



From spears to maps: the case of Waorani resistance in Ecuador for the defence of their right to prior consultation

Margherita Scazza and Oswando Nenquimo

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Cover: Protest outside the Constitutional Court in Quito. Banners read: "There is no consultation without consent"; "Decisions regarding us have to be taken with us"; "Our territories, our decisions" (Photo credit: Margherita Scazza)

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CONCONAWEP	Coordinating Council of the Waorani Nationality of Ecuador-Pastaza
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics

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About the authors

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Abstract

This report discusses the struggles and historical legal achievements of the Waorani people of Pastaza, which forced the Ecuadorian state into respecting their right to prior consultation and halted the auctioning of oil Block 22. The report highlights the relevance of community mapping as a strategic tool for empowerment and territorial defence. It first outlines the context in which the Waorani resistance emerged – characterised by neo-extractivist policies and systematic disregard for indigenous peoples' rights. It then presents how the mapping project was conceived and implemented, introducing the relevant actors and emphasising the centrality of communities and collective decision making. The report also discusses the role of participatory mapping in court litigation to challenge the auctioning of petroleum rights. In their judgments, the Ecuadorian courts recognised the violation of the Waorani people's rights to self-determination and prior consultation.

As flawed and culturally inappropriate consultation procedures, often reduced to mere formalities, are a recurring problem across the world, the legal case set an important global precedent. It also created a unique opportunity for advancing indigenous autonomy, with the Waorani asserting the need for consultation mechanisms that secure communities' consent, rather than merely disseminating information. The report aims to share lessons learned and offer inspiration to groups that might undertake similar efforts. Lessons relate to the intersections between participatory mapping and legal processes, but they also engage wider questions. Beyond classic legal-cartographic strategies, which often aim at land rights recognition, the map also served as a means for intercultural dialogue, allowing the Waorani to articulate their cosmovision and convey their views on consultation and consent processes.

1. Background

1.1 Oil extractivism and the Waorani people

Ever since the drilling of the first well in the Amazon region of Ecuador by Texaco in 1967, oil extraction has indelibly marked both the region's landscape and the lives of its indigenous inhabitants.

The Waorani are a recently contacted people who historically occupied the Tiputini River basin, before expanding southwards to the area between the Napo and Curaray rivers. Since being contacted by missionaries from the US-based Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1958, their way of life has undergone rapid and significant changes, particularly as a result of sedentarisation and evangelisation (Rival, 1994, 2002). SIL's missionaries have played a key role in initiating negotiations between the Waorani and oil companies interested in the resources located under their land (Kimerling, 2013, 2016; Ziegler-Otero, 2004).

With the endorsement of the Ecuadorian state, the evangelical organisation managed to concentrate the majority of the Waorani population in a single settlement, freeing a large portion of their territory for hydrocarbon operations. Since the 1980s, when the Ecuadorian state signed a contract with the company Conoco for oil Block 16, the Waorani territory located within the provinces of Napo and Orellana has become strategically important for the country's extractivist development model (Narváez, 2008). The Yasuni Biosphere Reserve, one of the most biodiverse places in the world, is located in the same region (Figure 1).

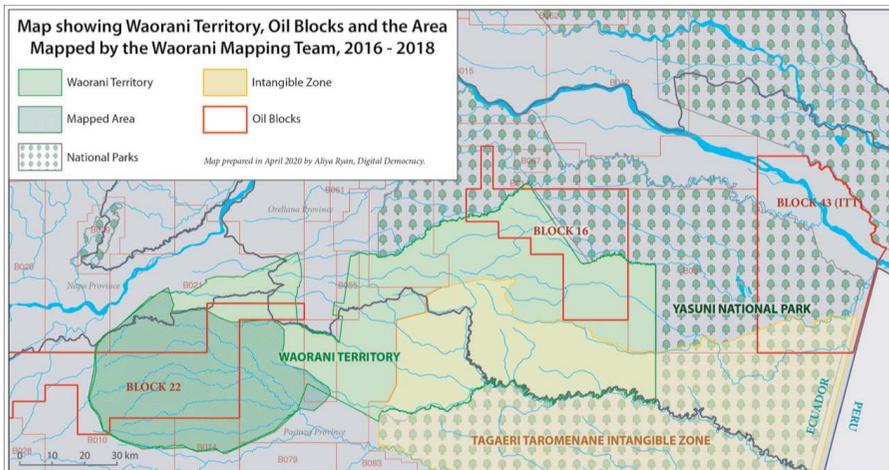
The oil companies that today operate in the area hire Waorani men to work as *macheteros*¹ or labourers in very harsh conditions, without appropriate protections (High, 2015; Ziegler-Otero, 2004). Underlying this strategy of co-optation has been the promise of development and the provision of goods to communities, which has inevitably engendered a high-dependency relationship. The civilising discourse of the oil companies and the state, combined with the negative social and environmental impacts of extractive activities, have steadily undermined the Waorani's independence and what can be characterised as the core of their culture: their unique relationship with the forest (Rival, 2002).

