



Session 7 Recap: Community Ownership in Practice

Indigenous Dialogue on Wind Energy: Insights from Brazil and Colombia

In Session 7 of the **JustRE Alliance Community of Practice (CoP)**, we explored how Indigenous communities in Colombia and Brazil are experiencing and responding to wind energy development in their territories.

The session opened with Holle Wlokas (JustRE Alliance / **INSPIRE**), who introduced the Alliance and the Community of Practice as a space for peer learning on the social dimensions of renewable energy transitions. The conversation was introduced and facilitated by Juanita Fonseca-Duffo (JustRE Alliance coordinator).

The session featured **María Paula Gil** from the **Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)**, Colombia, and **Ligia Amoroso Galbiati** from the **International Energy Initiative – IEI Brasil**, who coordinated and participated in a **community-to-community exchange between Wayuu** Indigenous participants from La Guajira, Colombia, and Potiguara Mendonça Indigenous communities in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.

The exchange was part of the training programme **Intercultural Dialogue, Wind Energy and Community Participation**, developed by SEI in collaboration with the University of La Guajira. It was coordinated and executed by SEI and IEI Brasil. Its objective was to **strengthen dialogue and exchange experiences between Indigenous communities regarding the presence and impacts of wind energy projects in their territories**, while highlighting lessons learned, organizational strategies, and initiatives that have generated tangible benefits for communities.

Community-to-community exchange

A central theme of the session was the value of direct dialogue between communities. María Paula explained that communities experiencing territorial transformations linked to renewable energy projects often face similar challenges around participation, relationships with companies, consultation processes, and defense of territory, creating opportunities for mutual learning and solidarity across regions.

Ligia explained that the participating communities themselves helped define the priority topics for the exchange, including consultation and community protocols, benefits and compensation, relationships with companies, and the decommissioning of wind farms.

The methodology included:



Meetings and dialogues led by community leaders



Small group discussions and plenary sessions



Horizontal learning and reflection spaces



Simultaneous interpretation between Portuguese and Spanish



Community panel presentations and field visits



Graphic facilitation and documentation through a memory booklet






The exchange strengthened trust, mutual recognition, and solidarity between communities from different countries, while reinforcing community leadership and the visibility of community-based knowledge often excluded from technical energy discussions. Participants reflected on how **these kinds of exchanges can reduce isolation and help communities share practical strategies** for navigating renewable energy development in their territories.

Participation and governance

A key discussion throughout the session focused on what **meaningful participation actually requires in large-scale renewable energy processes**. Across both Colombia and Brazil, communities reflected on **recurring structural challenges, including limited early and meaningful consultation, unequal or unclear benefit-sharing mechanisms**, companies entering territories without prior dialogue, weak recognition of Indigenous governance systems, and limited participation in decision-making processes.

Ligia reflected on the role of free, prior, and informed consultation under **ILO Convention 169** and explained how Potiguara Mendonça communities in Brazil organized collectively through Indigenous associations and consultation protocols to strengthen territorial governance and negotiation capacity with companies and government institutions.

The discussion highlighted:

-  The importance of recognizing community governance structures
-  The need for accessible and understandable information
-  The role of consultation protocols in preventing fragmented negotiations
-  The importance of collective decision-making processes rooted in community timelines and territorial realities
-  The importance of long-term relationship building between companies and communities




The speaker also reflected on the distinction between participation as consultation and participation as **meaningful influence over decision-making processes**. The exchange surfaced strong interest from Wayuu participants in how Indigenous political organization and territorial coordination functioned in the Brazilian context, particularly the role of associations established since 2013 to strengthen collective negotiation capacity and territorial representation.

A central reflection emerging from the discussion was that communities are not simply raising concerns about projects. **They are actively proposing governance approaches, negotiation strategies, and alternative visions for how renewable energy development should unfold in their territories.**

Relationships, territory, and long-term sustainability

Juanita guided the conversation toward the question of what it takes to build relationships that last beyond project implementation and remain grounded in territorial realities.

María Paula reflected on three central themes emerging from the exchange:

-  The distinction between compensation and long-term benefits
-  The importance of strengthening community capacities and access to information
-  The need to think about decommissioning and territorial futures from the outset of projects

The discussion emphasized that **compensation should respond to impacts, while benefits should contribute to long-term wellbeing and shared prosperity**. Participants reflected on how renewable energy projects, while framed as “green,” **can still reproduce inequities if governance structures, participation processes, and benefit-sharing mechanisms are not equitable and transparent.**

The conversation also highlighted the **importance of strengthening community capacities** through intercultural learning approaches that value Indigenous knowledge systems, local governance structures, and community ways of learning. Another important reflection focused on **long-term sustainability and the need to discuss what happens after** projects reach the end of their life cycle, including infrastructure removal, restoration of territory, future economic opportunities, and continued community support.

Women's leadership also emerged as a central theme throughout the discussion. Participants reflected on the **important role women played in governance, negotiations, care practices**, and long-term territorial planning. The conversation highlighted how women's leadership often helped **integrate discussions around wellbeing, health, food systems, education, and collective care into renewable energy conversations** that are frequently approached only from technical or economic perspectives.

Key reflections from the discussion

The Q&A reinforced the importance of creating spaces where communities can exchange experiences directly and reflect collectively on shared challenges related to participation, compensation, socio-environmental impacts, territorial governance, and relationships with companies and institutions.

The discussion also explored how communities are navigating power asymmetries with companies and institutions, the role of capacity strengthening within communities themselves, and the importance of building negotiation processes rooted in local governance structures and territorial priorities. Reflections from the **Potiguara Mendonça experience highlighted the importance of strong political organization**, the creation of Indigenous associations, consultation protocols grounded in ILO Convention 169, and women-led leadership processes that helped strengthen negotiation capacity and territorial governance.

Participants showed strong interest in the methodology used for the exchange, including the role of **horizontal dialogue spaces, simultaneous interpretation, graphic facilitation, field visits, intercultural learning approaches, and community-led documentation processes**. The conversation reinforced how **peer-to-peer exchanges can strengthen trust**, solidarity, mutual recognition, and the visibility of community knowledge often excluded from technical renewable energy discussions.

Regional and cross-regional exchange also emerged as an important reflection throughout the discussion. Participants reflected on how Indigenous communities across different geographies are often navigating similar tensions and transformations linked to renewable energy development, creating important opportunities for mutual learning and solidarity. Reflections from participants across Latin America, South Africa, and Canada reinforced the potential for these types of exchanges to continue expanding across regions as a way to strengthen collective learning, territorial governance, and long-term community leadership in renewable energy processes.

The session also reinforced several broader principles for a just energy transition, including the need for participation processes that go beyond consultation toward meaningful influence in decision-making, **long-term relationship building between companies and communities, recognition of Indigenous governance systems**, investment in community capacity strengthening, and greater inclusion of women and care-centered perspectives in energy governance discussions.

The session reinforced that communities do not only bring concerns to renewable energy processes. They also bring **proposals, governance practices, political strategies, and long-term territorial visions** that can help reshape how renewable energy transitions are imagined and implemented across regions.

