



Faculty of Legal Sciences

School of International Studies

**Collective Rights of Indigenous Communities and
Peoples in the National and International Framework:
Saraguro Community**

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International Studies**

Author:

Camila Fernanda Pachar Castro

Advisor:

Ana María Bustos Cordero

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To my tito, for being the reason for achieving my goals and being the person who made everything change for the better, I adore you. To my parents for being the people who have supported me the most and have been for me in my difficult moments, I love them infinitely.

To my angel, who will always be present in my achievements, and I will dedicate each of them to him.

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Collective Rights of Indigenous Communities and Peoples in the National and International Framework: Community of Saraguro

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the application and effectiveness of national and international normative instruments, including ILO Convention 169 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, regarding the collective rights of indigenous peoples and nationalities in Ecuador, taking as a reference the community of Saraguro, located south of the city of Loja. Through a qualitative approach, it was possible to contrast the legal framework with local experiences and perceptions, taking as a reference the case study known as "The 29 of Saraguro", which took place in 2015, when the military forces ordered by the Government of that time burst into the community, violating their human rights and collective rights. In addition, the research incorporates interviews with members of the community that make visible the strategies they have currently had based on the facts regarding the case study, as a result, the violation of collective rights towards the community is evidenced. Finally, several recommendations are made aimed at the protection and effectiveness of collective rights in practice for indigenous peoples within Ecuador.

Keywords: Saraguro Community, collective rights, 2008 Constitution, ILO Convention 169, United Nations Declaration, Ecuador.

Derechos Colectivos de Comunidades y Pueblos Indígenas en el Marco Normativo Nacional e Internacional: Comunidad de Saraguro

RESUMEN

En el presente trabajo de titulación analiza la aplicación y efectividad de los instrumentos normativos nacionales e internacionales, incluidos el Convenio 169 de la OIT y la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas de los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas respecto a los derechos colectivos de pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas en Ecuador, tomando como referencia a la comunidad de Saraguro, ubicada al sur de la ciudad de Loja. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo se permitió contrastar el marco jurídico con las experiencias y percepciones locales tomando como referencia el estudio de caso conocido como “Los 29 de Saraguro”, que se da en el 2015, cuando las fuerzas militares ordenadas por el Gobierno de aquel tiempo irrumpen hacia la comunidad, vulnerando sus derechos humanos y derechos colectivos. Además, la investigación incorpora entrevistas a miembros de la comunidad que permiten visibilizar las estrategias que han tenido en la actualidad basadas en los hechos respecto al estudio de caso, como resultado, sí se evidencia la vulneración de los derechos colectivos hacia la comunidad. Finalmente, se plantean varias recomendaciones orientadas a la protección y efectividad de los derechos colectivos en la práctica para los pueblos indígenas dentro del Ecuador.

Keywords: Comunidad Saraguro, derechos colectivos, Constitución del 2008, Convenio 169 de la OIT, Declaración de las Naciones Unidas, Ecuador.

INTRODUCTION

Over time, Indigenous peoples and communities have been affected by exclusion, discrimination, and denial of their rights, both nationally and internationally. This has generated inequalities that have affected their collective rights, which are directly linked to their cultural identity, territory, self-determination, and their own forms of social and political organization.

In recent times, the development of international human rights law has allowed progress to be made towards the recognition of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, through international instruments such as Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (International Labour Organization et al., 2009) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2008); which have served as an instrument to guarantee the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities. At the national level, the Republic of Ecuador has incorporated these principles and rights into its 2008 Constitution, which recognizes the country as a plurinational and intercultural State and guarantees collective rights (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008). However, the same regulatory frameworks have not ensured that their implementation is effective in most cases.

This situation occurred in the case of 2015 in the community of Saraguro, which shows the disrespect and lack of guarantees towards the people and their human rights and collective rights after the violent entry of the military forces into their community territory that resulted in repression and unjust processes carried out against several of the members of the Saraguro community. police fired tear gas and ran over the indigenous women; in addition, homes were raided, windows were broken, and people were dragged out of their homes (INREDH, 2016).

The question, therefore, arises as to whether the national and international regulatory framework has been effectively implemented for the protection of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities within the Saraguro community, and what are the main challenges that arise for its implementation to be effective.

In this context, this research focuses on the analysis of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities in the national and international regulatory framework, taking as a reference the community of Saraguro, located in the province of Loja (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020). The community of Saraguro is a historical reference within the

country due to the conservation of its culture, traditions, identity, and forms of organization, as well as the resistance to processes that have affected their collective rights due to decisions made by the State.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Pluralism and Interculturality

Interculturality allows for discussion, dialogue, and interaction on equal terms among various peoples and nationalities. It shows the importance of establishing equitable relationships between different cultures, leaving aside the issue of hierarchy (Chávez Vallejo, 2023).

For the recognition of interculturality in Ecuador, the proposal of the Indigenous movement for the State to begin teaching classes in the languages belonging to each Indigenous people was important (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025). For this reason, in 1998, with the constitutional reform approved, the State ordered that the development of all the languages of Ecuadorians and the other ancestral languages be respected (Political Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 1998). With this, it was possible to provide education in their own language in areas with a larger Indigenous population, but with the aim that Spanish is used as a tool for intercultural relations (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025).

Currently, interculturality is applied in various areas within the country, such as education, health, culture, communication, politics, and ordinary or common justice (Enadara, 2020). Interculturality opens the possibility for true plurinationality to take place.

However, it has already faced several limitations, where it has been reduced to being an institutional discourse that does not completely transform existing power relations. Today, racism persists; discrimination for feeling different and being different; and the limited understanding of the realities experienced by Indigenous peoples and communities within public institutions, which makes it difficult to build a good relationship (Enadara, 2020).

On the other hand, pluralism in the framework of human rights seeks to promote cultural diversity and respect for the fundamental rights of all people. Pluralism is divided into two dimensions: the diverse cultures and nationalities that coexist with each other, and what is related to political pluralism as part of democracy, which is important within a country (Chávez Vallejo, 2023).

Pluralism is essential to the issue of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, since the existence of various legal systems within the State is recognized (Chávez Vallejo, 2023). It has made it possible to recognize different forms of conflict

resolution, all based on community harmony and social balance. Despite this, there are still conflicts between the ordinary justice system and the Indigenous justice system, which makes it clear that there is a lack of reinforcement of mechanisms.

Plurinationality, as a political, legal, and social principle, becomes more inclusive, equitable, and diverse. Its main objective is to transform power structures so that all existing nationalities can participate in any way under conditions of equality (Enadara, 2020).

When a new Constitution was approved within the Republic of Ecuador in 2008, the country declared itself plurinational and intercultural, in reference to the scope of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities that exist within it, which has come to constitute a great support for the political process of the Indigenous movement (Constitution of Ecuador, 2008, art 57).

However, despite the passage of time, there are still many tensions and limitations in practice, especially when it comes to guaranteeing the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, which highlight the reality that legal pluralism is not fully implemented, nor is the guarantee of the rights of Indigenous communities and peoples, due to various difficulties in exercising the Indigenous normative system correctly (Chávez Vallejo, 2023).

1.2 Collective Rights

Collective rights emerge as a legal, political, and social response to discrimination and the insufficiency of individual rights to guarantee the protection of Indigenous communities and peoples (FOEIAdmin, 2023). Its emergence is closely linked to Indigenous movements that have been questioning the state model since the late twentieth century, demanding that cultural diversity and respect for their ways of life be recognized.

The collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities are a category of Human Rights, which are categorized as third-generation rights, that is, which seek human well-being; among which are also sustainable development, world peace, a good environment, the self-determination of peoples, and access to heritage (UNHCR, 2024). These were given because many of these rights were not specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), therefore, the annexed declarations and covenants had to be expanded and specified (UNHCR, 2024).

That is why they represent an important tool for the protection of the existence of Indigenous nationalities, peoples, and communities, in addition to being a protection for their native peoples (Casado Gutiérrez, 2021). In addition, collective rights are based on solidarity

and self-determination of a defined group of people, since certain rights are recognized that can be exercised jointly (Becerra Valdivia, 2022).

The collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities have become, especially for Latin America, a defense against any type of discrimination that is made against a specific community because of its language, cultural identity, natural resources, political and social traditions, and for the protection of its territories (Castro & Alberto, 2020).

Collective rights include the right to maintain and strengthen their cultural identity; the right to collective ownership of their lands or territories; the right to free, prior, and informed consultation; the right to maintain their forms of political and social organization; and the right to exercise their own system of justice in accordance with their traditions and customs. Likewise, their ancient languages, their knowledge of ancestral medicine, and the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples and communities are protected (Alejandro Labaka Foundation, 2016).

These rights are recognized because Indigenous peoples and communities maintain a collective and differentiated relationship with nature (Pachamama), territory, and community life elements that have not been adequately protected under traditional human rights frameworks. These collective rights efficiently guarantee respect for their culture and diversity, as well as allow participation in the decisions that are made and may affect them directly (Alejandro Labaka Foundation, 2016).

1.3 International Normative Framework

The international normative framework provides support for collective rights; however, its formal recognition at the international level was not consolidated until the middle of the twentieth century. In this context, the first international instrument through which Indigenous peoples are recognized in a binding manner as collective subjects with specific rights related to culture, identity, traditions, and territory is ILO Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization of 1989 (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

ILO Convention 169 of 1989 was created as an international treaty adopted in 1989, which is based on respect for the cultures and ways of life of existing Indigenous peoples and communities; Convention 169 deals with the situations of more than 5,000 Indigenous and tribal peoples, since in several countries they face discrimination and marginalization because they are considered different, in addition to conditions of labour exploitation (*What*

is ILO Convention No. 169? - Ministry of National Assets, 2016). ILO Convention 169 was ratified by the Republic of Ecuador in 1998.

According to the International Labour Organization (1989), Convention 169 recognizes several collective rights that are fundamental for Indigenous peoples and communities, as established in Article 1, which states that it applies to tribal peoples, whose political, social, and cultural conditions can be distinguished from other sectors that have their own customs and traditions. While Article 2 points out the responsibility of governments to develop effective and appropriate policies to ensure that there is no discrimination against Indigenous communities and peoples (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

Even though ILO Convention 169 of 1989 is still in force, there is still cultural marginalization and a lack of participation in important decision-making towards existing Indigenous peoples and communities. This highlights the reality in which many Indigenous peoples in Ecuador continue to live (Casado Gutiérrez, 2021).

The International Labour Organization 1989, through Convention 169, recognizes that Indigenous peoples have the right to preserve their traditions, customs, and institutions, as well as the right to participate directly in their own development (International Labour Organization et al., 2009). This is a milestone in recognizing the right of Indigenous peoples to strengthen and maintain their cultures, traditions, and institutions intact (Casado Gutiérrez, 2021). Many of the countries of Latin America are multicultural and multilingual, since in some cases the majority of the population tends to be Indigenous, which is why there have been several ratifications of Convention 169 within this geographical region (Casado Gutiérrez, 2021).

Another important international instrument is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007, which affirms that all Indigenous peoples are equal to other peoples, as well as recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such without any type of discrimination (United Nations, 2008). Article 32 of the Declaration establishes that States must obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before approving any project that affects their lands, particularly in relation to the exploitation of mineral, hydrocarbon, or energy resources (United Nations, 2008).

However, its acceptance process as an international instrument was delayed because several States did not agree with the proposals put forward by Indigenous peoples, such as control of natural resources in their territory, self-determination, and the right to ownership of the territory. It was therefore not adopted by the General Assembly until 13 September 2007.

ILO Convention 169, together with the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, are central pillars for the international protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples and communities. However, despite all the progress that exists for the normative and jurisprudential recognition of these rights, reality shows that there continues to be a significant setback in guaranteeing the rights of Indigenous peoples (Casado Gutiérrez, 2021).

1.4 National Regulatory Framework

In the context of the recognition of Indigenous peoples and communities within the Republic of Ecuador, this recognition is the result of a long-standing struggle, which has led to the recognition and guarantee of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities. Their cultural diversity and traditions are reflected in the 14 Indigenous nationalities and 18 existing peoples, each with its own system of justice based on its customs (Hidalgo Cajo et al., 2024).

Indigenous movements have been fundamental actors within the Ecuadorian State for the recognition and protection of collective rights. A clear example of this is the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), formed in 1986 to democratize relations between the State and Indigenous communities; as well as strengthening and preserving their territories, defending their rights, and promoting the self-determination of all the Indigenous peoples of Ecuador (CONAIE, n.d.). From the beginning, they have called for transforming the structures within the country and forming a plurinational state, with a framework of equality with respect to law, peace, respect, and harmony between nationalities.

This Ecuadorian Indigenous movement has made structural inequalities visible and demands that the Republic of Ecuador be a more diverse country. These processes, in addition to having an impact at the national level, also allowed for dialogue with international human rights frameworks to ensure their well-being both within and outside the country (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025).

Within Ecuador, plurinationality represents a fundamental pillar, since it is a political principle that seeks to be more inclusive, equitable, and diverse, and recognizes that the State has several peoples and nationalities (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025). Interculturality is applied within the country in areas such as education, health, culture, communication, and common or ordinary justice (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025).

Political pluralism tends to be understood as a diversity of opinions in order to obtain a democracy, in addition to the fact that the Constitution recognizes coexistence. Within the framework of Human Rights, they are important concepts that seek to promote cultural diversity and respect for the fundamental rights of other people, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or religious origin (Farfán Pinoargote, 2025).

Sumak Kawsay or Good Living also plays an important role in the Constitution of Ecuador, as it seeks a balance for a full life between nature, community, and spirituality (Paucar-Sarmiento et al., 2024). It reinforces the national normative issue of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, since they represent 7.7% of the country's population.

Buen Vivir, from the Indigenous worldview, is known for expressing the way of understanding life and how it should have balance between nature (Pachamama), the human being, and the community. This represents both a cultural and a political proposal. In addition, the same concept is under constant construction, moving between a reapproval by the Indigenous movement and native peoples, as well as a readaptation by the State (Lalander & Cuestas-Caza, 2018).

The Sumak Kawsay takes into account the equality between people who live within the country; this model is based on the objective of protecting the traditions of Indigenous peoples and communities. Its main objective is to expand opportunities, capacities, and freedoms, in order to ensure respect for Human Rights and the Rights of Nature, also known as the "Pachamama" (Enadara, 2020).

Within the country, there have been positive effects on the part of Buen Vivir, but it has also had several limitations. It has led to the inclusion of Indigenous peoples within the Constitution, making them be recognized no matter where they are in the region. However, it has been shown that the recognition of it in the constitutional sphere does not guarantee that, in practice, non-discrimination will be achieved and that inequality or lack of

participation in decisions towards Indigenous communities and peoples will continue to exist (Sánchez & Ruiz, 2025).

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, established in 2008, adopts as a national normative proposal the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities; for the same reason, it recognizes the country as plurinational and intercultural (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008). It is the main Ecuadorian legal regulation; however, it is complemented by international human rights treaties and instruments (Iglesias, n.d.). If their rights are violated or not guaranteed correctly, in some specific cases, the norm that is more favorable to the individual is applied; that is, if it is necessary to decide between applying the constitution or a treaty, the instrument that helps and gives greater protection to the person involved is selected (Alejandro Labaka Foundation, 2016).

