions, they worked hard to strengthen their communications infrastructure, and thus be able to maintain a constant and joint work rhythm between these 9 states, all distant from each other.

Mission and vision for action COL | Greater Indigenous Council of Tarapacá (CIMTAR)

One of the ways in which indigenous organizations influence the governance of their territories is through *life plans*, which are territorial and cultural planning documents where their mission, vision and actions are reflected. Overcoming the distancing measures, during this year CIMTAR prepared the **first version of the life plan of the Cotuhé-Putumayo Reservation**, bringing together the voices of 10 communities, and allowing them to be institutionally stronger in the eyes of public and private third parties.

Marcelino Sánchez, legal representative presents the life plan document. (Photo: SCIOA)



Members of the Nonuya Reservation discuss about their new government structure. (Photo: SCIOA)

Cohesion for better governance COL | Nonuya Villa Azul Reservation

The indigenous communities that belong to the Nonuya Villazul reservation have gathered this year to **consolidate a shared governance structure** that unites them and allows them to have a better representation within public and private institutions. They also carry out activities to preserve and promote ancestral knowledge regarding traditional medicine, to strengthen their Reservation and culture.



Teresita Antazú and other women display the artisan products made during a crafts workshop. (Photo: UNAY)

Digital strengthening to defense territories PER | Federation of Native Border Communities of Putumayo (FECONAFROPU)

Staying connected allows organizations like FECONAFROPU to **promptly report illegal activities** that take place in their territories. During 2020, they prioritized the **installation of satellite internet** at their headquarters which, in addition to bringing benefits to the communities (e.g. access to information, contact with cities), allows them to be trained in legal matters to strengthen themselves and their voice and thus continue to defend their territories.

Members of FECONAFROPU test their new satellite internet. (Photo: IBC)



Economic empowerment of indigenous women PER | Union of Asháninka and Yaneshá Nationalities (UNAY)

It is common that indigenous organizations are led by men. However, the **women of UNAY worked together to consolidate an association of artisan women**, seeking to contribute to the economic autonomy of the organization and of women. As part of their strengthening process, UNAY also worked to **install satellite internet** in 4 communities, and thus give continuity to their collective on-going actions.

Distance mutual learning SUR | Indigenous community of Galibi

As part of the capacity development process, the indigenous organizations within SCIOA self-assess their strengths and weaknesses to prepare an Institutional Strengthening Plan (ISP). Despite the fact that the Galibi community had just started the creation of its plan when distancing measures were decreed, **they managed to remotely move forward and conclude their ISP**. This achievement allows them to receive a small grant from SCIOA to execute some of the prioritized actions within the plan.

Offline connection SUR | Organization of Kaliña y Lokono in Marowijne (KLIM)

Unlike the other two Surinamese organizations, KLIM was only just beginning its self-assessment process, which normally is carried out through in-presence workshops, when the pandemic began. Given the distancing measures, **the evaluation tool used in the project (ITOCA) was adapted, combining virtual and in-presence methods**, in order to collectively consolidate a first draft of the KLIM Institutional Strengthening Plan.

KLIM members complete their capacities self-assessment. (Photo: VIDS)



Articulating virtuality and reality GUY | Moruca District Council (MDC)

Based on the results of its capacity self-assessment (with the ITOCA tool), **the MDC finalized its Institutional Strengthening Plan (ISP)** within Covid-19 restrictions. The final ISP was presented through a presental-virtual meeting (following all biosafety protocols) to the board and the leaders of the organization. Strengthening legal defense, training in project design, the legal subscription of the Council, the design of a financial policy, are some of the prioritized actions in the plan.

Members of the MDC, APA and SCIOA met to socialize the final ISP. (Photo: SCIOA)



Remotely working together SUR | Organization of Cooperating Indigenous Villages of the Para District (OSIP)

Just as Galibi, OSIP faced distancing measure restrictions during the construction of its ISP. **Using virtual alternatives, they worked remotely to consolidate a final document** that today allows them to receive a small grant from SCIOA, to implement actions within it. The concrete definition of their mission and vision, the development of a system to strengthen financial management, access to better technologies to stay connected, are some of the prioritized actions.

Planning y prioritization GUY | Upper Mazuri District Council (UMDC)

The UMDC also **finalized its ISP remotely**, giving priority to issues such as strengthening connectivity, the design of financial processes and policies, the legal registration of the Council, among others. Despite distancing restrictions, council members also managed to meet virtually also managed to design the project concept note that will allow them to receive their small grant.

We thank our partners across the 5 countries in which SCIOA works. Their support is fundamental for the indigenous organizations with whom we work to become institutionally stronger, and thus **more influential in the defense of their rights and territories**.