In 2007, the government of Rafael Correa launched the Yasuni-ITT Initiative with the intention of leaving more than US\$ 7 billion of crude oil underground, in exchange for donations from the international community. The fundraising objective was never fulfilled and, in a sudden change of discourse and position, the government gave the green light to exploitation in Yasuni National Park, and in a part of Waorani territory inhabited by two groups living in isolation – the Tagaeri and Taromenane.

1. Men working with machetes to open paths and roads in the forest.

In 2012, the state supposedly carried out a consultation in 13 of the 21 Amazon oil blocks to be tendered through the country's XI Oil Round. Among these was the so-called 'Block 22', which overlaps with the territory of 16 Waorani communities in the province of Pastaza. Figure 1 shows the Waorani territory as legally recognised by the Ecuadorian state, as well as the various oil blocks into which the Amazon region has been subdivided. The governments that succeeded Correa's 'Citizens' Revolution' have maintained a strongly extractivist approach, in stark contrast to claims of plurinationality and recognition of nature's intrinsic value (Becker, 2013).

Figure 1. Map depicting the Waorani territory, Yasuni National Park, the overlapping oil blocks, and the area mapped by the Waorani of Pastaza



Source: Digital Democracy, 2020

1.2 Legal framework

Under Ecuadorian law, non-renewable and underground resources are state property and can be exploited, regardless of whether they are in indigenous territories or protected areas. Even so, according to the Constitution the state is obliged to set up mechanisms for "free, prior and informed consultation" before carrying out any project that affects indigenous territories. However, neither the Constitution nor Decree n. 1247, which introduces the regulation for conducting prior consultation within oil block bidding processes, mention obtaining community consent through such mechanisms. This omission distorts the true nature of this human right, contradicting the state's obligations under international law. In the concluding observations of its periodic report on Ecuador, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern, remarking that the consultation activities prescribed by the abovementioned decree "are confined to the socialisation of these projects and ... fail to engender an intercultural dialogue

that would serve as a basis for obtaining the consent of indigenous peoples and nationalities and respecting their right to be consulted” (United Nations, 2012). Table 1 presents the relevant legal framework.

Table 1. National and international legal framework

Rights	Source
Indigenous peoples' territorial rights in Ecuador	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title II, Chapter IV, Art. 57 and 60
Nature's rights	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title II, Chapter VII, Art. 71–74
Property rights over non-renewable natural and underground resources	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title VII, Chapter II, Section IV, Art. 313 and 408
Indigenous peoples' right to prior consultation	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title II, Chapter IV, Art. 57 Organic Law of Citizens' Participation, Art. 81, 82, 83 Executive Decree n. 1247 and Regulation
Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent	ILO Convention N. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, Art. 6, 15, 16, 17 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Art. 10, 19, 29, 30, 32 OAS American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 23, 28, 29
Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title II, Chapter IV, Art. 57 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007, Art. 3 OAS American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 3, 11
Protective action (<i>Acción de protección</i> – remedy for the protection of constitutional rights)	Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador: Title III, Chapter III, Section II, Art. 88 Organic Law of Jurisdictional Guarantees and Constitutional Control: Title II, Section II, Chapter III, Art. 39–46

1.3 Community mapping initiative and the Waorani resistance

Given territory, or *wao öme*, as the Waorani understand it, is the fundamental element around which all aspects of their life and culture are articulated, and so the foundation of their collective identity, it is unsurprising that territorial governance forms the central dimension of Waorani politics (High, 2020). The forest provides them with everything they need to satisfy their material, cultural, social and spiritual requirements. Historically, the Waorani have defended their lands from external invasions using their spears, which today have become a symbol of struggle and territorial defence, and form an integral part of Waorani self-representation in indigenous politics (High, 2015). Current threats, however, require additional forms of territorial defence that are commensurate with the relentless global pressures underpinning them.