In Ecuador, the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and nationalities recognized are: the right to their territories and natural resources; cultural identity; justice and autonomy, which in this case on the part of Indigenous peoples have their own justice (Indigenous justice) which helps guarantee the fulfillment of their rights, promoting intercultural and egalitarian coordination; participation in any type of development that directly affects them or being public representatives; to the education system in which children can participate actively without any discrimination (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 60).

Article 57 establishes that: "Indigenous communes, communities, peoples and nationalities are recognized and guaranteed, in accordance with the Constitution and with the pacts, conventions, declarations and other international human rights instruments." (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 57).

Likewise, it is important to emphasize that Article 60 of the Constitution of Ecuador states that ancestral, Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and Montubio peoples may constitute a territorial limitation to preserve their culture. Communes that have collective ownership of land are recognized, this as an ancestral form of territorial organization (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 60).

In the context of the evolution of the rights of Indigenous peoples and nationalities, it should be emphasized that the Political Order of 1998 was the first to recognize the rights of Indigenous communities and peoples. This led Ecuador to be recognized as a plurinational, multiethnic, and multicultural country; therefore, it has the clear obligation to promote

cultural identity, as well as the practices that each community has come to have (Ruiz-Cedeño et al., 2024).

CHAPTER 2

STATE OF THE ART

2.1 Saraguro Community

The community of Saraguro is located in the south of the province of Loja and Zamora Chinchipe. Known as the "land of corn" due to the abundance and high quality of this product, which has characterized the community for several generations. Its name is said to derive from the Kichwa words *sara*, which means corn, and *guru*, meaning worm, referring to the corn worm (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023).

According to several sociological and ethnohistorical studies carried out, the Saraguro were formed as a population group as a result of a forced migration caused by the expansion of the Inca Empire, in order to dominate the other peoples and their lands (*Oral Memory of the Saraguro People – National Institute of Cultural Heritage*, n.d.). Despite their history, there is still a significant lack of documented information about the Saraguro people.

It is unknown what exactly the native language of these Indigenous people was because their origin is not well defined. However, once established in their geographical space, they adapted and began to use the Kichwa language. The community is currently considered bilingual, since Spanish and Kichwa are spoken (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023). According to the Population and Housing Census that was carried out in 2010, 47.44% are male and 52.46% female, with a total population of 17,118 nationwide (Jara Cazares, 2022).

The Saraguro stand out for having one of the oldest Indigenous groups in all of South America, since it is one of the Indigenous communities that best preserves its traditions and cultural identity. Its main objective is to support each other as a people or society as a whole, in order to ensure that state institutions and governments guarantee their collective rights and there is no type of racism or xenophobia on the part of other Ecuadorians or society in general (Decentralized Autonomous Municipal Government of Saraguro, 2024).

The majority of the population of Saraguro is traditionally peaceful, sharing beliefs, values, traditions, customs, and social norms (Eguiguren Riofrío, 2022). The indigenous community stands out for having an austere lifestyle and for being guardians of nature (Pachamama), reserving its natural resources and taking care of its community territories (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020).

They are known for celebrating four festivals called "raymis", of Andean origin (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023). Their festivals distinguish them from the rest of the Indigenous communities that exist within Ecuador; The most prominent are the "*Kapak Raymi*" and the "*Inti Raymi*". Despite having lived through colonialism, their celebrations are powerful when they remember their knowledge and wisdom. They are linked to the spiritual need to return to Pachamama (Mother Nature), the Sun god, and the Wirakucha God (Bacacela, 2021). The syncretism is evident in several elements within their festivities, such as their clothing, characters, and decorations (*Celebrations – Visit Saraguro*, n.d.).

Their traditional clothing is also widely recognized both nationally and internationally; their outfits are black and white; men wear shorts with a poncho and hat; while women wear an "anaco" or pollera, blouse, reboso, and hat; Their hair is braided, and they call it "jimba" that they wear regardless of their age or sex (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020). For this reason, they have often been subjected to discrimination and rejected by others, so several Indigenous people have considered abandoning their ethnicity and identifying as part of the whites or mestizo population (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023). Their clothing has become part of a system of beliefs and forms of expression that are part of a concept that they hold.

Figure 1

Saraguro Family in Traditional Attire



Source: Oral Memory of the Saraguro People

Saraguro is currently administratively divided into several parishes. The urban area is organized into blocks, and some of its privately owned homes have their boundaries established; each of them has all the basic services, and most of its streets are asphalted or cobbled (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020).

It is known for being one of the largest cantons within the province of Loja; it has an area of approximately 1,080 km², its altitude ranges between 1000 and 3800 m.a.s.l.; and its temperature ranges from 8 °C to 26 °C (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023). The highest population density of the canton is found in the parishes of San Pablo de Tenta, Celén, Selva Alegre, Lluzhapa, and El Paraíso de Manú (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020).

Figure 2
Reference Map of the Saraguro Village Settlement



Source: J. Belote, 1998

As for the architecture of their homes, the Indigenous people of Saraguro are characterized by having a particular style; It stands out for its rectangular shape, and its length is almost twice its width. In the beginning, the main material for the construction of their houses was bahareque, but with the passage of time and the beginning of modernization, new materials were incorporated, such as brick and adobe, which have good durability and have continued to be used to the present day (Guerrero, 2016).

The economic and social conditions of Saraguro have formed a space divided between the Indigenous population and the mestizo population living within the canton; even so, the communities remain attached to their identity as Indigenous people and their social integration (*Oral Memory of the Saraguro People – National Institute of Cultural Heritage*, n.d.). The commune, likewise, is an important tool within the socio-political organization of Saraguro, since its members construct and promote an identity politics in which their condition as actors in the face of power is questioned (*Oral Memory of the Saraguro People – National Institute of Cultural Heritage*, n.d.).

In this millenary land, almost all the raw materials they have are worked by hand, resulting in several outstanding pieces of art, such as necklaces and earrings of mullos that are highly appreciated in the international market (*SARAGURO, NEW MAGICAL TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY – Ministry of Tourism*, n.d.). In addition, the town of

Saraguro is recognized for being the best in Loja, all thanks to its coffee flavor, which has had the first places in international auctions (*SARAGURO, NEW MAGICAL TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY – Ministry of Tourism, n.d.*).

The functioning of the economy within the town is developed through three main activities: livestock, agriculture and crafts, complemented by salaried work, so that several families in terms of economic level remain stable, despite the fact that several people usually migrate to different countries to improve their economic conditions and have a better livelihood for their families (*SARAGURO, NEW MAGICAL TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY – Ministry of Tourism, n.d.*).

Lately, tourism has also become an extremely important economic source within the Saraguro canton, due to how it shows its cultural identity and how the community preserves its traditions and customs, attracting many people from different places and making them want to visit the community (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020).

They have their own justice system known as Indigenous justice, which allows them to resolve the various conflicts that arise in their territory, in accordance with the rules, procedures, and sanctions of that system. It is recognized in the Ecuadorian Constitution, since it has been a right that has been recognized, thanks to the constant struggle of the Indigenous peoples (Torres et al., 2022).

To administer justice as an Indigenous community within Ecuador, it is recognized in Article 171 of the Constitution of Ecuador (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 171). This Indigenous system seeks social and peaceful coexistence with the members who live within the same given territory; their own rules are applied, but they cannot be contrary to human rights or the 2008 Constitution (Torres et al., 2022).

In the interior of Saraguro, the participation of Indigenous women in the justice system has played an important role in issues of discrimination and injustice that have existed in their community. It is recognized that Indigenous women are important for conflict resolution and external or internal decision-making that affects the Indigenous community (Jara Cazares, 2022).

For all these reasons, the community of Saraguro has distinguished itself within the Republic of Ecuador and internationally, thanks to its strong cultural identity, it has been able to reflect its beliefs and spiritual manifestations within its daily activities and shows the

permanence of its symbolic spaces and traditions. This has been done in order for the new generations to keep alive what it means to be Saraguro.

However, the majority of the population has been affected by discrimination and rejection that many of the Saraguro Indigenous people face today, mainly because of the economic inequalities that still exist, which has made most of the Indigenous people of the new generations seek to identify as mestizo and reject their own roots (Aravena Domich & Martínez Lalangui, 2023).

Therefore, according to the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), a total of 45% of the population should be known as Indigenous; however, according to the last census carried out on the population of Saraguro, only 14.1% feel identified as a member of the Indigenous population (Journal of Social Sciences, 2020).

2.2 Case Study

In August 2015, within the Republic of Ecuador, several of the Indigenous communities began to hold demonstrations in various areas of the country because the government at the time and the National Assembly were approving regulations and projects that promoted oil exploitation in Yasuni Park. These demonstrations were also held due to the rejection of the bilingual education system and the guarantee of Indigenous justice, which is why the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), which is an extremely important Indigenous social movement within the country, called for a national strike in opposition to the proposed measures and in defense of the issue of community territory (LAPORA, 2015).

This led Indigenous communities such as Saraguro to mobilize in support of the demonstrations and participate in them, so they blocked main roads such as the Pan-American Highway that connects the Cuenca-Loja highway, allowing access only at certain times; however, the government at the time, in view of these facts, ordered the military forces to clear the way and neutralize the Indigenous people who resisted the uprising (LAPORA, 2015).

The strike in the community of Saraguro also took place due to the prohibition of the sale of quesillo and in protest against mining on the hill of Fierro Urco. On the issue of quesillo, the government at the time wanted to impose health control and registration standards on rural communities, which was very complicated to comply with, which is why

the community of Saraguro saw this as a setback to its economy, since around 50% of the milk is transformed into cheese for sale in different parts of the Canton (Ecological, 2016).

In the case of mining, they pointed out the violation of human rights and mainly of nature in accordance with the 2008 Constitution since they are subjects of law; due to the moment when the government at the time sought to carry out a drastic mining intervention within the hill of Fierro Urco; the protection of Pachamama (Mother Nature) was disrespected, which directly affects the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities according to Article 57 (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 57).

The demonstration intensified in a very short time, so that the conflict caused 142 people from different Indigenous communities to be arrested in different Indigenous communities by the military forces, likewise, there were a total of 229 cases of detentions and attempted arrests within various Indigenous territories in which the demonstrations began to take place, and they resisted the military forces, as they did not give in to what the Government asked for (LAPORA, 2015).

For this reason, August 17, 2015, within the community of Saraguro is considered a tragic day due to all the events experienced. That day several police and military forces arrived in the community of Saraguro, making use of the state of emergency decreed by the Government due to the issue of road closures and the possible eruption of the Cotopaxi Volcano; they began to carry out operations within their territories, using tear gas, used pepper spray, exercised physical and verbal violence against members of the community; and they ran over the women who were at the forefront of the demonstrations (Inredh, 2016). The participation of Indigenous women in the demonstration sought to strengthen their rights and defend the interests of the Saraguro community, through their active participation, in addition to the fact that it was considered harmony against what was happening (Jara Cazares, 2022). However, this was not respected, causing several Indigenous women to be beaten and imprisoned.

There was brutal repression by the public forces, which the Indigenous people of Saraguro considered a total violation of collective rights and their human rights (Inredh, 2016). Mainly violating the collective right by allowing military forces to enter into community territory aggressively and without the permission of an Indigenous member of the community (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 57). Despite the fact that many Indigenous people tried to take refuge within their community territories, the military

forces entered regardless of the agreements that must be respected, raided their homes, and took them out of their homes, dragging them and beating women and men (Inredh, 2016).

Everything that happened during this day was a clear violation of the collective rights that are recognized within the country's Constitution, specifically in its Article 57 that guarantees respect for their culture and Indigenous nationalities (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 57). Likewise, there was an obvious violation of Article 171, which recognizes the performance of the functions of Indigenous authorities and peoples within their territory (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 171). It is evident that the public forces that committed these acts against members of the community should be judged by the community authorities and the Indigenous justice system for failing to comply with what is provided for in the Constitution regarding entry into Indigenous territory (Inredh, 2016).

During the struggle between police and the Indigenous demonstrators of the Saraguro people, one of the defendants, Amable Angamarca, carrying out his work as a community journalist reporting what happened, was arrested by several police officers who used physical force, along with four other people who tried to defend their collective rights in the face of their oppression (Inredh, 2018). It is here that there is evidence of a clear participation in discrimination and racism due to the fact of being Indigenous and the excessive use of physical force towards a person in the community who could not defend himself; with reference to Article 57, which prohibits discrimination and disrespect towards an Indigenous person (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art 57).

In these days, a total of 31 people were arrested within the community; however, two of them were minors, so only 29 of them were transferred to the prison in the city of Loja, where they were locked up for about fifteen days without contact with the outside world (LAPORA, 2015). These individuals were accused of paralyzing public service according to Article 346 of the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (Inredh, 2016). Five of the individuals were sentenced to prison, with a total sentence of four years, due to the aggravating circumstances associated with the state of emergency. However, within the Comprehensive Organic Criminal Code (COIP) only a punishment of one to three years is established for this crime (LAPORA, 2015). The same people, who in this case were five, could not leave the country during their time of trial, that is, with a ban on leaving the country and with precautionary measures.

During the case that was presented, the evidence obtained by the Prosecutor and the Ministry of the Interior, however, during the trial hearing did not justify even the minimum sentence, much less aggravating circumstances that resulted in what was the maximum penalty plus an extra year. To justify this situation, Judge Narváez, in charge of the case, presented a "clumsy argument" alleging the crime of paralysis of public services, after accusing the Indigenous people involved of paralysis of public service on the Loja-Cuenca Road (*JUSTICE IN SARAGURO. By Luis Ángel Saavedra, 2021*).

Even though the Ministry of the Interior held several press conferences to protect the public forces, making their relatives give their version of the facts, it was never possible to show in a real way how the people of Saraguro attacked the public forces as brutally as they did against the indigenous people (*JUSTICE IN SARAGURO. By Luis Ángel Saavedra, 2021*).

This situation is also due to the fact that there is a strong tension between the Saraguro people and the Loja judicial system, this is due to the fact that Saraguro has been one of the most structured Indigenous justice systems, even before being constitutionally recognized, so its justice has led them to assume competencies that were supposedly only for mestizos (*JUSTICE IN SARAGURO. By Luis Ángel Saavedra, 2021*).

The people who were sentenced to four years in prison as the maximum penalty were Amable Angamarca, who was a community journalist; and Luisa Lozano, who at the time was a women's leader in the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE); both people were from the Indigenous community of Saraguro, who were unjustly sentenced on May 30, 2015 for helping the people that the military and police forces were beating.

For this reason, on June 6, 2016, according to Inredh (2016), the president of CONAIE, Jorge Herrera; Luisa Lozano; Amable Angamarca; defense attorneys; Ángel Portillo Guamán, representative of Social Movements of Saraguro; executive director of Inredh with Diego Zorilla, resident coordinator of the UN system in the Republic of Ecuador, in order to present the cases of discrimination that were happening within the country, emphasizing the case of Saraguro.

In this case, the United Nations (UN) did not issue a specific formal response or an international ruling; however, it did follow up on the case, and it did issue a great concern about the excessive use of force during the protests that had taken place and requested that

Ecuador protect Indigenous peoples (*UN Committee Requests Ecuador to Protect Indigenous Peoples*, 2017).

Similarly, on the same day, Luisa Lozano and Amable Angamarca went to the outskirts of the Council of the Judiciary in the city of Quito, with the aim of demanding respect for Indigenous jurisdiction; however, the director at the time, Dr. Alvear of the Council of the Judiciary, said that it could not pronounce on jurisdictional decisions already taken (Inredh, 2016). The judges in the case had based their sentence on actions that harm society and that the defendants had been co-authors of the plan within the demonstrations (LAPORA, 2015). It is here that the racism that judges have towards the accused begins to be noticed, since their justifications were not properly argued.

