Luca Eufemia
Michelle Bonatti, Stefan Sieber

COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNANCE MANUAL

Case Study
Municipality of Paz de Ariporo,
Casanare (Colombia)

english

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EDITION AND AUTHORS

Author:	Eufemia, Luca
Co–Authors:	Bonatti, Michelle
	Sieber, Stefan
Conceptual Support:	Etcheverry, Selva
	Novoa, Jennifer
	Parker, Amanda
	Rodriguez, Mical
ZALF Support Team:	Löhr, Katharina
	Morales, Hector
FHV Support Team:	Peñuela R., Lourdes
	Ardila R., Vanessa
With the support of WWF Colombia:	Sofía Rincón

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INTRODUCTION

Governance models offer valid tools to solve a number of conflicts, including the use and management of natural resources. They also help to promote the community perspective, where inclusion and commitment are key factors [11]. The following manual presents Community-based Governance (CBG) as a possible key to understand the socio-political-economic perspectives of local groups. It has two objectives: first, to offer those interested in applying this model a practical, methodological and concise plan of action. Also, through a specific case study, this work presents the perspectives of the community members of the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo (Casanare, Colombia).

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNANCE (CBG)?

Community-based Governance (CBG) is a bottom-up organizational model. It can be facilitated by a central government, private organizations and / or NGOs. The CBG aims to increase the participation of local groups in the planning, research, development, management and formulation of policies and strategies for a wider community. Decentralization of management strategies allows for dealing with the territory's unique political, economic and social problems [11]. The attention and inclusion of local perspectives allow for a synthesis of collective problems and the development of joint solutions to solve them.

Many cases around the world demonstrate that under a CBG model, local cultures and traditional institutions are highly important for sustainable development [1, 18, 19, 22]**.**

This applies especially to rural contexts in developing countries where strong economic pressures have favored the accelerated incorporation of natural resources for immediate productive use. In most cases, this is based on external rationality, with the consequent impact on the natural and human environments [5, 15, 20]. Undoubtedly, CBG must address socio-political-economic development in relation to the use and management of natural resources. Local cultures and traditional institutions are a key ingredient in prosperous and sustainable development, and

also incorporate local and ancestral knowledge [7]. Therefore, integrating traditional institutions in the use and management of natural resources is necessary to ensure sustainable development [2, 10, 17, 18, 22, 23].

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNANCE (CBG)?

The "how" to build CBG uses a methodological approach that both understands and values the local perspective. This manual proposes to follow 3 steps (Figure 1):
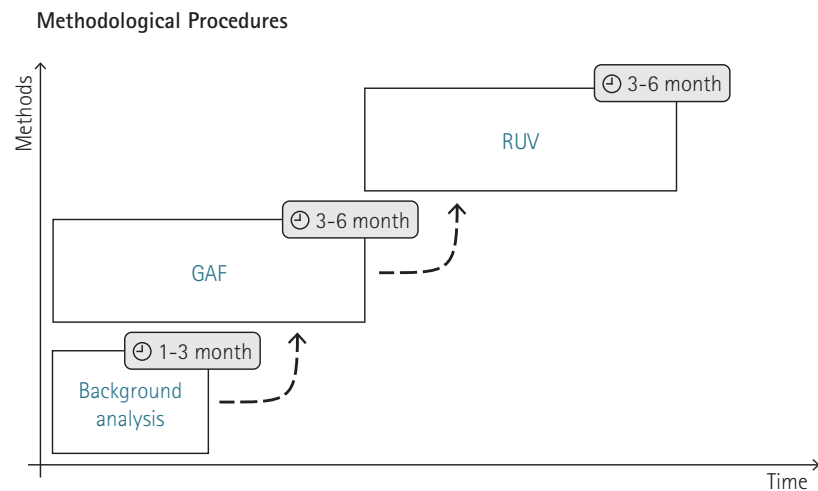
Methodological Procedures

Figure 1: Methodological procedures.

1   **Background analysis**: A review of the literature and creation of questionnaires addressed to a representative sample of experts (in economics, politics, sociology, environment, etc.) in order to know reliable trends and opinions. It is also possible to create categories and variables for a selection of the same experts. Interviews can be live or online, and structured or unstructured. Key participants represent experts from local institutions and civil society groups in the selected regions. This step helps us to know and explore the local context as well as to support the next steps.