Having witnessed the environmental and social harm suffered by communities in other provinces due to oil exploitation, and long before learning about the state's intention to tender Block 22, the Waorani of Pastaza decided to equip themselves with a new tool for defending their territory. Under the guidance of their warrior leaders and authorities, the *pikenani*, the communities decided to map their territory in order to provide a solid foundation for territorial governance and display their ancestral knowledge and cosmovision. According to the latter, their territory thrives with life, both human and non-human, as well as with spirits that protect the forest, and fragile natural resources that must be cared for. It is a dense spider web, profoundly different from the image of fallow and uninhabited land portrayed in the maps of the *kowori*.² Through this visualisation, the Waorani intended to present the real uses of the territory, highlight their traditional relationship with it, demand respect, and show how oil exploitation would impact these elements.

After various community meetings involving deep analysis of the communities' demands and the reality established by the influence of Western culture, the Waorani decided to follow the example of other indigenous peoples and sought technical support. In 2015, with the assistance of Alianza Ceibo and two international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – Amazon Frontlines and its ally Digital Democracy – the mapping process began, involving 20 communities in the province of Pastaza.

These actors were carefully selected, having already been involved in a long-term collaboration. Alianza Ceibo³ is a foundation created by activists from four indigenous nationalities of the Amazon: A'i Kofan, Siona, Siekopai and Waorani. The alliance was formed in 2014 in parallel with Clear Water, an organisation that preceded the formation of Amazon Frontlines and whose mission was to address a basic need: provide communities with access to clean water through rainwater harvesting systems. As would later occur with the mapping, the organisations

2. In Wao Terero (the language spoken by the Waorani people), *kowori* is a term used to refer to outsiders.

3. See: www.alianzaceibo.org/.

accompanied communities in the initial phase of training and installation, then transferred all responsibilities to them by withdrawing from the field.

During the three-year mapping project, Digital Democracy⁴ assisted the Waorani in adapting Mapeo, a free, open-source application for collaborative mapping, to their needs. The Waorani were the second people to use the software created by the organisation, and it was in their communities that it was transformed from a prototype into a complete application, with detailed features and functions. Digital Democracy recognises that Mapeo grew in parallel with the Waorani team's methodology and necessities. Initially guided by the NGO, and later independently, Alianza Ceibo's team visited the communities, organising workshops to draw the first maps manually while training young people to use GPS devices and Mapeo. Building on this, community members – men and women, young and elders – were formed into small teams and, guided by the oral knowledge of the *pikenani*, began mapping their territory. Communities themselves chose which points were of sufficient interest to be geo-referenced, and accompanied them with photographs. The data were then systematised and processed using computers the team had brought to the territory, without the need for an internet connection.

Figure 2. Waorani activist and co-author of this report, Oswando Nenquimo, at a community meeting in Daipare where the printed version of the map was presented, 2017