Luisa Lozano's innocence was ratified until August 7, 2018 by a court of cassation of the National Court of Justice; Luisa had made it clear that this case was a clear example of a lesson in her life, since it served as a struggle and not to remain silent in the face of any type of injustice that exists before the indigenous communities within the country (*The Innocence of Five of the "29 of Saraguro" is Ratified - Fundamedios*, 2018).

In May 2019, after intense years of the judicial process, three of the judges were called to give their version of the human rights violations that had been generated for the defendants, this because they did not testify at the time about the preventive nullity for the case of the Saraguro 29.

In the end, the people involved had to serve their sentences. This case had a great social, political and symbolic impact within the community of Saraguro, generating a debate within the country due to the discrimination and racism it had at the time of disrespecting the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities.

2.3 Analysis of the Rights Violated in the Case

The Indigenous community of Saraguro has expressed its concern about the serious impact of physical and verbal aggressions by the security forces, maintaining that the governments in power have not prioritized and guaranteed their collective rights that are recognized within ILO Convention 169 (1989) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008). These are international instruments established for the protection of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities. For this reason, requests were made by the CONAIE to be taken into consideration during the hearing for the trial against the people of the Saraguro community.

The interventions of the security forces during the arrest of several members of the Saraguro community are questioned for their legitimacy and legality, which ended with the arrest of 29 people from the Indigenous community. It is important to emphasize that the government at the time went so far as to declare a "State of Exception" within the country, used as a temporary measure due to a serious situation and crisis within Ecuador; under these conditions, military and police forces may use force; however, collective rights, human rights, and the principle of proportionality are not suspended.

The Saraguro community pointed out that during this case, their collective and individual human rights were violated. First, by entering the community territory without the authorization of the members of the community, that is, by force; despite the state of emergency, the fundamental rights found within the 2008 Constitution must be respected; kicking and stepping on Indigenous women and children is a clear example of the violation of physical integrity and direct violation of human rights; the use of verbal violence against Indigenous people is considered an act of discrimination and racism, as well as psychological and moral integrity; and finally the deprivation of liberty of the arrested Indigenous persons of the Saraguro community, without having previously complied with a legal procedure, which is determined in Articles 66 and 77 of the Constitution.

On the other hand, the tensions between both justice systems, which are legally recognized within the 2008 Constitution of Ecuador in Article 171 (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, Art. 171, 2008), are evident. Indigenous justice is applied in community life to resolve internal conflicts that arise and can alter social harmony. When a conflict arises within the community, its own procedures are carried out that are based on its customs, traditions, and customary law, which seek the restoration of social and cultural balance (Ruilova Sánchez, A. I., 2020). All procedures are applied to any ethnic identity of the person if it is within the territory of the Community and is subject to constitutional review.

Ordinary justice, on the other hand, is present within the Saraguro community and is applied within the legal framework of the Ecuadorian State; however, it is based on respect for legal procedures and deadlines of the state justice itself (Ruilova Sánchez, A. I., 2020). That is, it seeks to apply the law and punish the crimes that are committed, in addition to the fact that it is a written state law and has state judicial control.

In this case, a judicial process was applied through the common justice system that was carried out to try the Indigenous people of the Saraguro community, consisting of 12

women and 17 men, who were sent to prison for 16 days. However, a sentence was handed down to 5 members with the following restrictions: prohibition to leave the country, to appear every month before the judge of the Saraguro Penal Unit, to perform community work with a total of 240 hours, to pay a fine of four basic salaries and to present a formal apology to the public forces for alleged injuries suffered by the sentenced (*The Innocence of Five of the "29 of Saraguro"* - Fundamedios, 2018).

Given the existing tensions that have existed between the Indigenous community of Saraguro and the Loja justice system, the judicial process of the people of the community becomes complicated, due to the decision-making or the different forms of procedure that each one has, in addition, the issue of territorial scope and compliance that both systems have at the time of their respective application is involved.

By analyzing the case study, it can be shown that there were violations of human rights and collective rights towards the community of Saraguro, highlighting the legal procedure applied to the defendants without having a clear argument about what they were accused of, and for having to publicly apologize to the police officers who were found with alleged bodily injuries.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological Approach

For the analysis of this thesis, a triangulation methodology with a qualitative approach was proposed, which allows the analysis of the same event through different approaches applied during the research (Hernández Sampieri & Fernandez-Collado, 2014), in order to obtain accurate results regarding Indigenous collective rights from the perspective of the Saraguro community and to obtain data that contribute to an interpretative perspective to determine the guarantee of their rights. Therefore, three main phases were implemented: a literature review, case study analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

For the development of the methodology, three phases were implemented:

The first phase was a literature review and analysis of sources directly related to the collective rights of communities and Indigenous peoples, such as documents related to ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which are part of the national and international regulatory framework, both linked to the theoretical framework and the state of the art of this thesis. This is with the aim of determining the advances and limitations in the recognition and guarantee of these over time.

In the second phase, the case study that occurred in 2015 known as the "29 of Saraguro" was analyzed in depth, in which the collective rights of the Indigenous community of Saraguro were violated by the government at the time, in addition to the lack of empathy towards the imprisoned people due to the demonstrations that took place and the judicial process they had to go through.

In the third and final phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five people from the Saraguro community, including individuals involved in Indigenous community organizations, participants in the case study, and individuals holding positions that defend and represent the community of Saraguro, in order to collect information on violations of their Indigenous collective rights during the case study and its entire procedure; in addition to knowing if there have been advances or setbacks due to being Indigenous.

During the data collection process for this research, five individuals who have participated or currently hold a representative position for the community of Saraguro were selected. The interviewees were selected as follows:

- Direct: Individual directly involved in the case study, "The 29 of Saraguro", in order to obtain accurate information about what the defendants experienced during the case and their perspective on the violation of the collective rights of communities and Indigenous peoples.
- External: Individuals who, at the time, held an important position within the community, experienced the violation of collective rights indirectly and attempted to address the issues related to the case study regarding the protection of their Indigenous community.
- Connected: Individuals involved in activities related to the preservation of cultural identity within the Saraguro community.

Table 1
Profiles of the Interviewees

Code	Profile of the interviewee	Information	Tool
E-01	President of the Interprovincial Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Saraguro (FIIS)	Extensive experience in defense of the Saraguro people	Semi-structured interview
E-02	President of the community of San Vicente	Involved in the struggle towards the Saraguro cultural identity	Semi-structured interview
E-03	Manager of the savings and credit cooperative "Las Lagunas"	Knowledgeable about the case study topic	Semi-structured interview
E-04	Mayor of the canton of Saraguro	Expert in conflict resolution issues towards indigenous people	Semi-structured interview
E-05	Former leader of the women of the CONAIE	Person directly involved in the case study "The 29 of Saraguro"	Semi-structured interview

The main data collection instrument was a guide of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews that were going to be carried out, in order that the interviewees could give their different points of view and deepen their understanding of Saraguro cultural identity and the violations of the collective rights of communities and Indigenous peoples that have existed over time, especially in the case of "Los 29 de Saraguro" which took place in 2015.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This chapter presents the application of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities in the community of Saraguro, through semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals listed in Table 1 who were involved in the case of "The 29 of Saraguro". This case delves into what actions the government at the time took in reference to the judicial process faced by some members of the community, and what they experienced from their perspective on the violations of their rights and those of the community.

4.1.1 Contextualization of Saraguro

The community of Saraguro is one of the most important and distinctive peoples of the Republic of Ecuador, due to its strong cultural identity and a strong organization as a community that has led them to be one of the most representative peoples in the struggle for their collective rights both inside and outside the country (*SARAGURO, NEW MAGICAL TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY – Ministry of Tourism, n.d.*). For this reason, it has become an important community for analyzing the current application of national and international instruments regarding collective rights.

During the 2015 case, violations of both individual and collective rights within the community were identified, for this reason, five people belonging to the community of Saraguro participated in this research, as well as the two main international instruments that recognize and guarantee the rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, and the main national regulatory instrument, in this case, the 2008 Constitution.

4.1.2 Recognition of Collective Rights in the International Framework

This research has shown the broad recognition of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities within the universal human rights system, especially from Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as international instruments that have been fundamental for several of the indigenous communities, especially in Latin America, to demand their rights, because the region has a larger Indigenous population than in other parts of the world (Castro & Alberto, 2020).

Among the main findings of the analysis of Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization, it is possible to identify which rights are protected due to their importance. They are considered minimum standards related to the well-being of Indigenous peoples.

First, self-determination and autonomy are recognized as a fundamental right for Indigenous and tribal peoples to decide on their own destiny. It has as a priority that Indigenous peoples have the right to decide on development processes that affect their lives, their beliefs, and their institutions in any way (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

The right to their lands, territories and resources; through which the collective and spiritual relationship that peoples have with the land they inhabit is recognized, it recognizes the right of property and possession that the peoples traditionally occupy within these determined territories; In addition, they have the right to participate in any matter that involves the natural resources that exist within their territory, such as their use and management (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

The right to prior, free and informed consultation, which specifically guarantees that the State cannot make unilateral decisions that affect any Indigenous people; therefore, they must consult them every time there is any legislative or administrative measure, these consultations must be carried out in good faith and in an appropriate manner, in order to reach an agreement and reach consent on the proposals that are made (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

Cultural identity and heritage protect diverse peoples and their existence, as they have the right to be different and to identify as different, have the right to live in peace, security, and freedom, without any attempt to destroy their customs, traditions, and culture. They can also pass on their stories, languages, and traditions to the next generations (International Labour Organization et al., 2009).

4.1.3 Recognition of Collective Rights in the National Framework

Likewise, this research shows that, within the national regulatory framework, specifically within the 2008 Constitution, there are different articles that recognize and guarantee the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities, within the framework of the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational and intercultural country, which implies that it recognizes both cultural and ethnic diversity.

When analyzing the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, it is identified that Article 57 recognizes and guarantees the cultural identity, traditions, community organizations, and territory of the country's Indigenous peoples and nationalities. It specifies each of the main axes for its fulfillment (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

The right to cultural identity and non-discrimination, which seeks to recognize cultural identity as an essential element of Indigenous peoples and communities for their survival for the next indigenous generations (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

The right to territory, which protects the lands on which Indigenous peoples and communities live, also implies that they can protect the natural resources found within those territories. It should be emphasized that the spiritual connection that exists between the territory and the Indigenous population is also taken into account (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008).

4.1.4 Main Findings Case Study

The results obtained after conducting semi-structured interviews with the people who were able to observe and directly experience the case that occurred in 2015, and who are part of the Indigenous community of Saraguro, show the clear violation of human rights and the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities. With this analysis, it was possible to identify the main consequences that occurred within the community itself and what happened after the impact of this event in relation to their identity as a community and the strategies they have today.

In relation to the violations of collective rights by the security forces towards the people of the community, interviewee 1 points out that there were violations in relation to: "territorial determination, the Kichwa Saraguro people means where the majority of the settlement of the Saraguro people are, in this sense the urban part is surrounded and since we are surrounded by these communities territorially belongs to us to say that we are Saraguro people then territorially, they violated this right because the people have their own authorities of the people who are in the FIIS, the president of CORPUKIS that they were able to talk with the state to reach an agreement" (interviewee 1, personal communication, February 20, 2026). This refers to the fact that entering community territory constitutes a violation of collective rights, and there was never an attempt at dialogue by the government at the time.

Likewise, interviewee 2 points out that the collective right that was violated was "The right to resistance, article 57, right to resistance because all Ecuadorians, I believe that the 17 million Ecuadorians are protected under the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador and I believe that we have every right to express our voice, to go out to the streets to demonstrate, we have done it peacefully, we have not done it violently, we are not terrorists under any circumstances and I believe that this right was violated" (interviewee 2, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

In the same way, interviewee 4 stressed: "The Constitution itself establishes the right to resistance, and when there are measures that are an attack on peace, tranquility, and harmony of the community sectors, there is this possibility established; however, that was not respected" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026).

In this sense, interviewee 3 states that in order to carry out the demonstrations within the community, "The very organization of the communities to carry out these demonstrations, obviously is done with all respect, at least the entire procedure at the time of making an uprising, of making demonstrations, it is not done with the purpose of perhaps attacking or doing some damage to the part of the public sector, including assigned as security personnel, police, or military forces, however, they see it differently" (interviewee 3, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

In relation to the event, interviewee 5 explains that, during the demonstrations were taking place, she saw one of the police officers dragging a pregnant woman, the interviewee expresses "the police dragging her, but like a dog, that is, like a dog" (interviewee 5, personal communication, February 22, 2026), demonstrating the violent treatment the woman received from the police. The police released the woman; however, the interviewee and the Indigenous people who were with her were arrested.

Interviewee 5 expresses, "you felt incapable because they, of course, had their weapons, they had their protection, and it was impossible for you to start dealing with them" (interviewee 5, personal communication, February 22, 2026). This reveals what they suffered at the hands of the public forces and that nothing could be done about it because the public forces were armed and did not seek any dialogue.

As a result, it was clearly observed how most of the population of the Indigenous community of Saraguro feels a certain resentment towards the State, especially with what happened in 2015, recognized as a tragic day for the community. According to interviewee

2, he states that "it was biased or limited so that the community could raise its voice in demand, in protest of many actions that they were not seeing at the time. And I think that there is also a particular fact that I am interested in citing, which is that many of the public authorities of a national nature have even told us that there should be a working group, there should be dialogues, but unfortunately under the political system that we live in today with the governments at the time it is difficult, it is very difficult, I could say almost impossible, to sit down at a dialogue table, put forward clear proposals and be able to obtain positive results" (interviewee 2, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

These results show the realities of Indigenous communities in Ecuador regarding the struggle to guarantee their collective rights in practice within the governments in power, showing that to this day, it continues to be a challenge for many communities. That is why, with respect to the case that happened within the community of Saraguro, its community identity was taken as a reference for the struggle of other peoples, both nationally and internationally, as expressed by interviewee 5 when she said: "we are the voice of those who have no voice, those who cannot organize, those who cannot say, well, they share the same thought as ours and this becomes evidence and a reference to say that this is how it can be done" (interviewee 5, personal communication, February 22, 2026).

4.1.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Saraguro Community

When analyzing the Saraguro community, it was evident that their cultural identity as Indigenous people has had different strengths and weaknesses over time in relation to their collective rights, showing how internal and external factors influence the Saraguro community in its interaction with the State and justice systems.

Among the main strengths is the care of nature and coexistence with water, known to them as "yaku" in Kichwa, since for interviewee 1, "it guarantees the survival of our production and of ourselves and the canton" (interviewee 1, personal communication, February 20, 2026). This reflects the defense of collective rights, since the care of nature is one of them.

Another of the most important strengths of the Saraguro community is organization, as interviewee 2 mentions: "organization when you have to fight against a system, when you have to oppose an external agent of domination that does not benefit our communities, our peoples" (interviewee 2, personal communication, February 20, 2026). That indicates that

community organization in the indigenous community of Saraguro remains present to this day.