2 **The Governance Analytical Framework (GAF)**: This method can be used to identify current governance processes [13]. It analyzes the social interactions in which stakeholders make decisions regarding collective problems, thereby creating, reinforcing or changing social norms and institutions. We therefore suggest the development of qualitative approaches (e.g. questionnaires for interviews, workshops and focus groups, world cafes, etc.) that aim to understand and synthesize collective problems, as well as to identify hierarchical and power structures within a society and institutions.

3 **RUV pedagogical framework**: The pedagogical tool known as **RUV** [4] implies the organization of workshop(s) with community members. It is built on three conceptual phases:

✓ Recognition of collective problems (**R**):
value, identify and integrate local values

✓ Better understanding of collective problems (**U**):
recognizing the structure of the problems according to local
people and their motivations

✓ Visualizing the future with collective solutions (**V**):
rethinking images of the future and creating operational
solutions to problems

In accordance with these three principles, and in order to implement the RUV methodology, the structure of the workshop is outlined in six steps (Table 1).

STEPS	ACTIVITIES	RUV METHODOLOGY	OBJECTIVE
	Participant registration		
1.	Kick-Off: Welcome, presentation, setting expectations	Dialogue and individual presentation	Self-definition and community characterization
2.	Sharing workshop agenda and methodology. Dialogue about governance models	Present definitions of the concepts (e.g. community-based governance)	To build a common understanding of the concepts (e.g. community-based governance)
3.	Presentation of a „current scenario" (case study) Explain and guide participants through the elements of weak governance (conflict, politics, economics and land use, etc.)	Recognition (R) (rescue, identify and integrate local values) Group activity (theatre of images, drawings etc.) (Reference method: Resource map)	Draw a "current scenario" of the concepts
4.a	In-depth understanding of the causes of the "current scenario"	Better understanding (U) Group activity (theatre of images, drawings etc.) (Each group explains the problem by role playing the challenge) Open discussion with guiding questions Group presentations (Reference method: Ishikawa/ fish-bone diagram)	Understanding "current scenario" in complex situations (recognize the structure of the problems)
4.b	Search for local solutions. Visualize an "expected scenario" (own local alternatives to change the situation)	Visualize (V) (rethink images of the future and create operational solutions to problems) Group activity (theatre of images, drawings etc.) Open discussion with guiding questions Group presentations	Create an "expected scenario" for the next 5 years Imagine new conditions

5.	Evaluation of solutions	Visualize (**V**) (rethink images of the future and create operational solutions to problems)	To create and evaluate solutions for "current scenario"
		Group activity (theatre of images, drawings etc.)	Critical education process (learn to evaluate and criticize solutions)
		Open discussion with guiding questions	
		Offer a list of possible solutions to rank (evaluation)	
6.	Workshop evaluation	Open discussion with guiding questions	Evaluating the effectiveness of applied methods

Table 1: Six steps for the application of the RUV pedagogical methodology.

Groups are formed for the joint activities. They represent different sectors, in an exercise of constant integration and dialogue. Under the RUV framework (Figure 2), each group aims to create images and key points (e.g. theater of images, drawings etc.) for three key categories, and then present the results in a plenary session. Integrating the GAF (step 2), the categories proposed in order to build a current scenario are the following:

- The role of the local and central governments (political perspective)

- The role of the existing economic model (economic perspective)

- The incidence of social exclusion (social perspective)

Afterward, the same groups create new images and key points (e.g. theater of images, drawings etc.) for the three proposed categories, followed by a plenary where the following desired scenario proposals are presented (expected scenario):

- **How can we improve** the role of central and local governments?

- **How can we improve** the role of the existing economic model?

- **How can we promote** social inclusion?

Finally, the last group exercise includes a platform where each group has the opportunity to evaluate the images and key points of the others' proposals in a collaborative exercise.
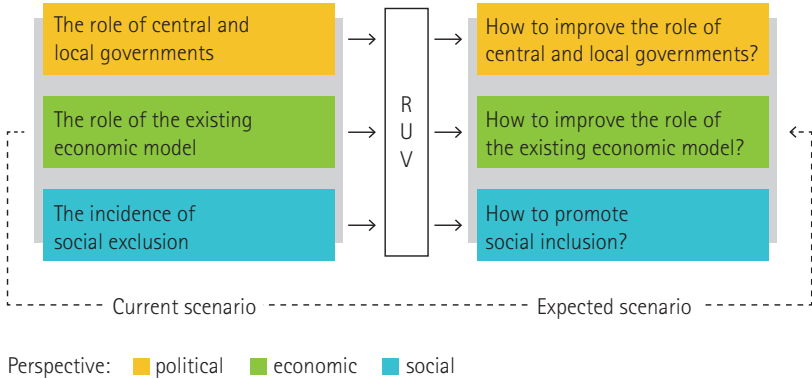
RUV Pedagogical Framework