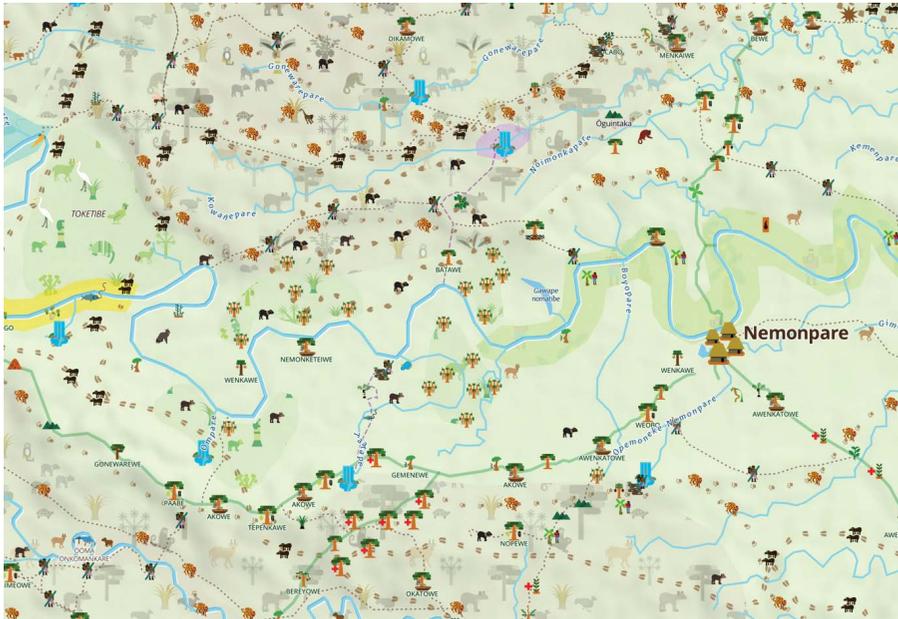
Source: Alianza Ceibo

Figure 3 shows the map created by the people of Nemompare – the first community to embark on the mapping process – which depicts most of the elements they

4. An organisation working in solidarity with marginalised communities to use technology to defend their rights. See: www.digital-democracy.org/.

recognised as relevant to their territory. These are mainly resources, but also included are sacred sites, historical landmarks and paths used by people or animals. When they first began mapping, the people of Nemonpare recorded the coordinates of every point they thought deserved to be in the map. However, there were so many that, once they were all laid out, the map looked “as if it had measles”. This density of points was regarded as potentially confusing for unfamiliar readers, so they decided to include only the most important elements, using the over 150 symbols that make up the map’s legend.⁵

Figure 3. Map created by the community of Nemonpare using the Mapeo app, 2015



Thanks to their joint effort using Mapeo, the communities managed to create a map that simultaneously depicted the territorial, resource and cultural landscape, while capturing the knowledge and wisdom of the *pikenani*. Thus, when the Waorani of Pastaza later learned of the imminent auctioning of Block 22, they and their recently formed organisation, the Coordinating Council of the Waorani Nationality of Ecuador-Pastaza (CONCONAWEP, formally created in 2012 but scarcely active until 2018), already had an instrument to mobilise in defence of their territory and rights.

5. For the complete interactive map, see: www.amazonfrontlines.org/maps/waorani/.

2. Mapping for territorial defence: the lawsuit for the violation of Waorani people's right to self-determination and consultation

2.1 Waorani of Pastaza vs. Ecuadorian State

The 'consultation' carried out by officials of Ecuador's Hydrocarbons Secretariat⁶ consisted of brief one-hour meetings that did not comply with many of the requirements established by law: excessively technical language was used without appropriate translation; oil extraction activities and their possible impacts were not presented thoroughly, in contrast to much time being spent socialising the supposed benefits, such as employment and increased access to services; and no time was dedicated to traditional methods of discussion and decision-making, nor to allowing members of distant communities to reach the meeting locations.⁷

It was in 2018 that the communities of Pastaza learned that, when the authorities visited in 2012 asking them to sign documents that appeared to be simple attendance records, they had, in fact, been 'consulted' about oil extraction in Block 22. At this point, 16 of the communities involved in the mapping project decided to come together and plan a common strategy of action and resistance. Having requested access to public information regarding the tender, they mobilised with the support of Amazon Frontlines' legal team and the Defensoría del Pueblo (the Ombudsman of Ecuador), and drafted a declaration of intent.⁸ They also appointed spokespersons for the resistance, including Oswando Nenquimo, one of the authors of this report, as well as selecting official claimants for a protective action. The latter is an instrument for constitutional redress, aimed at protecting constitutional rights from violation or omission by public authorities (Table 1). The communities forming the Waorani resistance accused the Ministry of Energy and Non-renewable Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment of having violated their right to prior consultation, as well as their right to self-determination, enshrined in the Constitution and international treaties. They therefore demanded that the consultation be declared null.

The case was examined over two instances, due to the appeal lodged by the Ministry of Environment against the ruling of the judges of the Tribunal of Pastaza in favour of the communities. This first tribunal accepted the complaint for 12 of the 16 communities – that is, only those located within the boundaries of the so-called Block 22. The ruling recognised that violation had occurred of both the right to self-determination and the right to prior consultation. Furthermore, as a

6. Secretaría de Hidrocarburos.

7. As thoroughly described by the plaintiffs' lawyer Lina María Espinosa through documentary evidence and witness statements during court hearings. See: Ruling of the Tribunal de Garantías Penales of Pastaza, Ruling N.: 16171201900001, First Instance, 9 May 2019, p. 13, <https://tinyurl.com/yyovezue>.