On the other hand, interviewee 4 expresses that "one of the great strengths of the Saraguro people as such is their culture and their culture manifested in the daily experience of the activities they carry out" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026). The significance of their culture, both nationally and internationally, shows that the Saraguro community remains strong in its cultural practices, collective identity, and resistance. The interviews also show that their culture is not only perceived as a symbolic form, but as an active mechanism of organization as a community and defense of their territory and their people.

Likewise, it is evident that the festivities that take place within the community are community-strengthening, since they seek those traditions and customs that prevail, such as the "Kapak Raymi" and the "Inti Raymi", which are among the most characteristic festivities of the Saraguro community. As interviewee 2 puts it: "the one that has been the most visible example, there in our Saraguro canton" (interviewee 2, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

With reference to the case study, according to interviewee 4, he expresses that: "there were different strengths, such as the unity of the population to defend their colleagues who at that time were in a difficult judicial process" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026). Likewise, most leaders began to work more on respect for the collective rights of Indigenous communities.

On the other hand, there are also certain weaknesses that the community of Saraguro has faced and continues to face; one of the identified weaknesses is migration, since many of the Indigenous people of Saraguro migrate to other countries in order to seek better opportunities for themselves and their families. As interviewee 2 comments: "One of the determining factors is migration, the challenge of maintaining cultural identity, because unfortunately, most of the people who have gone abroad, because in one way or another we have seen transculturation, unfortunately, we are losing aspects of our culture" (interviewee 2, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

As interviewee 3 maintains when she indicates that "the whole process of sustaining the cultural identity as a Saraguro people is perhaps weakening currently in youth, because many individuals from younger generations are developing different identities, some, many

or most are changing their clothing, are using other clothing and even in their identity they are no longer identified as indigenous" (interviewee 3, personal communication, February 20, 2026).

4.1.6 Current Strategies

In relation to the strengths and weaknesses identified, discrimination by other citizens due to differences, and the violation of collective rights in practice in Indigenous communities and peoples, has caused the new generations to lose their culture, that is, there is a cultural crisis that may gradually be lost over time, especially in relation to their clothing; the original language, where most of the new generations use Spanish and lose their Kichwa language; and their hair, known as "jimba" which is an important representation for the Saraguros.

For this reason, the Indigenous community of Saraguro has developed new strategies currently used and intended for future application for community strengthening, as well as for the defense of their collective rights and the preservation of their cultural identity for new generations.

As interviewee 4 points out, "it depends on three important points; mainly, it largely depends on the family and how identity is transmitted; the bilingual education system so that customs and values continue to be maintained with the help of teachers; and the society or community to which you belong" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026).

Likewise, interviewee 3 indicates that there are several training programs within the Saraguro Indigenous community that help develop new leaders who will help their indigenous community in the future. Likewise, workshops should be implemented to preserve the Kichwa language, since it has been lost with the new generations.

Indigenous social organizations of the Saraguro community also play an important role in the strategies, as they have carried out several programs for the training of Indigenous leaders. As interviewee 4 emphasizes, "they are always trying to preserve the thinking and worldview of the Quichua Saraguro people and from that base to develop leadership so that later they can be in public office, they can be directing certain institutions" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026). In other words, what this program seeks is to train you and make you know in depth what it is to be Indigenous, to feel proud of who you

are; and when you have a position in institutions, let your thoughts of the Saraguro culture prevail as Indigenous.

Educational centers of the community have implemented initiatives to promote knowledge about traditional clothes, children learn more about their culture, make their own garments, such as the zamarro, the poncho, the anaco, etc. As interviewee 5 comments: "children are learning and also generating awareness. They teach them to spin sheep's wool, they teach them to shear sheep, to dye clothes" (interviewee 5, personal communication, February 22, 2026). This makes it possible for children to learn and recognize the clothing that has characterized them for several years, and can feel proud to be part of the Saraguro culture.

As interviewee 4 states, the celebrations within the community of Saraguro have been important to transmit to the new generations existing customs and traditions, as he points out: "one of the important things here is to see the celebrations that are not transmitted through talks or workshops but rather in one's own experience" (interviewee 4, personal communication, February 21, 2026).

It is possible to affirm that, based on the findings, it is evident that the Indigenous community of Saraguro has carried out various workshops and projects in which the new generations participate, in order to strengthen the cultural identity and prevent it from being lost. In addition to achieving positive impacts that allow the continuity of the traditions, customs, and forms of community organization present in the Saraguro community since its origins.

CONCLUSIONS

This research on the community of Saraguro has made it possible to analyze, from its perspective, the violation of its collective rights before the State, focusing on the case that occurred in 2015, based on three main approaches: the national and international recognition of collective rights, the violation of collective and individual rights by the armed forces against members of the Indigenous community, and the implementation of current strategies to protect their rights as a community against external violations.

Ecuador has formally incorporated the principles of plurinationality and interculturality, in addition to being one of the main countries in Latin America in recognizing the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities; however, this has not been fully realized in practice.

The case study known as "The 29 of Saraguro" evidenced violations of collective rights within the Indigenous community by the government at the time, especially when the judicial procedures were carried out unjustly against members of the community, and they had to comply with their sentences that did not take into their current cultural context, resulting in significant social, political, and symbolic impacts within Saraguro.

A relevant finding about the community has been how its resistance has strengthened its culture and community identity through new strategies that are currently used for the protection of the Indigenous community of Saraguro; in addition to serving as an example for other Indigenous communities where their collective rights are violated.

Finally, the community of Saraguro stands out for strengthening its cultural identity and confronting the ordinary justice system and the State when its collective rights are not upheld. Its recognition as an Indigenous community has led to its recognition at the national and international levels, ensuring compliance with its collective rights, which are protected by international instruments and internally by the national regulatory framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and analysis carried out in this research, the following recommendations are proposed, which seek to strengthen the Saraguro community and serve as a reference for other Indigenous communities within Ecuador where the violation of collective rights occurs in practice.

First, it is recommended that a dialogue be established between the Ecuadorian government and the Saraguro Indigenous community, in order to strengthen communication between the two parties and to reach agreements that benefit both parties without undermining collective rights. In particular, it is recommended that policies be implemented in practice to strengthen the participation of Indigenous persons in decision-making, involve issues that may significantly affect Indigenous communities, and that their collective rights are not violated.

Second, it is recommended that the successive governments within Ecuador commit to guaranteeing respect for and protection of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and communities based on existing national and international instruments. The violations experienced by Indigenous communities in recent years should be taken into account, and a change should be made that does not limit Indigenous people solely for being different.

Finally, it is recommended with reference to the case study, and what happened to the arrested persons, when judicial proceedings are carried out in cases involving Indigenous communities and peoples, plurinationality be recognized, and the application of indigenous justice be guaranteed; and only in exceptional cases where ordinary justice is applied should it adopt a plurinational and multiethnic approach.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Informed Consent

INTERVIEW AND INFORMED CONSENT FACT SHEET

Information sheet on the Degree Project:

"COLLECTIVE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLES IN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: COMMUNITY OF SARAGURO"

Synopsis

This degree work is carried out by Camila Fernanda Pachar Castro, a student of International Studies at the University of Azuay and directed by the lawyer Ana María Bustos Cordero.

The general objective of this work is to determine if the rights of the indigenous community of Saraguro in the Republic of Ecuador are being guaranteed and protected in accordance with the current national and international regulatory framework.

The person interviewed individually is expected to give his or her opinion on the exercise of the defense of collective rights towards indigenous peoples and communities, the difficulties they face, protection mechanisms and how the protection of indigenous peoples can be improved. You will not be required to answer all the questions, and you can withdraw from the interview at any time, without having to explain yourself to the interviewer.

You will be asked for permission to record the audio of the interview. The purpose of the recording is to obtain a complete and accurate record of the information you provide; however, you can request that the device be turned off at any time, or not used.

Excerpts from the interview could be cited in the Degree Project. The information will not be used in any other way.

Questionnaire

*Attached to the informed consent

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWEES

I, Camila Fernanda Pachar Castro, as the author of this Degree Project, wish to ensure that the people interviewed are fully informed about their participation in this project. Please indicate if you agree with any information and/or require clarification, let us know.

- I have read and understood the information sheet of the Degree Project.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the Degree Work.
- I agree to participate in a personal interview.
- I am participating on a completely voluntary basis.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions, without having to explain why.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time without explaining the reason
- I authorize the recording of the audio of my interview.
- I authorize notes to be taken during the interview.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in the Degree Project.
- I understand that the information provided will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Name: _____.

Signature: _____.

Date: / /2026

Identity card: _____.

Appendix B

Transcript of Interviews Conducted

Interviewee #01

What does it mean to you to be Saraguro and what makes you different from the rest of the indigenous communities?

Well, first of all, being Saraguro is a unique ethnic group that we are south of Ecuador, where we have been considered the purest ethnic group in America, in a way, I have always said, in quotation marks, but that we have in particularity and that we could take away from the different peoples is first of all the different wisdom that each of the communities has, because here in Saraguro, Lagunas with Oña Cápac is very different in some important issues, in gastronomy, language, in the celebration of the festivities, so I think that we are unique because each community has its own value of interest for each one, for each ethnic group where it is and that at the time of conglomerating when we go to the town, in this case, which is in general in Saraguro canton, we will always have a different distinction

Do you think that the Saraguro community has changed in recent years and if so, how?

Let's see, 533 years ago specifically, when we have a practically where they lived in an Andean town where the Incas were, a space was created such as the issue of the mitimaes, which are the Saraguros specifically, from there there was a time, through colonization where the Saraguro people were paralyzed, where they began to be culturalized, I would say because of the national system created from the West, where the language, clothing, our customs and our ways of living began to be silenced. In these last 42 years specifically, a little more and a little less, our communities have begun to demonstrate our value with greater strength, we have begun to work to sustain and revitalize our identity, so the main actors are people who have self-educated, they have prepared themselves in universities, people who studied anthropology, historians, from our communities who have encouraged us so that this generation begins today to show itself with greater vision for the world and for the canton.

How has the Saraguro identity been maintained and transmitted to the new generations?

In recent times we have changed a little the issue of the paradigm that seeing you with a hat, seeing you with shorts in the different educational centers, especially because there the people who have been in an educational center far from our land, as in different places of the country and the world, are first schematized, marked, eh not taken into consideration; That has allowed the people we have prepared to value, have shown everywhere we go and demonstrate our own identity, and that has satisfied us a lot now.

What are the main strengths, characteristics, and contributions that the community and Saraguro have, both at the cantonal, provincial, national and international levels?

The Saraguro people have truly demonstrated that their main strength is the care of nature, since, as care for nature and with the living entity that lives with us, which is the water, the "yaku", through these we have been able to strengthen ourselves in collective rights, so that, first of all, our own decisions are respected. We must be respected for our coexistence with water that guarantees the survival of our production and of ourselves and the canton; and that they guarantee this the existing community group and in that sense because of the struggle that we have had for water, against mining, with our, for the issue of our language, which has been put in the educational system and all those situations, we have even had to reach international instances so that the State itself considers us, and of those achievements that today are in the Constitution of 2008 that is about collective rights, that also bilingual intercultural education, and some other things.

What are the main challenges you have presented inside and outside the community and what have you done to solve them?

To go against the system, us and the challenges is to organize, to look for proposals, to look for alternatives so that governments listen to us through our own rights of our organizations, we have been able to do this so that it is fulfilled.

Do you know about the case "The 29 of Saraguro" that occurred in 2015?

Yes, it was an outrage for the people of Saraguro, a fatal discrimination for our defenders who were there protesting because it was against mining, all the governments have tried to humiliate, sink and silence the ethnic group of Saraguro, in the south above all, and that is the way to continue and criminalize without making a real process. Because only when we demand what is fair they believe that we are terrorists, they believe that we are the ones who are against the country, they believe that we are the ones who do not allow the country to progress, but progress cannot be by discriminating or eliminating a population, the country cannot be the growth that must be lost in order to be able to do extractivism and through that benefit only a single sector that is 5% of this country, so at that time there were many people who were criminalized even when they were not in the protests, they never made a clear or precise investigation, they never talked about the consequences and the security that they put on the urban population here in the Saraguro canton because they attacked everything that is Loja Street, they came to Azuay Street, they came here to this space that is the house of the FIIS, a community organization and they never cared about anything, just imagine I start to think, they have criminalized 29 people, but what would have happened that one of our members of the city had died from the asphyxiation of the gases that they put in. Would someone have spoken?, we always ask ourselves that question, that the judges have done, only serve the government to be able to criminalize, so far there has not been a clear response from all the people who were criminalized.

What collective rights do you think were violated during the 2015 event and why?

To the territorial determination of the Kichwa people Saraguro means where the majority of the settlement of the Saraguro people are, in this sense the urban part is surrounded and since we are surrounded by these communities, territorially it belongs to us to say that we are the Saraguro people, then territorially they inflicted because it has the authority of the people who are in the FIIS, which is the president of the CORPUKIS that they were able to talk with the state to reach an agreement violated and 6 principle of collective law and violated its competent authority within what of its competent jurisdiction that says who and the other the other to trampled in violation of collective rights is above all criminal zero of women dense of the constitution speaks very clearly especially in the 171 the participation and decision of the and that space women were there to mediate in our world there is Women are the ones who will be able to achieve half balance so that there is no such conflict violation of women's rights, second, they wanted to impose a mining law within a community territory where we defend that it is the virus, the defense of this place that is already considered as I am water, because this place there is a where it

produces water for the province of Loja del Oro and other places more, then In that sense, violation, attack on the life that we have as a relationship with nature, which is within collective rights, are the main factors that allowed it to happen.

Do you think that the case that occurred came to strengthen or weaken the community identity of Saraguro? Explain your answer

Hey, the West, because of the governments in power, will always observe that the peoples believe that we are weakened, as we are seeing ourselves today, but nevertheless there is a bit of analysis and at the moment that it really goes either a direct affection towards life, towards the vital liquid, towards the norms and customs of each community, to the decisions of what we have suffered for the rights here. in Ecuador the peoples are going to unite and surely with these actions that I forget to do for a long time that it is already customary for governments to listen to us has been strengthened first the young people are already strengthened because in this last time we could observe the young people were more active than ever in the older ones were behind giving the experience the wisdom of the young people had more active so what do you want To say, if in 2015 there was a certain group that is a defense, today we can see much more young people who run out of the next one to be able to sustain these rights.

Do you think that the case that occurred came to strengthen or weaken the community identity and the Ecuadorian State and that new forms of organization or defense as a community were created? Which ones?

What we can first do, that this space allows us to generate a much broader organization of defense of the club at the level of southern Ecuador, because we are now organized from the province of the PSOE to Macara, where there are people who are in defense of the vital liquid, it seems to me that this allowed us to strengthen much more and let's say in this way, now on the issue, on the national issue, we have visibly been with actions with actions in defense and we have also arrived so that the National Assembly knows and we have always been talking with the state entity that all the mining issues were going on the soil of the Lojav family and in their elevator I believe that the lime in the state are at the service of the government are at the service of the International Monetary Fund are at the service of the 5% of this country that manages the country of Ecuador economically and then do not allow the rules, procedures, decisions or criteria that we have created in our lawyer, in dialogue tables with the state, eh could be made visible and I resolve in the assembly to eliminate these traditions from the communities, that is, we believe that we have been able to contribute with clear and precise proposals, but the government will never make me listen because it is at the service of a sector.

What role did indigenous organizations, especially community organizations, play during the judicial process?