The role of central and local governments	→	R U V	→	How to improve the role of central and local governments?
The role of the existing economic model	→		→	How to improve the role of the existing economic model?
The incidence of social exclusion	→		→	How to promote social inclusion?

Current scenario ‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧‧ Expected scenario

Perspective: ■ political ■ economic ■ social

Figure 2: RUV pedagogical framework.

CASE STUDY:
MUNICIPALITY OF PAZ DE ARIPORO, CASANARE (COLOMBIA)

Contribution of community members:

Ardila Rodríguez, Andrea Vanessa
Barreto Meta, Leidi Johana
Broccardo, Alessio
Camargo Caballero, Aurora
Cáceres, José Tibaldo
Duran, Yamith
Gaitán, Hugo
Gaitán, Nelson
Gordillo, Prada Osman
Latriglia, Víctor
Lizarazo Aaron, Ruiz
Madrid, Gilma
Martínez, Luis
Martínez Nino, Marina
Parales, Libia
Pérez, Yohaira Andrea
Ramirez, Daniela
Rojas, Luisa Fernanda
Sánchez, Ana Edilce
Suarez, Luz Elena
Vargas, Edwin

Context:

This work focuses on the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo, located in the flooded savannas of the Colombian Llanos, in eastern Colombia in the Orinoco River basin. This region was chosen due to its peculiar characteristics both at the ecosystem level and the processes of radical changes in the use and the management of natural resources. The region's biome is characterized by floodplains, gallery forests and a large number of sub-units, such as the sub-Andean jungle, etc. [16]. It

has two distinct seasons, the rainy season and the dry season, and is characterized by its extensive, diverse and heterogeneous savannas [24]. Its climate is of intertropical savanna [8]. The economy in Los Llanos is mainly based on extensive cattle ranching and oil extraction [12]. During the 1970s, only 2 % of the eastern plains of the Orinoco basin had been affected by significant changes in land use. However, due to anthropic and extractive interventions, in 2012, the unsustainable transformation of the region already reached 15.5 %, which caused a drastic reduction of the flooded natural savannas – from 11,401 km^2 to 9,283 km^2 (18.5 %) [24]. These changes have negative impacts on the biological and cultural diversity of the Llanos, including the loss of habitat due to the expansion of extractive interventions, intensive agriculture, water and soil contamination, the introduction of exotic species and the growing threat of climate change [14, 21].

Flooded Savannas, 2017 (© Jorge García, Courtesy WWF Colombia).

Flooded savannas are strategic and mostly unknown ecosystems, despite their ecological, biological and economic importance. They represent 12.5 % of the Orinoco basin, an ecosystem with great cultural, economic, biological and ecological importance [17]**.**

The local communities of the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo seek a concrete and replicable example of how to strengthen community governance. This reflects the role of different groups in the municipal community and their perspectives on anthropic and extractive interventions (agricultural expansion and the exploitation of hydrocarbons, including oil) and the link between natural resources. In the same way, it is understood to draw a new paradigm of socio-environmental and economic models and the relationship with local culture, known as Cultura Llanera (CL). Therefore, we wish to present the application of the three steps of the manual of community governance in the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo. The objective of this exercise is to present the perspectives of community members in order to alleviate the impacts of anthropic interventions on local social and cultural dynamics, and at the same time help in understanding the intrinsic relationship between natural resource depletion and CL erosion in Colombia.

1   **Background analysis:** In this phase, we conducted a review of the scientific and gray literature on the economic, environmental, political and social history of the region. Then, we organized unstructured interviews with 10 local experts and branches of civil society. Subsequently, we conducted an online survey targeting a larger group with national and international experts, with the active participation of more than 50 members. People were chosen for their experience and commitment to social, economic, political and environmental issues in the department of Casanare. After compiling the responses, we extract the percentages for each characteristic and indicator created and structured the results. The findings suggest that there are three mechanisms that cause weak governance. The **first** is centralized power, both economic and political, that directly impacts law enforcement and monitoring at the local level. The **second** mechanism is the role of central and local governments, often linked to weak land tenure regimes, land distribution and land planning. Finally, the **third** is social exclusion and the impact that marginalization of rural and indigenous communities has on the use and management of natural resources.