8. "Mandato del Pueblo Waorani de Pastaza por la defensa de nuestro territorio y nuestras formas de vida".

reparation measure, it prescribed a new consultation process be carried out by competent entities.⁹

In July 2019, the Provincial Court of Pastaza confirmed this ruling and denied the possibility of further appeals. The only remedy allowed was an extraordinary protective action,¹⁰ through which the state appealed – without success – to the Constitutional Court regarding due process. In addition to recognising the violation of the two aforementioned rights, the judges of the Provincial Court ordered two supplementary reparation measures: that the two ministries train their officials on the rights to self-determination and prior consultation; and that the officials involved in the flawed consultation be investigated with a view to determining responsibility and possible sanctions. Finally, they accepted the Waorani's request that the four communities excluded from the previous ruling be included, thereby recognising that, for the Waorani, territory is unique and indivisible.¹¹

The map created by the communities with Alianza Ceibo and Digital Democracy was included as evidence, and proved essential to the courts' understanding of the Waorani's worldview. This was made clear in the text of the first judgement:

"This process [of mapping] has made it possible to reveal the special relationship that the inhabitants of these communities have with the territory, and how essential this is for their physical and cultural survival; thus confirming that it is not simply land but a territory, subject of rights, with which they interact in a permanent, comprehensive and organic way; and that it is fundamental for the enjoyment of their other human rights."¹²

In May 2020, the Constitutional Court decided to regard the ruling as jurisprudence, given that it concerns the interpretation of constitutional rights.¹³ This ruling presents a unique opportunity to further analyse the application of free, prior and informed consent mechanisms, especially for cases involving recently contacted peoples.

2.2 A map before the law

The mapping resulted in a process that strengthened the communities and prepared the ground for a structured and cohesive resistance. In creating spaces for dialogue among leaders, communities and generations, it facilitated the transfer of knowledge otherwise at risk of disappearing. Thus, the 20 communities involved

9. Ruling of the Tribunal de Garantías Penales of Pastaza, p. 66–67.

10. *Acción de protección extraordinaria*: legal guarantee established by the Constitution of Ecuador (art. 94) and the Organic Law of Jurisdictional Guarantees and Constitutional Control (Title II, Section II, Chapter VIII). This remedy can be filed against the final decisions of national courts in cases where it is argued they have violated rights enshrined in the Constitution.

11. Ruling of the Court of Appeal, Corte Provincial de Justicia de Pastaza, Ruling N.: 16171201900001, Second Instance, 11 July 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/yxdejbx>.

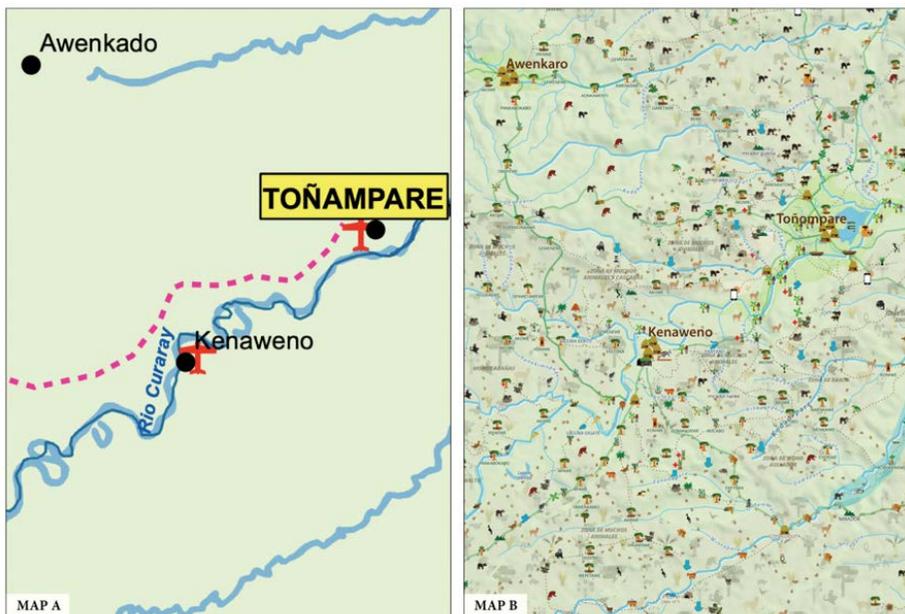
12. Judgment of the Tribunal de Garantías Penales of Pastaza, p. 3.