Well, at that time, for example, the authority of the people, that we are mainly always supporting our own right, the right to be or a good process to be carried out, the right to be respected, to respect the collective rights that at the time of judging that it is in an alternative way that is an instrument the IOC YY, above all that does not criminalize when it is something just what we We claim then we as organizations socialize we are the intermediary to socialize our communities and our communities that are buried of the whole situation that gives their 9 and despite in some situation where the judge makes the decision has made the decision in which time to be able to judge the active communities to be able to support according to the so that the constitutional norms do not violate acquire and with respect to what What is the CONAI, how was the help it gave them during the case here, to understand the situations, the Interprovincial Federation of Indigenous Peoples, some countries, is not an organization that is the base of the Conade in Saraguro, the base of the CONAI and the CORPUKIS, it is already a very different structure, our main organization is the genocidal organization and I can say that the penalties without the federation and well, national dew of nationalities Black and indigenous people of remembrance, we have always been manifesting and indicating that those rights that we collectively acquired must be respected at the national level, the situation of the defense of the project and proposals must be analyzed in the National Assembly and in turn from the National Assembly to make a support and national spokesperson so that everything that happened between the 29 and others that may happen support us at the national level So there is a juncture in our organization, from the community, from the people that we are, and from the nation here, in the context of everything that has happened and everything that the community of Saraguro has currently experienced, what actions have been carried out to strengthen the cultural identity of the well, we can speak as the FIIS, first after observing that for 40 more than 40 years they have strengthened the the intention of the kings where we have the living context with water, the game, the air and the Earth, we have begun to walk in each of our communities, first making visible and living the kings, already to the mission of the kings, it is a joint context in each of the times, for example, I am going to take the example of now that we are in the short time, it is a time where we make visible that the beloved Earth provides us with the first tender fruits and allows us to see a field full of flowers, then it is a time where we relate to nature, but we also observe in comparison and or parallel with this event our leaders who were elected in the field at the beginning of December so that now in Raimi Park they begin to make visible with their first armies of dividing something with their first test of the community and if we go to the family environment to see also making visible from the family what is the sense and support that we are developing and the growth of a family towards the community and towards the people, then we as a country in that one of the points have worked and we have strengthened and grow itself in each of the regimes we have supported the youth so that they can Training could be given in these intercultural issues, the issue of collective rights, in leadership, in oratory issues and also, above all, in the issue of art, which through painting, because the Saraguro people have a lot of art, they have many things to offer, but they are not visible or are not technified, to be able to promote them later in the future, as well as the issue of gastronomy each of the communities In this time of the kings, the different types of gastronomic expenses existing in each of the communities are provided, because we can say this because in each king they are interspersed and the particular thing about the pis is that the skin is not only of indigenous people, greetings, pencil, it has its bases in Baikal, if I kept it, Jalpan, background noise, the compañeros of Poterillos now have the commune, commune, this Marco Pérez de Castilla that is from the province of Azuay in the canton, so they are ethnic groups that perhaps remained stagnant, they did not become visible and did not self-determine, they determine themselves as peasants, but it must be observed that the word peasant, that is why we are historic now in the piece, in 2023 yes in 2023, in 2023 26 on the 25th, it is historic that a representative of the community of 20 education that self-identify as peasants so that work is not one there are many other series that are not authorized but we are working with them to continue strengthening them and at the moment that you want to strengthen the cultural identity currently you have had some kind of challenge to see in the administration shows the challenges first when there are communities that are very westernized first of all us with the rules and procedures of the communities existing in some places have allowed the fragmentation of the because because decisions are not made to say very well in the community such with your video X so that you are part and active member of the community you have to speak the Quichua language and the assembly you have to participate in the mingas constantly and other things that are done in the community that has weakened us a lot because there are many young people who are part of the community. We would be interested, for example, here in the urban part, used to the administrative authorities of their old life, house vice, that is, everything creates a community, you have to work to have that access, hotels, food, to be able to

Territorial determination, everything that I am working means where are the majority of the settlement of the Saharawi people, beginning sense in the urban part, this is the days of the elections, the truth and as we are the days these communities are your territorial belongs to

us to say that we are Quiché people, then territorially they inflicted because they have their own authority in the people who are the president of the country who is the president of the cookies that they could talk to the State to reach an agreement violated that is the principle the collective fact violated to their competent authority within what of their competent relationship that says who the constitution of and the other the other to run over in violation of collective rights is above all and zero criminal of women dense of the constitution speaks very clearly especially in the 171 participation and The decision of the and space rangers were there to mediate in our world the women are will be able to mediate balance so that there is not that type of conflict duration second they wanted to impose a mining law within a community territory where we respond that it is the fruit of the defense of this place that is made considers it as strange Iberian because this place there is a where it produces water for the province of Loja del Oro and other places, so in that sense violated, attacking the life that we have as a relationship with nature, which is within collective rights, are the main factors that allowed that to happen.

Interviewee #02

I need you to help me with your name, age, profession, activity and your institutional position.

My name is Víctor Condolo, I am 43 years old, I am president of the San Vicente community. Well, I have a degree in agroecology, a degree in agroecology, but I do not practice per se, I am dedicated to a business in the bakery, and I am also a soccer coach in a soccer school.

What does it mean to you to be Saraguro and what makes you different from the rest of the indigenous communities?

It means being a native with a cultural identity that has lasted for hundreds of years and that today has allowed us to develop cultural activities and transcend time and history, especially with the demonstration of some values such as clothing, which is what has transcended and visualized the most in the world.

Do you think that the Saraguro community has changed in recent years?

Of course, it has changed quite a bit, especially because of modernism, which has been one of the greatest bridges it has influenced. Technology and migration have been the three determining factors in the transformation of many aspects of the Saraguro culture. I believe that this is precisely governed by wanting in one way or another to align oneself with other cultures, as I said, specifically the result of modernism or the fashion that we call today.

How has the identity of being Saraguro been maintained or transmitted to the new generations?

What has been transmitted, the most visible as I said at the beginning is the issue of clothing, clothing, which is one of the issues that I believe has been preserved and has been transmitted from generation to generation and you can see it because I think it is the most salvageable, the most alive that has been able to be maintained during all generations and well I hope that it continues to strengthen that from here on out.

What are the main strengths and contributions that the Saraguro community has had at the cantonal, provincial, national and international level?

Organization, especially one of the visible things is also the issue of community justice, because in one way or another, although as I said before, many things have disappeared, but I think that part of that with weaknesses, with stumbling blocks, with diversity that there is, but in one way or another the organization when you have to fight against a system, when it is necessary to oppose an external agent of domination that does not benefit our communities, our peoples. So it is still latent within our canton and especially the indigenous part of the Saraguro canton.

What are the main challenges that have arisen inside and outside the community and what has been done to solve them?

It is first to try to maintain our traits of cultural identity. That has already been why one of the determining factors is migration, the challenge, the challenge of maintaining that, because unfortunately most of the people who have gone abroad, because in one way or another we have seen transculturation, unfortunately we are making our cultural sides disappear, for example the hair that is for the Saraguro indigenous people, which is decisive outside the country, especially in the external part, because we have been forced or voluntarily, I don't know if forced or voluntarily, but this cultural identity shows to disappear.

And what has been done based on that?

Well, today there are bilingual educational centers, there have also been some internal workshops here at the level of Saraguro, in the communities, in the parishes, which have also tried to raise awareness and socialize about this value, because it is a unique wealth that I think should be preserved, because as I have said, the same trait. The greatest value is clothing, it is our hair, they are things that perhaps more than are visualized, it can be evidenced, they are transcending in each generation.

What are the challenges that have arisen within the community and what have been done?

It has a lot to do with the issue of sustainability in terms of the organizational process of indigenous communities. Why do I say this? Because unfortunately today the youth is trying to ignore the community organizational process and everything is the result of external agents. I touch again on the issue of modernization, I return to the issue of technology, I return to the issue of migration. So, and above all also the world geopolitical system and the national geopolitical system I also touch on the subject, because then taking into consideration that, as the youth becomes apolitical to organizational, everyone thinks that perhaps living in organizational processes, political processes, is a matter of corruption, of deep embezzlement, the youth kind of tries to put aside and that is one of the biggest challenges that is facing the world. in the community, how to involve them, how to make sure that there is a replacement in the future, because those of us who do leadership or leadership are going to disappear and we need to see people who take over, who take control. So that is what I think is the biggest challenge today and that we are, I think most communities thinking concerned about that situation.

Do you know about the case that occurred in 2015 of Saraguro?

Of course. Yes, yes. In fact, maybe I wasn't on the street. But it is very close, that is, I had full, absolute knowledge of what happened. Unfortunately, it is a violation of human rights, it is a violation of human dignity, perhaps even some aspects that the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador itself allows, self-determination, the right to resistance and everything. So there was the violation of many of those unfortunate aspects, really.

From your perspective, how do you think the Saraguro community lived during the Saraguro 29 event?

Unfortunately, perhaps it was biased or limited to the community being able to raise its voice in protest, in protest of many actions that they were not seeing at the time. And I think that there is also a particular fact that I am interested in citing, which is that many of the public authorities of a national nature have even told us that there should be a working table, there should be dialogues, but unfortunately under the political system that we live in today with the governments of the day it is difficult. It is very difficult, I could say almost impossible, to sit down at a dialogue table, to put forward clear proposals and to be able to obtain positive results. So perhaps we have to proceed to actions perhaps of a demonstration, of a concentration in the street so that perhaps the public authorities can give us help, the national government can give us help and we can perhaps in one way or another try to negotiate something, try to make them listen to some proposal that we have. But very indignant about all that in itself, as I say, very indignant with everything.

What collective rights do you consider to have been violated and why?

The right to resistance, Article 57, the right to resistance because all Ecuadorians, I believe that the 17 million Ecuadorians are protected under the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador and I believe that we have every right to express our voice, to go out to the streets to demonstrate, we have done so peacefully. We have not done it violently, we are not terrorists under any circumstances and I believe that this right was violated. Resistance, as I say, is in the cooking of the Republic, Article 57, that it is important to also review the collective rights that are otherwise focused and directed towards providing a side of protection to the peoples and nationalities of the people.

Do you think that this case strengthened or weakened the community identity of Saraguro and why?

There are instances, that is, with the case in this case of August 17, 2015, in this case it was strengthened, why? Because despite the diversities that there may be, despite the diversities that there may be within the Saraguro people in the political-ideological question, but nevertheless when it is already an issue of a national nature, when it is already an issue that otherwise encompasses a whole conglomerate of different communities, then perhaps at that moment we kind of forget the internal problems that there may be and strengthen us because we are already fighting against a dominant system of government. So in that sense it strengthened, I think its moment could be clearly evidenced, many people on the street, many people contrasting with what happened during that day, it really was a massacre in the town of Saraguro. So it strengthened as such, it allowed us to see how united we are strong, it allowed us to see that even the Saraguro people as such made themselves known at the international level, there was the opportunity to go out to CNN, an international network well known worldwide, so to know that it is a strong people, a people with history, a people that fights for its rights, a people fighting for self-determination.

Do you think that this case set any precedent in the relationship of the people of Saraguro with the Ecuadorian State and because of this some kind of form of organization or defense as a community was also created?

Yes, he did leave some precedents. The precedent, for example, that was left there is that the Saraguro people, the Saraguro people with the social organizations that exist here, the communities, different social movements, activists and everything, that, for example, we make a counterposition to the defense against mining, the defense against the preservation of water, which is the source of life, The main source we also do not agree, for example, with mining, it is because there is mining and there is displacement of communities, displacement of territories, so we do not agree with that, but we want to preserve those cultural values that transcended for so many years, it is an ancient value that has been preserved until now.

What role did the special indigenous organizations, those here such as the FIIS and CORPUKIS, play during the development of the judicial process that took place in the case?

Accompaniment, accompaniment clearly them, accompaniment with the relatives, accompaniment with even somewhere also mutual relationship between the lawyers who followed the process, between international instances, national and international instances that followed the case, so above all and also what had to do is the mobilization of people who in one way or another also supported the hearings, different activities of a judicial nature that were carried out both in Loja, in Quito, so it was focused as you said, not only leaving the relatives, but it was accompaniment to the organizational issue.

What actions have currently been taken to strengthen the cultural identity of the community of Saraguro?

Well, I can say that what these people, what has been seen now are the festivities, the festivities have been what they have maintained the most and I think that the most visible, the most transcendental so far is the festivity of the end of the year, Christmas or the Kapak Raymi calls it here in our Quichua language, it is the one that has been the most tangent exhibition, visible there in our Saraguro canton, including not only the indigenous part, but the mestizo part and everything, it has been the one that has transcended the most, I think that at the level of the country internationally it is the largest exhibition and there come other festivals such as the Raymi, the Kapak Raymi, the Inti Raymi, the Pauca Raymi, who are also Raymi, who in another way is also visible but perhaps not as strong as the Kapak. Within the religious calendar such as Christmas, which is the end of the year.

In wanting to strengthen the cultural identity of the community, has there been any kind of challenge? If so, which one? By wanting to strengthen cultural identity as communities. Have there been challenges to this? If so, which ones?

Wanting to maintain cultural identity is a challenge here. Education, education. Education has to be. Education is a determinant, primordial factor. It is well known that the saying that education is the basis for the development of the public and if there is no restructuring of an educational system, then it is difficult, it is difficult to be able to preserve some cultural values that may be in force or perhaps try to reincorporate some that may be disappearing. So first you have to know it and that is to educate ourselves, the base, to collect history, to read, to talk to the elderly, with my libraries. And to take some aspects that can help us to maintain, to strengthen cultural identity.

What do you feel you have been missing out on the community of Saraguro?

Let's see here. Food, a lot of food, food practices, agricultural cultural work that have practically disappeared by almost 90%. For example, I can cite the tilling of the land in a manual way, as it was done before, for example, with the help of the yoke, let's say, the manual method of tilling the land has practically disappeared almost 100%. I think that is what I find most today, there are no people who work the land with the yoke, there is none. Even the technique or method of organic production has almost disappeared as well. Most of it is already a method of cultivation, of agricultural technique, but already Western, most of it is mechanical, machinery, agrottoxins in crops. There are many things that have disappeared in that sense and it is unfortunate because it has not favored anything, it is an equal negative repercussion within food, within the health of the inhabitants. I work and well, I think that even worldwide, not only here, the most visible thing is that. And there, well, I think there are aspects such as music, aspects such as language. Language is another thing that has also disappeared a lot, unfortunately. The language. Yes, and here is what I was saying a while ago, a while ago the question of education, that is, if the question of language is not incorporated as an education system, which should not even be only as a curriculum of study in schools, but also at home, as some native peoples here in Ecuador do, For example, they have the pre-education that they do at home and everyone speaks, even young people speak Quichua, so here instead that is not practiced, parents also do not do that with other children and worse as an educational system, as Pensul is not contemplated, so more complicated, what they rescue here are the bilingual educational centers, but that they are few, but on the other hand educational centers do not. However, although Ecuador is considered Quichua as the second official language, unfortunately it is only written and is not practiced. So it is other things that have also been disappearing. Two key things that I say, I repeat, which is the question of agricultural practices, the language I think is the most decisive

Has there been any participation for the new generations, such as programs to strengthen the cultural identity of the community?