2 **Governance Analytical Framework (GAF):** We created a GAF-survey that focused on the understanding of social interactions within which actors/participants make decisions regarding a **collective problem**, thereby creating and reinforcing **social norms** or institutions. In addition to the acquired data, we used "snowball" sampling techniques, selected local groups based on their membership in the study area and their experience in CL [3]. In parallel, we maintained a field diary based on the GAF. Under this step, we interviewed a total of more than 50 participants in the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo. Each interview was authorized and transcribed, with a duration between one and three hours. The results show the following:

- **The collective problems** are related to the growing model of extractive development, which is mainly based on agricultural expansion (rice) and the exploitation of hydrocarbons (oil). These are perceived as the main threats to the protection of CL.

- **The social norms** integrated into the CL are both formal and informal. Under an extractive economic model, and within the political agenda and the productive sector, natural resources are managed under a hierarchical structure where power relations and interference occur. However, from the perspective of land use and the management of flooded savannas, participants perceive the critical importance of maintaining and preserving **traditional livestock** as the most appropriate action for CL protection due to its identity factor in the region. Likewise, community action boards (**CAB**s) are seen as an important form of citizen action for the protection of community rights. These mechanisms are civic and non-profit, community-based organizations for social management.

3 **Pedagogical Framework RUV:** To achieve this step, we organized the first *Inclusive Workshop on Community-based Governance in Flooded Savannas* in the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo. It had two objectives: first, to share and evaluate the results of the previous steps (1 and 2); second, draw guidelines to identify how to strengthen community-based governance, presenting suggestions and/or recommendations. This workshop served to foster the dialogue between different actors and to promote

a better understanding, acceptance and inclusion of community-based governance models. 21 members of the community participated, representing civil society, as well as the public and private sectors. The process for strengthening community-based governance involves the recognition (R) and the better understanding (U) of the current situation.

The description of R and U is built upon the following elements:

- The definition of community-based governance that is agreed with the members of the community and takes into account the local reality:
  e.g. "Community governance is a process of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation of social norms and institutions".

- With the recognition of weak governance:
  e.g. Due to socio-environmental and socioeconomic problems.

- With the identification of a collective problem:
  e.g. The way in which agricultural expansion (rice) and exploitation of hydrocarbons (oil) develop in the district.

- With the recognition of social norms:
  e.g. Traditional Livestock and the role of community action boards (CAB).

- With the common points that unite the different actors:
  e.g. The CL is deeply rooted in natural resources, their use and management.

- With the existing processes of dialogue and interaction among the actors:
  e.g. Workshops and the role of the CAB.

The perspectives of the groups were discussed in order to reach a consensus about each of the proposed categories. The results are presented in Figure 3.
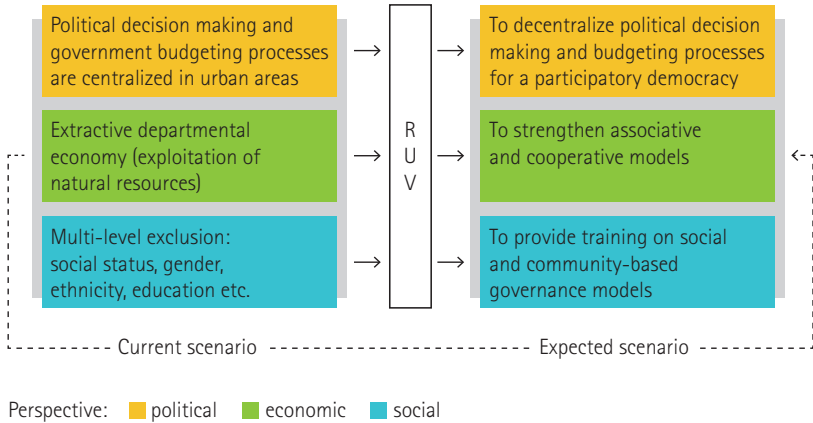
RUV Pedagogical Framework (Case study)

Figure 3: RUV pedagogical framework (case study).