13. Judgment of Ecuador's Constitutional Court, Case No. 1296-19-JP, 18 May 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/y6skvdfj>.

were able coordinate their actions around a new vision for the defence and development of the territory, drawing on their renewed attention to the *pikemani*'s knowledge. The process was as important as its final product, the map, which in turn had great symbolic and practical value. In providing a tool for territorial and cultural defence, with legal, political and narrative scope, mapping achieved its expected result and more.

For the Waorani, as for many other indigenous peoples, territory constitutes a vital space for the creation and recreation of their culture. Through the map, communities managed to make manifest what the state continues to omit at both a narrative and legal level, transforming 'intangible' cultural heritage into something visible and undeniable. This includes the communities' presence within the territory, their ancestral knowledge, traditional medicine, sacred and culturally significant sites, symbols, livelihoods and toponymy, as well as the non-human beings inhabiting it. Figure 3 captures this ontological difference by comparing an official map produced by the state to the one produced by the Waorani.

Figure 4. Comparison between map produced by the state (Map A) and map created by the Waorani (Map B)



Details from two maps of same geographic area to demonstrate the difference between official maps of Waorani Territory, and those created by the Waorani during their mapping project. **Map A: Mapa base de la Provincia de Pastaza**, Pastaza Gobierno Provincial, 2019; **Map B: Mapa del Territorio Waorani**, Alianza Ceibo.

Using the community map as documentary evidence, the Waorani were able to communicate effectively with the judges, demonstrating the superficiality and inadequacy of the consultation process conducted by state officials in 2012.

Furthermore, communities were able to illustrate the potential impact of oil extraction on their culture and lives. Thus, this map served as a tool for intercultural dialogue, going beyond traditional legal-cartographic strategies aimed at recognition of territorial rights (Wainwright & Bryan, 2009). In this case, community mapping was central to the fulfilment of Waorani self-determination, a right disregarded by successive Ecuadorian governments. The map, in demonstrating the need for an ad hoc governance system and consultation process based on the Waorani's own worldview, enriched this right with new meanings and applications.

At a political level, the initiative prompted the reform and consolidation of the Waorani of Pastaza's representative organisation, CONCONAWEP, and the emergence of a new generation of leaders. Communities, which emerged strengthened and united, now have a sound basis for political decision-making regarding ancestral governance and territorial – and thus social, economic and cultural – planning. As such, the map does not represent the end, but rather the beginning, of a process of growth. Finally, the success of the mapping initiative and the Waorani resistance brought the Waorani people closer to the national indigenous movement. New relationships are being forged with the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), as well as with other indigenous nationalities.

The support that communities received from the organisations providing technical, legal, communicational and financial expertise, was essential. While Alianza Ceibo, Amazon Frontlines and Digital Democracy were not the first NGOs to work in Waorani territory, their commitment to providing long-term support, co-creating solutions and fostering community autonomy, proved successful when it came to respecting the demands of the Waorani. In particular, the previous work carried out by Alianza Ceibo and Clear Water was essential to ensuring a strong level of independence, and a relationship of trust with their workers, Waorani as much as *kowori*. It is in this context that the conditions allowing communities to reflect collectively on their future, as well as the changes experienced since contact, were created. Moreover, it is thanks to such experiences that the communities of Pastaza decided to rely on both their ancestral wisdom and Western knowledge.

2.3 Challenges and lessons learned

The actors involved in the mapping had to overcome several challenges and unforeseen events, which they were able to address through good communication and dedicated moments of reflection.

Initially, the communities expressed scepticism regarding the creation of a new map. Numerous external actors had made maps of their territory while failing to offer any concrete contribution, or, in many cases, even share the results. It was only after discussion with Alianza Ceibo and having profoundly analysed the map's potential uses, forms and meanings, that the communities decided to mobilise. It was not

easy to find a definition of a map that would not compromise the meaning of territory as understood by Waorani culture, which is how the idea of a 'spider web' map was conceived.

The communities also feared drawing a map with inner boundaries could provoke internal fragmentation and conflicts. Thus, they decided to create a map highlighting the uniqueness of Waorani territory. In addition, former leaders of Waorani Nationality of Ecuador (NAWE) – the general organisation of the Waorani, dominated by various interests and visions – initially rejected the proposal, as they struggled to conceive of a map whose purpose was not to delimit their territory and obtain property rights, as had been the case up to that point. That is why the mapping only took place in the 20 communities located in Pastaza province, where the idea was originally born.