There are workshops, there are training workshops, there are training schools, leaders, there are those things, but there is a but there, but within that issue instead it is always like it tends to be inclined or determined to a certain group, so there is a controversy within the organizational issue, for example, I tell you, for example if we want to go to the rescue of cultural practices. It is very good that it should be done like this, there are workshops, but there is also a side that is being folklorized and what is folklorizing? Folklorizing, on the other hand, has to do with the fact that you see it from a mercantilist point of view, more than one point of view of social awareness to change this reality, this tonic and restructure or incorporate new things that are disappearing. So you see if you do a ceremony or you do a workshop, let's say to rescue the ancestral language, or you do a workshop to rescue the native clothing of the areas, but maybe because a little tourists come, because a little people come from outside to record and generate a revenue through the community with a revenue in between, it's not precisely because you feel it, because you want to change the sociocultural reality from there then. So those are perhaps some aspects as well that are visible, that you can see there inside Saraguro

Do you think that the new generations are losing what they call cultural as Saraguro?

Yes, a lot is being lost, a lot is being lost, as I say, there are spaces, there are moments or there are characters where otherwise they are making an effort, but as I tell you, but not all, I repeat, some do it out of folklorism, others do it because they really feel it, this need. And we are in a cultural crisis that is about to disappear. Yes, because there is a lot to think about what will be like in two, three more generations, in about twenty, ten, fifteen, twenty years, with all the aspects that I told you before. If these points are not taken into consideration, then unfortunately it is possible that the Quichua people Saraguro could disappear. It is regrettable, it is regrettable. Perhaps, perhaps it will not disappear in its essence, its feeling, because in feeling, both the Saraguro who lives in Saraguro, and the Saraguro who migrates to different parts of the world, feels it, its identity, its feeling is Saraguro, but many of its features, its external characters, have disappeared a lot. So that is, I think that in a penant, regrettable, as I say, in a few more years, maybe two more decades, we may feel like Saraguros, but we will not demonstrate how our identity is externally. One thing is the feeling and another thing is the sample, the demonstration, our clothing, the language, our hair. There are so many things that I would like to be translated, I would like them to be there. But that's a risk for youth, believe me, it's a risk for youth. We should, I think, I don't know if we should become aware, but beyond consciousness, learn to unlearn many things. It is not only learning to learn, but it is also giving feedback to learning to unlearn. And in this case we have to learn to unlearn many things that are dominating us. Technology is dominating us, we are slaves to technology. And if we don't learn to unlearn that, then it may be the disappearance of something so beautiful that it has transcended and that has lived more than 500 years here, 524 years specifically.

Interviewee #03

I need you to please help me with your name, age, profession, activity and your institutional position

Well, good afternoon, my name is Rosa Macas, I am currently working, I am currently working in this financial institution, my profession is commercial engineering. The activity or position I currently hold is manager of this financial institution and I am 42 years old.

What does it mean to you to be Saraguro and what do you feel differentiates you from the rest of the indigenous communities?

First of all, I am proud to belong to the Saraguro people. For some time Saraguro has identified itself as a town of resistance to the different policies that the government itself has imposed and from this resistance perhaps some results have been achieved, the benefits have been at the national level, so that is why I at least value the identity of our Saraguro people very much, in fact, It seems to me that all peoples and nationalities within our country are at least identified as a sector of resistance.

Do you think that the community of Saraguro has changed over the years? And if so, how?

Actually, it has changed, it has changed since previously perhaps the organizational part was stronger, more consolidated. Currently it is evident that there are some limitations, some biases, especially political, organizational we would say, because certain leaders have sought personal benefits at the expense of or using the name of an entire people or an entire community, so based on that, yes, and I would say it has been weakened currently, then we should see some urgent action for us to be able to continue strengthening these community works that have been done through of the Saraguro people.

How has Saraguro's identity been maintained or transmitted to the new generations?

Rather, I would say that perhaps the whole process of sustaining the cultural identity as a Saraguro people is being weakened in the youth, because many people or many current generations are perhaps already taking their own identity, some, many or most are changing their clothing, they are using other clothing and even in their identity they are no longer identified as indigenous. So we also have a weakness within the Saraguro people, because perhaps as communities or as a family we do not have that identity and also that. I can't find the exact word, for us to be able to spread and make our children or our generations still maintain our own identity and feel proud of how we have transcended in these years.

What do you think are the main strengths and contributions that the community of Saraguro has provided both at the provincial, cantonal, sometimes national and international levels?

Let's see, there are many strengths, well I could say one is the territory itself, the territory itself when we are in a community or when we identify ourselves as Quichua peoples, Saraguro, we have many benefits, let's say self-determination also at the time we make decisions through a community, obviously it is for a more individual collective benefit, So there are a lot, our own identity itself makes all this transcendence perhaps a strength for us and precisely for this reason it is also impregnated in the Constitution itself, in 171 with the right to take our own justice through indigenous justice, in 21 our own cultural identity and that of collective rights as well. So from the Constitution itself it is reflecting all the rights we have and that makes us with our identity stronger or we feel strengthened.

What do you think are the main challenges that the community has presented?

Let's see, within the community the social part, the social part, the economic part, also the political part? So within the social part, as I said, the organizational part needs to be worked on a lot, perhaps more before compared to the work that has been done more before, it has been quite different from the current one, the economic part, there are still perhaps families that really need, need support or perhaps need the community to be able to accompany until perhaps they get out of a level of poverty, let's say in certain communities or in certain sectors. And on the political side, obviously always like us, more than anything as communities, we must make political advocacy through our government entities, request support, make our needs known, perhaps propose some policies to attend to the communities, however, some depending on the changes of government, some have been attended, others have not been attended.

So do you think that the political issue could be a challenge that the community has faced outside?

It has always been facing perhaps especially the political part, all these resolutions or the norms or the changing policies that it has had at the national level even at the provincial or local level. As communities we have always had to be launching or perhaps raising our voices and also proposing ourselves from the communities, making our proposals and that is when the uprisings, the stoppages, the resistance also come, because we also want to be heard, because there are many things that are raised from a desk, political, resolutions or some norms that finally when they come out to execute these policies, it is not coherent with the needs or what we request.

Now, speaking of demonstrations, do you have any knowledge about the case of the Saraguros 29 that occurred in 2015?

Very closely, no, very closely, no, because at least we as communities at that time did not yet belong perhaps, or within the same community we lived, but perhaps I did not participate much in the assemblies, how the processes were carried out as communities, how they defended the accused, I was not yet immersed within that time, Since I was still, let's say, living under my dad's roof at the time, I didn't have my yet. In the communities, at least in my community, it is defined that when we already have our home, we have our house, we become part of those assemblies and everything. So I haven't been very active in that time, but yes, if we have knowledge, well, if we have knowledge in a rather superficial way. What things have happened during those times that were, I would say, were criminalized directly by the government, by the policies that they have always been putting out. Well, I would say it is imposing or criminal, criminalizing all the people who rise up and have just rights, it is also in the Constitution, the right to complain and when we do that, they judge us as criminals.

What do you think were the collective rights that were violated during this case?

I, one would say one, in the territory, that is, they were perhaps learned or retained within a community territory. The very organization of the communities to make these demonstrations, obviously is done with all respect, at least all the procedure at the time of making an uprising, of making demonstrations, it is not done with the purpose of perhaps attacking or doing some damage to the part of the public sector, but even to those who are assigned as security or police, military, however, they see it differently. So, at the moment one, we have every right to organize, to organize and demonstrate. And to demonstrate in the face of all situations or policies and decisions that are

made. We have the right perhaps to consultation, to free information, so at least all those rights have been violated and in case there have been some female colleagues, there is gender violence. So they exist. Some types of violence that it has suffered both as a community, as human beings and the same right, the right to resistance that we have and the violation of rights perhaps as human beings mainly.

How do you think the Saraguro community experienced this whole issue about the arrest of people from the same community?

With a lot of uncertainty we could say. Thank you. With a lot of uncertainty, I think that all the people who were arrested I think that two ended up being tried. So when I belong to our community, when we belong to our people, even when I talked to the compañera she said I had to leave my family, my whole family is in disharmony, she is quite worried about what is going to happen next? So there is instability both family, community and why not say at the level of the whole town.

Interviewee #04

First I need you to help me with your name, age, profession, activity and institutional position

Perfect, my name is Abel Sarango Quishpe, I am currently 52 years old, by profession I am a social communicator and I currently serve as mayor of the canton.

First, what does it mean to you to be a Saraguro and what do you feel differentiates you from the subtraction of indigenous communities?

Well, I think that first, if we know part of the history of the Saraguro people, it differentiates us from the rest of the existing peoples within the Kichwa nationality of the Ecuadorian highlands, first, because the hypothesis most assumed as such is the one coming from the mitimaes, so therefore, that gives us a certain identity also with the entire road, with the American continent, the part that today is South America, because it would come from that sector of the The shores of Lake Titicaca, and that is why in the clothing, in the way of life, in the customs and traditions that we have here, are very different from the other peoples who are neighbors, including us, as the Cañaris, will purify them, so I believe that this differentiates us fundamentally, here there has also been an equal process of permanent organization, with a well-defined structure, which also differentiates us from the other indigenous peoples of Ecuador.

Do you think that the community of Saraguro has changed in recent years and how?

Well, I think that every culture, when it is alive, experiences changes, there really would not be a single culture that remains in a static state, in such a way that the Saraguro people as such in their cultural aspect have been changed, there have been variations, even in the same issue of clothing, for example, it is one of the factors that takes certain changes, I remember that when I was about 5 or 6 years old, the hat that we used to wear for the newspaper, for example, it was a different one, then it was changed, then it was changed to an oval, now it returns again to a different shape that we are using, so from there we see the same material, it is synthetic, the one we also use in clothing, but there are also other changes that are quite strong, perhaps not very visible, but that do have transcendence, for example, since these last 2 generations they are losing already The language is no longer spoken in Quichua here, something that 40 years ago, 50 years ago, practically everyone spoke the Kichwa language and we communicated with our parents in the language, but today that is practically disappearing and when the language disappears, it not only means that you stopped speaking the language, but with that you will also see a little change, disappearing the worldview of the people, the way of thinking, the way of understanding the way of linking with the world, the way of linking with society, with the energetic and religious part, so those changes are quite profound that perhaps they are not visible at a given time, but that little by little are giving a different context to this sociocultural relationship that the Saraguro people have.

Now, how has the Saraguro identity been maintained and transmitted to the new generations?

Let's see, I think that here basically this depends a lot on the home, if the home is strengthened in the issue of cultural identity, the children of that family will also continue to support them and that is what I think is the main source of transmission of identity, culture, way of thinking, of the way of understanding the world. That is the first space. A second space is the educational issue. I believe that the bilingual intercultural education system in force in some communities, when there is the commitment of teachers and authorities, there is an important work in the maintenance and transmission of the customs and values that are held. So that's a second factor. I believe that the third is also society itself as such, the community to which it belongs. As long as we work on issues of identity, as long as the elderly are using their clothing, they are carrying out their traditions, they are maintaining their protocols, for example in the issue of gastronomy, then in that way it is transmitted. I think that one of the important things here is to see the celebrations that are not about transmitting through a talk, through a workshop, but rather in one's own experience, for example, here the celebration of Christmas, I think it is such an evident example that customs are transmitted from generation to generation and that is done by fulfilling certain roles that should exist at Christmas, so many families are passing through The position of marchanta, for example, there they learn everything that has to be done, such as the protocol part, of serving oneself with food, of sitting at the table, and that is not taught perhaps in an educational center, but rather in one's own experience, and we see how lately that has been the case, growing before, we had only four characters who made up the quadrant of the chacana, but today There are not only 4, there are 8, there are 12 each of the characters and for more each brand, so much so this shows that in this specific aspect, for example, it is getting stronger year after year.

What do you think are the main strengths and characteristics and contributions that the Saraguro community has both at the cantonal, provincial, national and international levels?

Well, I believe that one of the great strengths that the Saraguro people have as such is their culture and in their culture, manifested in their own daily experience of the activities they carry out, it is not a folklorism, it is not a matter prepared to make visible to others, but rather a daily experience, an experience, we would say, that has been transmitted from generation to generation and that this type continues to be carried out of festivities in which it was referred to as Christmas, Holy Week, I think they are the 2 most important events of a cultural nature that the Quichua people have Saraguro, there it is demonstrated in many aspects the issue of solidarity, of repositioning is also highlighted, the whole protocol issue, respect for hierarchies, in short, everything is involved in this type of celebration, so I think that is The great contribution, lately we have been able to see how many national and international tourists come to look to be part of this experience that is unique, we do not have this manifestation in any other part of the country, although it is true that it has been maintained based on the link with the Catholic religion, but all the elements that are demonstrated there are part of the Kapak Raymi that at the time were taken by the Catholic Church to be able to To maintain the religious-spiritual dominion over the indigenous population of that time, I consider that this is one of the fundamental contributions that we have, which is the cultural issue, but in the cultural system linked almost all the elements that I have just mentioned

Now, what do you think are the main challenges that have arisen within the community?

I think that there are some interesting issues that could be considered as part of an evolutionary process of these cultural manifestations, but that there are also beginning to be certain questions about defined roles within the Andean world, for example, certain characters must be male, certain characters must be female and they had also established ages, but today that is a certain norm, that social aspect that existed and that has come for many years begins to be disrupted, I think that for about 10 years now, some things from about 5 years ago are no longer being respected, for example, the ages, to tell you that before an aja was an adult, now in this last year we have been able to see since the ajas are 8 to 10 years old, then it changed, for example, that form, the paileros before were only males, for a long time About 5 or 6 years here it has changed completely, so to a certain extent, suddenly wanting to participate could disrupt a definition of the roles that must be fulfilled, so we would have to think that this does not lead us to a folkloric nation and manage to maintain that as a cultural manifestation of a people, I think it is like a challenge that would have to be analyzed and discussed to a point since it is easy to To be able to control in a spontaneous way or what people want to participate in, then things like these would be seen as a challenge in the strictly cultural issue, secondly, the issue of migration is generating new patterns of behavior linked to the issue of individualism that could disrupt the community life of the peoples, I think that a lot of work is needed, on the one hand, to take the good elements of a capitalist system where Many colleagues have gone, they have worked, they have learned, but models of labor exploitation can also come with it to the same people who have no other option, they are forced to be part of the workforce, so that could disrupt and could generate certain internal conflicts in a community, I think that there would be these challenges that have to be worked on, but how do you rather make the most of the opportunities? that we have but without greatly disrupting this community organizational structure that we have until

Now, what do you think are the challenges that the community has outside?

Well, the main challenge is not to be able to lose the cultural identity, I think that in a certain way it has been managed with some favorable position for the Saraguro people, because if we see within the genetics of the Saragureños themselves, there is the being organized and the first migratory processes that have taken place from Saraguro from a century ago were to the Yacuambi canton and they remained organized, there is an organizational structure of the Saraguro in that sector and not only there, but later in what is Zamora Chinchipe, after the 90s another migratory process came to the United States and Spain, especially at the end of the 90s with dollarization that deepened migration, then many comrades went abroad and at that time we also have an organizational process, there is an organization of the Saraguro indigenous people residing in Spain, an organization of the indigenous people residing in the United States, so there is always an organizational structure, I believe that this is a fundamental sector, there is also mutual support among themselves, when people went to study in Loja, there was an organization of indigenous people from Saraguro when they went to study in Cuenca, the same as in Quito, so I believe that it is one of the strengths that we have and that we should continue to maintain it, because of certain This way allows us to continue to maintain the cultural identity, the organizational spirit in any part of the world where it is and we see that this type of manifestation continues the annual meetings that are held in the United States despite being in a difficult condition of illegals and all the others, but there is still an organizational level in the community

Do you know about the case that occurred in 2015 known as the Saraguro 29?