From a current scenario to an expected scenario, the 21 participants found consensus on the three proposed categories:

- The role of central and local governments

> Political decision-making and government budgeting processes are centralized in urban areas

- The role of the existing economic model

> Extractive departmental economy (exploitation of natural resources)

- The incidence of social exclusion

> Multi-level exclusion exists based on: social status, gender, ethnicity, education etc.

The visualization (V) of operational solutions to community problems supports the development of an expected scenario. It presents suggestions on the local, economic and social policy of the municipality, built together with the different actors.

The group's common perspectives on the proposed categories are the following:

- **How to improve** the role of central and local governments?

> Decentralize political decision-making and budgeting processes for a participatory democracy (decentralization)

- **How to improve** the role of the existing economic model?

> Strengthen associative and cooperative models (associativism)

- **How to promote** social inclusion?

> Provide training on social and community-based governance models (social models)

Decentralization, associative and social models are common points that were articulated in a list of specific suggestions (steps to follow) for public institutions and community members (Table 2). Each column represents a category supported by a list of concrete suggestions that support local perspectives. Also, to demonstrate the connections between the political (decentralization), the economic (associativism) and the social (social models) elements, we created three advocacy groups:

Capacity building	Lobbying	Research

From here, it is important to reinforce these connections to better understand the local reality, as well as to strengthen or build community-based governance models in the region.

Inclusive Workshop on Community-based Governance in Flooded Savannas in the Municipality of Paz de Ariporo; 2019 (© Alessio Broccardo).

GROUPS	DECENTRALIZATION	ASSOCIATIVISM	SOCIAL MODELS
	○ Develop initiatives to strengthen citizen participation systems ○ Prepare a historical review of the movement to defend natural resources ○ Develop an agenda of allies detected at the local, national and international levels (contact details and brief explanation of their field of action) ○ Periodically organize a situation analysis (such as drawing negotiation strategies, social communication strategies, how to draw up an action plan)	○ Propose economic diversification alternatives for the communities	○ Promote dialogue on social structures that propose alternatives to existing values in society and the economy ○ Rethink the notion of the value of work that each person in the community can contribute, based on seeing citizens as valuable resources to influence reality ○ Create spaces of organizational work that allow its participants to experience systematic practices that expose the value of human beings with their different knowledge, work and perspectives ○ Develop workshops on diversity and its value within the social and community fabric (social state, gender, ethnicity, education, etc.)
	○ Strengthen existing legislation (national and international) on human rights, participation and public information ○ Analyze the possibility of developing programs of state transfers to NGOs or intersectoral community instances ○ Draw strategies to bring municipal services closer to their localities (state decentralization) and establish alliances with solidarity actors in urban centers for the management of bureaucratic procedures and lobbying processes that support their interests ○ Elaborate a basic guide of political education	○ Establish a direct or indirect relationship scheme with companies that promote the transformation of savanna ecosystems (build dialogue and interaction) ○ Create political and corporate alliances at the national and international levels to make conflicts and denunciations visible	○ Organize a workshop on community lobbying

	○ Compile the current legislation relevant to the topic under discussion (local, national and international). ○ Use virtual tools to research, organize and communicate ○ Develop a reference bibliographic guide to learn about similar experiences in communities in Latin America and the world, as well as specific information on actors involved in socio-environmental and socioeconomic conflicts ○ Promote training on climate change to qualify the political discourse, going beyond the particular „we defend our way of life" to the general „we defend the whole planet in this small but valuable trench"	○ Promote the formation of companies about climate change in order to make an invaluable contribution when making economic decisions ○ Rescue literature on the use of land under traditional livestock within the framework of the Llanera Culture ○ Explore economic alternatives for the zones, preserving the role and the low environmental impact of traditional livestock in particular	○ Promote processes of research, analysis and training to influence local government policies

Table 2: Lists of suggestions and connections between categories.

CONCLUSION

This manual can be widely used as a tool for the community in general, as it seeks to promote the political, economic and social analysis of community actors as well as scenarios to address the socio-environmental and socio-economic problems that affect them. The political, economic and social formation of the communities must allow the generation of real processes of social dialogue through a clear understanding of the interests that each party defends. The steps presented in this manual, as well as the case study developed, can facilitate dialogue and build trust between community groups, take into account local perspectives, and promote the development of the community-based governance models for sustainable development.

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