Another critical issue concerned the younger generations, whose knowledge of the territory was much more limited than the elders or *pikenani*, and who therefore omitted much relevant information when mapping. To address this, the communities decided to create heterogeneous mapping teams, with trained young GPS users and expert *pikenani* guides. In this way, a valuable space for knowledge transmission was created. Different gender groups were also created as, despite traditionally being an egalitarian society with no strict division of labour, knowledge today varies among Waorani men and women. For instance, women recorded the location of medicinal plants, fruit trees and weaving palms, whereas men were more familiar with hunting grounds and animals' paths.

There was also a feeling of insecurity among young people regarding the ownership and legitimacy of the map. New generations, having grown up with a state education, seemed to think that Western knowledge was more valuable than traditional knowledge, and therefore expressed doubts about the validity of the map they made. Thanks to the collective discussions led by Alianza Ceibo when it delivered the printed maps, it was made clear that young people, as the legitimate owners of their territory, should also feel they were the owners of its representations. However, where these graphic representations are intended to serve as a tool for dialogue and mediation with the *kowori* world, communities' representational freedom will inevitably be limited. In order to produce an effective tool, understandable to the Ecuadorian state and non-indigenous users, the Waorani had to adopt Eurocentric cartographic conventions and adapt their illustrations – for example, colouring rivers in blue rather than brown, as they often are in the Amazon, or prioritising the most important elements to avoid confusing the reader. Nevertheless, there was an effort to decolonise the map's icons, which were created by designers based on drawings made by the communities.

3. Conclusions

The Waorani communities of Pastaza's legal victory represents a historic achievement, setting a precedent of utmost importance for the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, as well as for other countries. Such success enriches the recently adopted Ecuadorian Constitution, a unique charter informed by the great efforts made by allied indigenous and environmental movements. Significant progress has been made in the national and international debate regarding the right to prior consultation and free, prior and informed consent.

Thanks to the map, both the Tribunal and Court of Pastaza, later validated by the Constitutional Court, were able to grasp the centrality of territory for the physical and cultural survival of the Waorani people, and therefore the importance of truly consultative processes. As such, they were able to formulate fully informed decisions.

It is worth noting that the results presented would have not been achievable without the support of Amazon Frontlines and Digital Democracy. While the mapping process and resistance were entirely community-led, the legal process was profoundly influenced by the public pressure exerted through Amazon Frontlines' media campaign.

The Waorani's experience can serve as a blueprint for others. Every culture has a different vision of territory and how to govern it, and therefore each mapping process will be as unique as the maps produced. For the Waorani and for Alianza Ceibo, the mapping process involved a lengthy period of collective analysis, which helped define shared objectives, goals and methods.

When planning mapping in similar contexts and with similar functions, communities should take account of the following strategic considerations:

- Before the process begins, ensure the unity and full participation of all communities in order that each decision is truly collective;
- Form alliances and articulate actions with other peoples and nationalities, learning from each other;
- Take the necessary time to consolidate unity and capacities – the Waorani's process of learning was spread over years of work with communities and other peoples;
- By involving everyone within communities, including young and old, a complete representation of cultural and territorial knowledge can be assured, and a valuable means of knowledge transmission and intergenerational dialogue created;
- Find the support of actors that have a respectful and collaborative – rather than overbearing – attitude;

- Resistance and the struggle for indigenous rights do not stop when the mapping process ends, nor with a legal victory – the development of autonomous governance systems and initiatives for the protection of territory and culture are lengthy processes, which must continue over time. Such strengthening needs to occur both within communities and the national legal framework.

It is clear that the map alone cannot be considered a sufficient tool to protect territorial rights. However, other key actions were conceived and consolidated around this effort. Moreover, it is through this initiative that the Waorani were able to protect their territorial integrity and, with respect to their right to consultation and consent, make their voices heard to the Ecuadorian state and the international community.

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From spears to maps: the case of Waorani resistance in Ecuador for the defence of their right to prior consultation

This report discusses the struggles and historical legal achievements of the Waorani people of Pastaza, which forced the Ecuadorian state into respecting their right to prior consultation and halted the auctioning of oil Block 22. The report discusses community mapping as a strategic tool for empowerment and territorial defence, and explores its place in legal proceedings that culminated in Ecuadorian courts affirming the Waorani people's rights to self-determination and prior consultation.



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