Yes, precisely because at that time he was also serving as mayor of Saraguro when the events took place and in a certain way we had to be in full coordination with the government authorities and the organizational authorities also to intercede for what happened on that occasion

From your perspective, how did the community of Saraguro live during the event that took place?

I believe that it was the use of excessive force by the state against the demonstrators without recognizing the right to protest, the right to resistance, there was an excessive action on the part of the public forces, I believe that the main objective of the public forces and of President Correa's disposition at that time was that they clear the road, but they persecuted the people everywhere, the community members were even arrested minors, people who were never in this demonstration were arrested from the surrounding houses, they entered from there, they took them out, they took them, they confiscated cell phones that were never returned, they reported them missing and finally this case ended with the 29 who were prosecuted, but in reality there were many more minors arrested, including, that some of them already managed to be released at dawn when the age of each of them was demonstrated. So for me I think that was what it was, it was an excessive aggression, they came to the center here in Saraguro, to the central park, they attacked the elderly who were there, they did not measure the consequences that it could have. So, from that point of view, we had also denounced to public opinion this excessive act on the part of the State through the public force.

What do you consider to be the collective rights that were violated during this case and why?

First, I believe that the Constitution itself establishes the right to resistance and when there are measures that are an attack on peace, tranquility and harmony of the community sectors, there is this possibility established, however, that was not respected. Second, it is also clear that the State had the possibility of being able to declare a state of emergency and since there is a state of emergency, practically all the powers have the power, but there also comes into opposition the inviolability of the communities, a situation that occurred, they entered the communities, they persecuted the people, they attacked the people, men, women, children, in short, I believe that it is demonstrated that they effectively made excessive use of force and violated these rights, which basically have the right to resistance that the peoples have, and not only the indigenous peoples, but also society in general, the Ecuadorian people. The other right that I also consider to have been violated after that is the possibility of being judged by the community itself. The decline of competences was proposed so that they could be judged in the community itself and when that, according to the Constitution itself, 171, the collective rights established in Article 57 should be proceeded in this way. However, on that occasion they did not give way to this issue, so they were judged by a system that at that time responded almost entirely to the interests of the government of the time. There was no fair process for the comrades who were prosecuted on that occasion, it was also really evident that they did not respect the constitution. 10 years have passed since then, today we see that community justice is really beginning to gain strength, greater positioning and in many cases they have been referred to indigenous justice, a situation that on that occasion did not happen and I consider that it was another outrage and another violation of the collective rights that we peoples and nationalities had.

Do you think that with this case that occurred, the cultural identity of the community was strengthened or weakened?

I rather consider that there were several strengths in the issue of cultural identity, it allowed the population to group much more, to have and strengthen more the sense of unity, because the two organizations assumed for themselves the defense of the comrades, they were

present in marches, in demonstrations, accompanying the declarations, in short. So, therefore, I believe that it played an important role in giving greater strength to the cultural identity as a Saraguro people. That same fact that the decline of competences has been denied also made the leaders basically begin to work harder to ensure respect for this right that they had and that unfortunately on that occasion was not respected. So I think it was one more reason for citizens to begin to analyze this right in greater depth and begin to make use of it in different fields.

Do you think that this case set a precedent in relation to the Saraguro people and the Ecuadorian State and that some new forms of organization or defense as a community were created?

Let's see, I think so, in reality it was one of the cases that transcended nationally and internationally, that opened the doors for Saraguro to be seen as a victim of the State in the national context. Many national media opened their doors to us, we were present there denouncing the issue directly, reports also on how the 29 were in this situation, how they had been fighting in the defense, so it gave it a greater presence and as an important element is that the people of Saraguro gave it the category of being one of those that has mostly resisted the impositions of the governments in power. I also believe that the fact of this event that happened also made certain excesses of the public administration visible, which I finally believe that the justice system had to resolve in a favorable way for the 29 colleagues. So in a certain way at that time the position that the indigenous movement had did not prevail, but after a certain time it was shown that there were mistakes and that finally they had to end up in this case acquitting many comrades.

What role did indigenous organizations, especially those of the community, play during the development of the judicial process of showing solidarity?

I believe that there it was evident how when it comes to a collective struggle, in the end the consequences should not be assumed only by those who are in a judicial process, for example, they always had the accompaniment of the community to which the organizational leaders belong and even with direct economic contributions to many of them so that they can cover the expenses that this meant. So from there also an accompaniment on the psychological level, because this also represents a hard blow for example for the family, the fact that their mother is not at home or their father is not at home for a certain time is complex to be able to understand this situation and I believe that there were also these types of visits to the families, to the homes, to motivate the children, to get out of this desperation they had and say that they are not alone, but that they are heroes for Saraguro and that as such they will be accompanied by part of the Saraguro people.

Currently, what actions have been carried out to strengthen the cultural identity of the Saraguro community?

I believe that as such a planned and executed action would be the bilingual education system, which can be said to be systematic, it is permanent, it seems to me that it is the only one that has that permanent character. Apart from that, there have been some specific projects in themselves that have a start date and an end date, or cultural fairs, analysis meetings that take place, but basically as a state policy at this time, which is obviously also the product of the conquests of the strikes and the demonstrations that have taken place, it is the bilingual education system, it is the only one that can in a certain way strengthen cultural identity there and also perhaps to a minimum extent it is an intercultural health system that is also trying to highlight the knowledge that was had by people who have their knowledge, not in a professional way, but empirically that this knowledge has been received from generation to generation.

By wanting to strengthen cultural identity as a community. Have there been challenges?

Yes, I think there are several challenges in this issue. On the one hand, I think that it is faced when decisions are made, it is faced between being popular and being liked by the majority or having to make decisions that can also make certain sectors uncomfortable. Just to give you an example, when we do an inter-community championship, the objective of that championship is to link young people with the authority of the community, but also the objective is to maintain the identity of the demonstrations, they see the way to distribute, is to make these things that are part of the customs of the Saraguro people, young people can also assimilate and practice them. But for example, for Saraguro as such, one of the factors or identity elements is the braid and long hair, but there are many young people who no longer use it and within the regulations that are put in this championship, at least 7 of the 11 players on the field must keep their hair long. And there we find ourselves, for example, with adverse positions that they do not accept, do not admit and so it is like a challenge to do certain activities, certain actions that are suddenly going to go or are going to be rejected by the young people of the Quichua Saraguro people themselves. So I think that there is a challenge to begin to be able to measure things as far as we can, as far as we cannot, for any activity that can be developed.

Now, speaking of new generations, have there been programs for their participation, for the strengthening of cultural identity?

Well, I think that organizations have played an important role there. For example, I know that organizations have training programs for leaders with identity, it is one of the programs that I know. So they are always trying to prevail the thought, the worldview of the Quichua Saraguro people and from that base to be able to highlight a leadership so that later on they can be in public positions, they can be directing certain institutions. So there is a process of continuous training that has been going on for about two years, working mainly with young people. So these types of actions have been taking place, but they are not always maintained over time. While a project is achieved, it is developed, it will last two or three years, then it disappears for a certain time and in that way there is a little support in this field of linking young people.

Do you feel that with the new generations the cultural identity like Saraguro has been lost?

In certain respects yes. For example, in clothing it is evident, there is no way to cover the sun with a finger, there it has been modified, identity is being lost at that point. In the use of the language, I think that almost 95% of young people do not speak the Quichua language, so therefore they have lost part of this identity and as I said at the beginning, when they lose the language they lose much more, it is not only speaking but it is the way of thinking, it is a whole cultural load that is immersed within a language system. So all that part has been lost. But there are other aspects on the other hand that have been strengthened, as I said, cultural manifestations such as Christmas, Easter, which have had a very important boom in recent times. So there are elements that are being lost and others that are being strengthened. The use of community justice, for example, strengthened a lot, which is another element of the people as such, with all its errors that obviously are also being seen that they must be analyzed at the time and take the corrective measures that are necessary. But in any case, if we buy this 20 years ago, today it has had a fairly strong rebound.

Interviewee #05

Let's see, first I need you to help me with your name, your age, profession, activity and professional position

I am Luisa Lozano, I am from the Kichwa Saraguro people, I am indigenous. I am currently studying in the sixth cycle of the anthropology career. I have been a former leader of the women's CONAIE, community authority within my community, and I have also occupied some spaces in the community as a Community Justice Commission, also as vice president and I really like social activism. I do not tolerate injustice and my vision is always to defend our territory such as Fierro Urco.

That's it. Now, what does it mean to you to be a saraguro and what do you feel differentiates you from the rest of the indigenous communities?

Let's see, in Ecuador there are 18 peoples from north to south and 15 nationalities. That this is guaranteed in the constitution of Ecuador, we are recognized as indigenous peoples. Of course, we are as a Saraguro people, we make perhaps a great difference in our ways of life, in our community coexistence, also in relation to other peoples. We may have the same cultural practices, but there is always a difference that frames us to live within the community territory. And also, for example, One is the climate, which differentiates us, for example, from Cañar. Cañar is taller, Saraguro is a little shorter. And our clothing, perhaps our suit. We wear a round hat. Of course, we are always identified as the vaquita's hat, which is our wool hat. Unlike, for example, the Cañar people have the smallest hat. And I think that this was also, of course, since colonization, as these spaces of community differences and differences of peoples were marking us, right? In relation, perhaps ours, our ancestors, right? They were perhaps putting a difference in our clothing. And also in our ways of eating. For example, Saraguro is always framed in the issue of corn cultivation. We also grow our own products for our own food on our land. Of course, now you don't see much, but throughout the Saraguro canton you see corn, there is always corn. You could say that it makes a difference to you. And also, for example, the theme of experiences in the festivities is quite rooted. Saraguro, the Kapok Rai, itself, is quite, quite rooted here. we make a difference at the level of the peoples and nationalities that we have been able to sustain here. Of course, it is related to religious syncretism, but it is even more so when you already know the history and see this social cohesion that exists in the Caparrayn period.

Do you think that the community of Saraguro has changed in recent years and how?

Yes, it has changed a lot. Well, if we look at history above, in any context it could be said that it has been changing our ways of life. we have also been acquiring other cultures, it is as if it has gone away and knowing that culture is changing, as if our forms of coexistence are coming culturally, but we do continue to sustain that. Now the other issue may be that we have changed due to the issue of migration, we have acquired other ways of life, other forms of housing construction, we no longer have our own houses that we previously had made of barrique, tile, that and of course they have also gone into our forms of clothing, we have not acquired, we are already putting on other types of clothes. We are becoming clear from the Western we would say in this sense, the same our anaco, we no longer wear the wool anaco. It has also changed in the other political-social space, yes, because previously, I remembered just this morning when I was talking to a colleague, that historically we as indigenous peoples did not have that opportunity to be able to access education, work, that we were not recognized in the constitution as peoples and nationalities. So already in social life, in political life, we have gone as... positioning and bilingual education has begun to appear, indigenous doctors have begun to appear. So little by little in that sense, in those ways of life we have also gone, yes, there is quite a difference. It could be said that there are two things, if you put it in the balance, there are things that we have been culturally sustaining in our ways of life, but perhaps we are also forgetting to look at the past. So we do have to take these two things into account. When we talk, for example, about progress, we are only seeing individual progress, we are not seeing collective progress, for example, that has changed a lot in these times.

How has Saraguro's identity been maintained and transmitted to the new generations?

Well, identities have been transformed, but they have been sustained by the practices that we have, from within the family, within the community, within the educational center, within social organizations. In other words, it has been sustaining itself and has been taking possession so as not to lose what we have. So, and that makes it possible to live and resume until now, because I remember, let's see, in 2005, 2005, 2006, before we had the new constitution of 2008, there, for example, we had many difficulties with which many people began to lose, leave the hat, leave the valleta, leave our way of dressing, and perhaps the most indispensable thing is for us this relationship we have of our way of speaking, our language, "Nyukan Chishimi", from Quichuano. So that was kind of fading away, but of course, after bilingual education appeared, more than 30 years, they began again with this educational project to appear again and to sustain and to be able to raise awareness, to generate social awareness to be able, both in the language, as well as our own identity as Saraguro.

What do you consider to be the main strengths, characteristics and contributions of the community of Saraguro that it has at the provincial, cantonal, national and international levels?

That collective vision that peoples and nationalities, and also, well, of course, in the mestizo world there are also other ways of life, but this solidarity is witnessed. And in our space, as indigenous peoples, there is always this collective vision, solidarity is always present, reciprocity is always present, the "ay, nino", the "randi, randi", you give me, I also give you. So, that's like that big fortress. And I have put myself, that is, of all the strikes that I have been able to evidence, I have seen how they run into one, they hit us all. And that connection that we have, isn't it, rooted between us, you feel, right?, from afar you are perceiving, you are feeling the pain of others. You're not like, already, he's already died or he's already being beaten, already, no, instead, we all, all come together. That happens when someone dies, that happens in the social struggle, that happens at parties. So that strength of unity, of coexistence, that is still present in us. So that's what I tell you, that's the greatest strength that we have as a people. like Saraguro and it is also not only Saraguro, it is at a good level, I have also been able to get to know the other peoples, for example, the Cañar people, the Caranqui people, the Otavalo people, that is, all the peoples and nationalities have that vision of always a collective view, it is not only for me, but it is for everyone.

What do you think are the main challenges that have existed within the community?

Respect for the rights of all. First of all, of course, the Constitution is framed in the 21 collective rights of peoples and nationalities. There is the territory, there is education. There is the territorial space, there are our hills, there is our own right, which is community justice. That all these rights are guaranteed in the same way. And the other very strong challenge is to eradicate gender violence that exists in peoples and nationalities, since it is invisible. is not considered. Of course, there are struggles that are made, but unfortunately public policies do not guarantee that you will continue to sustain and strengthen. Those are the challenges that we pose that historically, if we look at history, in our Andean world there was no issue of machismo, it was always on a par with each other. If we look at the history of the gatherers, of the hunter-gatherers, it was always like this, there was no inequality, but unfortunately later due to the issue of colonialism, the issue of patriarchy and everything was implemented, so that makes it have also been shaped as a social resentment because when looking at how history, how colonization has been absorbing us, it has been beating us, it has been enslaving us, raping women, etc., etcetera. So I think that from that resentment towards us as indigenous peoples we have many challenges that we all want to live in the same conditions.

What do you think are the main challenges facing the Saraguro community abroad?

The first thing is to make oneself culturally visible. What I can see inside the community here, being inside, is respect for the territories, respect for water, respect for the sacred hills, because that is the first challenge, because if you don't have water you will not be able to survive later. So in every way I could, the first challenge is respect for the land. That's what all people would put in. Of course, later, as I

told you before, there are more things that we would complement, but that's the first thing they put in. Now, we know that you lived through the case of the Saraguro 29 in 2015 and we want to know more or less what your perspective was, how you lived it and how the community of Saraguro experienced this event. Let's see, the 20s, of course, on August 17, 2015, well, I lived with a lot of indignation, quite, quite sad, right? Because one being the mother of four children, being a worker and being linked, that is, that they have involved me and that being in the constitution a right that guarantees you, not the right to resistance, then that they have taken you to jail, that they have not respected your right to protest or that they have not... that they have not respected you for the fact of being a woman, because unfortunately indigenous women experience more violence, that is, double or triple it would be from the mestizo world, so, hard, quite hard. But also full of learning, full of a lot of learning, because I always say, while you are not in pain you never learn. And being in prison, looking inside the prison, for example, I could feel how justice acts, how it acts with the most vulnerable people, how the State is... guaranteeing your right to defense. There you can also witness the issue of discrimination, the issue of racism, xenophobia, that is, all of that you are witnessing, right? But at the same time there is a strength that I had, right?, to say: "No, we can't be silent, you can't be silent in the face of so much injustice, you can't continue, that is, as if you are giving reason to the State when rights are being violated in your community." Community schools are being closed, Fierro Urco is being concessioned, which is a sacred territory from where the water comes down. So that indignation makes you go on and accept, and keep fighting, fighting, fighting. Psychological violence, a lot, a lot I experienced a lot of psychological violence because... They accuse you of having committed a crime and an aggravating circumstance, it is four years in prison, psychological violence both me and also my family, my children and the community. Now the other issue that for me has been quite, quite, quite important and for me it is sacred is the dignity of the people of Zaragoza. I have not been able to turn my back on that energy, that commitment that the people put in me so that I can continue to defend myself and so that I can sustain that struggle. Because that is always why that collective strength, that cohesion, that vision of solidarity of everyone is so important, because that struggle is for everyone. I have not fought for myself but for everyone, so yes. And of course, you also get to know, you learn from the justice entities, what that apparatus is like, how they manipulate, how stories are invented, how the versions of the police do not coincide with our versions, how names are invented, how locations are invented. So, you see all that, right? And the saddest thing is to see that a government minister still has that colonial thinking and tells us, we have to tame them, because that is why we have acted that way in the social struggle. So, that kind of... of treatment, right? At least I can never forget that it is always present and that is precisely why we, I say, always have to continue preparing and knowing and generating social awareness so that we do not continue to live that violation of rights that we experience, that is, it gives rafal because for me no State has guaranteed a clear commitment, No government in power has guaranteed the right to life, the right to protest, the right, because they have all been, they have all focused on repressing you, on murdering, on imprisoning you, on disappearing you, so it's hard, isn't it? So, therefore, with that experience of having lived on August 17, I have always said: no, you cannot be silent in the face of so much injustice. During these events in 2015,

What do you think were the collective rights that were violated?

The right, the one is the right to freedom, the right to protest. Well, of course, the 21 collective rights that are embodied in the Constitution, the one right is to self-determination and the right to territory, because the police could not and cannot enter to arrest you. in your community if you do not have authorization from the president of the community. Therefore, that right was violated. Of course, they came and entered our territory to repress, to beat us and of course, on top of that, to arrest us. So, that is the first right that they violated because And beyond that, the right to resistance, of course, is not in the 21 collective rights, but self-determination as peoples and nationals we have our own justice, we have our own space where we can be judged, but unfortunately it was not like that, they took us to Loja.

During this case, do you consider that Saraguro's community identity was strengthened or weakened?

No, we went as a reference for other peoples, we went as a reference also at the national and international level because at the international level there are other peoples, also indigenous peoples at the level of Latin America, the continental women's link. There were already many human rights institutions, this struggle was made visible because, of course, they have always told me, sometimes they even tell me jokingly, Luisa fought with Correa, but worse with us, that is, we are not so much afraid, but respect, right? So, that's it, isn't it? Respect for the city was also strengthened because... And it is time to say, we cannot be silent, it is visible, it is so latent, unfortunately. Well, nowadays this issue of racism in young people has already decreased, but in Loja, I mean, it's a very, very racist city. So, as when you mark this position, you mark something that many people do not have a voice, we are the voice of those who do not have a voice, those who cannot organize, those who cannot say, because they share the same thought as ours and it makes that be generated as evidence, as a reference to say that this is possible. So, Saraguro took office at the local, national, international level and, of course, I have always said, we have not stolen, we have not killed, the only crime that the Penal Code codifies is the right to resistance and, of course, you are put in jail. So, that's what I can say as far as what we've gotten stronger at.

Do you think that this case set a precedent between the Saraguro people and the Ecuadorian state?

Yes, because I remember in the 2022 strike, I said, no one gets involved with Saraguro. And that's true because the police, I mean... Now with Daniel Noboa they came to repress. After 2015 there has been no repression as there was in 2019 in Quito. Here in Saraguro there were none in 2022 either. And of course, now there was repression this year, but yes... People set that reference at the international level and the State, of course, I have always heard people say, when you are in meetings or in strikes they tell you, with Saraguro do not get involved or we will not get involved. And the police themselves have said, no, they don't mess with Saraguro because they don't sit still. The same with this case, were new forms of organization created among the community? More strengthened, yes. More organizations have not been generated because the same organizations have been strengthened, yes. They have generated more social awareness, they have been more empowered, claiming more rights than... Sometimes they are in the constitution, but many of the times due to ignorance we do not exercise them. So, this has made this more visible and many people have generated more awareness in the community. It has been sustained more. The different communities, not just some, but all communities. So, that's visible because... They are clearer about what we are fighting for and what we want, it is not just because, it is for something that we need as indigenous peoples.

During this process, which were the internal indigenous organizations of Saraguro that accompanied you during the judicial process?

Well, CONAE is the mother organization and has its regional organization, which is Ecuador, and it has its provincial bases, which is Corpukis. But here in Saraguro a collective of all the social organizations was put together, there was the FIS, there was the Corpukis, there was the... Assisi, there was the Association of Saraguro Evangelical Indigenous People, they were there, there was the Ayus Council; everyone, that is, absolutely everyone, came together and of course, there are more political organizations that are also linked, but the most visible were, of course, the Head, the CONAE and then the grassroots organizations here that were in the Corpukis. And what role did these organizations play during the process? Of course, well, the process that they carried out is more the issue of the spokesperson, the

issue of the organization, of the calls, the meetings. Also, well, there is one, we as the 29 of Saraguro also organized, we held raffles, we sold tickets, we made dishes for Easter, purple laundry to collect the funds, because our expenses, of course, many people like that from the organizations supported us, but it was not 100%, because... Then we had to cover the expenses, it was our counterpart too, but that is how we also organized ourselves, of course. And more in bagging, the political issue, the media issue, plus the organizations as well. Of course, there we are cooperating in the spokesperson as well, in organizing the events to raise funds, because our judgment, at least to me, I who went in the end, I don't know if it had come out for more than 8 thousand dollars. Yes, but of course, well, everyone did minga, it's not that I put the same, yes of the houses and my husband also supported me a lot. but he also made mingas and a collective to be able to pay the expenses. And from his perspective,

How was the judicial process that you had?

Yes, let's see, innocent first, I super innocent. That is why I say, in life everything, no one is born knowing, if you do not learn life. Of course, I thought that the first one, they already took us to jail, I already thought that I was never going to get out. A very unfair process because when you arrive at the, first to take you to jail they have to read you your rights, there was none. To take a woman to jail they have to do a medical evaluation, see if you are perhaps in the gestation period, there was not, there was a lot of violation of rights. All the time incommunicado, they held us hostage for almost more than 12 hours, more because at ... I think they arrested us at 10 in the morning and at 2 in the morning they held the hearing. Of course, so quite a long time. From there we ended up in prison. And when they were going to take you to jail, well, handcuffed like... handcuffed, protected, with a lot of police. That is traumatic. I mean, now, of course, I went through an emotional healing process. That's why I'm here, now I talk and tell without crying, because it's something super painful for me, very, very, very painful. And when they take you to the hearing, they invent charges, they invent them because... They told me that they were arresting me in San Lucas and when it was here in Saraguro, that is, some police reports that were quite out of context, they did not have clear arguments for what they were accusing us of. But of course, the first instance goes, they held the hearing, we came out with precautionary measures of 16 days in jail and then the trial begins in the Provincial Court. And of course, it was in the Provincial Court that I received the sentence of four years in prison. Then I continued fighting, it seems to me that in the National Court the same, then in the... In the National Court of Quito, after three, almost four years of trial, they let me go. They never found evidence. It was, of course, a favorable decision for us because they did not find evidence of what we were telling them. Above all, they were inventions, because it was funny, because the police said, one of those pins that we have for the valleta, that it was a sharp weapon. The use we spun from, the way the use had with the guango, was a sharp weapon. Well, my cell phone, I was not with a cell phone that day they arrested me. Cell phones, chats of my colleagues with their husbands or with their boyfriends, that was more evident. I had no more evidence. So, that arbitrary, very arbitrary detention is quite unjust. And of course, it was quite difficult for me to deal with them, but... What I did learn is that you should never be silent in the face of so much injustice. Whoever it is, we cannot remain silent in the face of so much injustice. Because I saw my own colleagues, that there were lawyers who told you, take advantage of the law, the abbreviated procedure, which is to declare you guilty and reduce your sentence. And they insinuated or told me to do that and I said no, I can't do it because it's not born in me, I can't do. So that and many comrades like they did want to take responsibility so that they would be released. But I didn't, I didn't want to, I never wanted to and I didn't. Then they declared me free. Were you the last? It is that we were the 29, then they declared us, they linked us to 5, 12, and then to 2 they sentenced us to jail, me and Mr... Friendly Angamarca. They took us both, that is, they sentenced us to jail. But, of course, I didn't stay, but as I say, CONAIE was also my pillar, my support for me, that is, not to shut up. The leaders at that time, well, they supported me just as much so that I could continue fighting. And the biggest strategy is the media where you can make yourself visible. At that time there was little Facebook, but there was, but more the issue of the media. I beat Correa, that's why I think he can't win in Loja or Saraguro so far.

On the subject of the arrest, were you in your territory, in your home or how was the police arrest?

The police arrest was, well, I was there on strike, we were there on strike. And of course, the arrest was like that, I'll tell you. They have already repressed us, we have already swallowed gas, everything, and what I did was withdraw. I was retiring and I came here, which was almost at the height of the Lagunas cooperative, more or less, around there. And I go to see a colleague, her name is Luz Pachi. Well, here we all know each other, we all know who is pregnant, who has died, who has been divorced. So, almost, of course, in the communities they always know each other, right? So, I knew that Doña Luz was pregnant. And when we went to see her, the police dragged him, but like a dog, that is, like a dog. I don't tell you anything else like when a dead dog is caught and dragged like a rag, dragging it like that. So, I myself like that, he gave me so much courage, that is, I always say, I pushed myself. I mean, I mean, how is that? How are they going to do that to a pregnant woman? What are you, crazy? And I have always, I have grown up with so much, so much indignation when my grandparents told the story that this is how the landowners treated us, that this is how they enslaved us, that this is how they broke our chicha, that this is how we were... they stole our food, that is, and I said, but why can't they defend themselves? Why couldn't they have defended? I was always with that. And sometimes, that's why I say, sometimes since it's like a social resentment you also have, so you say, I mean, what the fuck is wrong with them? Excuse the word. And I left. And now more women have arrived, we have armed ourselves with more women, we were with sticks and we were with sticks, only sticks. So we told the police, leave the women, because they have to drag him away. She is pregnant, we told her that she is pregnant, they released her. When they release her, she comes and a policeman tells them, arrest the women. So that's when they arrested us, because we were defending the other lady. Of course, there was still a lot of men, how they kicked them, the police tore men to pieces, but you felt in that incapacity because they, of course, guarded, had their weapons, had their protection. And you might start dealing with them. But just like that, we got strong and told them to release the company. So it was right there, inside the community territory, because everything is community territory. So from there they arrested us. Twelve women left. Based on everything that the Saraguro community has experienced, because it is not only that case, there have been several and for many years,

What actions have been taken to strengthen the cultural identity of the Saraguro community?

Well, what we do are very personal efforts, what we have done is training for women, on the issue of community justice, on the 21 collective rights, so that people know, lived experiences, for example, the issue of women's rights, the issue of violence. Work has been done here within the territory, here in the community, because it is not that... the GAD or the Provincial Council, the Prefecture, have that will or those policies to say there is a budget. What we have tried to do with people we have, people linked to us or comrades who have knowledge of these issues, invite them to do self-management. We ourselves put our dollars to pay for the ticket of the person who comes. In this way we have been able to train ourselves in what we have been able to so far and within the community. There are also organizations that yes, there are some projects that are also training young people on the subject of audiovisual projection. in everything political, social, organizational, so that they know the history of where we come from. I have said it is not to revictimize, it is not only to generate social awareness and that this consciousness is seen collectively, that it is seen in a different way, that it is not so individualistic and that it is not to trample on anyone.

When you want to strengthen Saraguro's cultural identity, have there been challenges within it?

Yes. Well, there are many to be able to take care of, for example, our clothing. The educational center generated a project, when we talk about a project sometimes they think that there is money, but it is an educational proposal that generated, for example, the ahuanacuchos, to make our own garments, the vallete, the anaco, the zamarro, the blankets, the poncho. Then the children learn and also raise awareness. They teach them to spin sheep's wool, they teach them to twist sheep, to dye clothes. This has been done here in the school and also with links in the community. So we worked in that space. And of course, there we were able to discover that there are many young people interested, many young people who are already working, weaving, are spinning, they are making more visible then. That has also been one of the most important works because this issue of clothing is very devalued, very invisible, at least of our own clothing. And the other thing is that the issue of taking care of our gastronomy, of our own food. Of course, the educational center also works a lot on raising awareness not to consume junk food, to eat our own food. to take care of the orchards, then from that side you can do, the little that can be done because there is no budget and of course, for example, there is another quite important work that is a group of ecological women, it is called the ecological group, also men and women, the issue of non-pollution, of not bringing covers, to see other ways of wearing to refuse the covers, the clothes themselves to refuse, to reuse so that the earth does not continue to be polluted because we are also in danger of extinction from that side. So everything goes as if in a chain, in a minga, the minga is always present.

Now with the new generations, do you think that the Saraguro cultural identity has been lost?

Yes, it is very noticeable, starting from my family. The first thing is the economic issue. For example, if you relate to it, an anaco with pants, a pair of pants costs you 10 dollars, an anaco costs you more than 100 dollars. The other issue is comfort, sometimes to work, to play. The other issue is discrimination, because I have noticed many people who do not want to wear their clothes because they feel uncomfortable in another space when they interact with mestizo people, and they also want to be part of that social group, so they are like excluding themselves or covering themselves up from not identifying themselves. The issue of migration, all that has gone, globalization has been absorbing as well, and yes, it has been very noticeable. But there is a fairly great strength that can also be noticed in the young people when they are at the big parties, all with wool anaco, all with their blouses, with their very elegant hats. They kind of support both things. But I have always claimed a lot from my home, from my space, I have still claimed a lot in my own suit. Maybe I've been taken into account at the university, and I always go with my suit. Not a single day have I left with pants, or I have left without a shade. Every day I've left with my suit. And they have existed for the new generations, for them to participate in programs, for them to strengthen their cultural identity. Here in the community, yes. They are at the parties, at the Christmas parties, at the Tapas Reina Navidad parties, for example, which are always there. The festivities of March 10, the festivities of the community, the festivities of Holy Week, always make them have to show off their property. And here for me the greatest strength is the educational center. The educational center has been the promoter, the one that continues to support and set an example, raising awareness that we must not lose our identity, our ways of life, in every sense, in the planting, in the harvest, in the food, in the clothing, that is, in every sense. So, the school, the community, the family always go hand in hand. The social actors are... the parents, the school, the community and everyone, that is, all against all. So, that's been a huge advantage for us as a community. I think that