

# OPIAM

## A SUCCESSFUL PARTNER IN THE AMAZON BASIN

*Strengthened advocacy skills and communication processes:  
A sample of enhancing capacities of indigenous communities  
that help to face the Covid-19*

Governments around the world have been grappling with the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. Latin America is no exception. Communities most affected by the pandemic in the region are those that have been historically challenged by poor living conditions and limited access to basic social services, all of which are further exacerbated by the current situation. Particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 are the indigenous communities living in the Amazon region.

As part of the Amazon Basin, Brazil, Perú, and Colombia have been among the countries with the highest number of infections in the world. According to the International Institute of Education (IEB), which is a capacity development partner working with the Strengthening the Capacities of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon project (SCIOA) in Brazil, *“the new coronavirus is spreading faster upon indigenous communities in Brazil and has infected at least 9,414 persons and caused 380 deaths.”*



*Nilcélio Jianui, OPIAM's Coordinator.*

Supported by SCIOA, IEB has been strengthening the administrative and financial capacities of an indigenous peoples' organization working in Amazonas, Brazil, **Organización de los Povos Indígenas del Alto Madeira (OPIAM)** since 2018. As part of its Institutional Strengthening Plan development with SCIOA, OPIAM has been improving its access to communications equipment, in order to more effectively serve the remote communities, it represents.

During the past several months, OPIAM's representatives have helped establish the Humaitá COVID-19 Crisis Committee. They have also been able to contribute to the committee's efforts in coordinating the safe delivery of food, medicine, and safety equipment to indigenous communities along the Alto Madeira River.

*“Institutional strengthening means working hard to disseminate the policies and rights of indigenous peoples. With that, we are expanding the dialogue regarding indigenous lands to defend the rights of indigenous peoples in the Madeira [River] region”*

*Nilcélio Jianui, OPIAM's Coordinator.*



It may seem that OPIAM's actions are just a short walk against the COVID-19 race. However, this indigenous organization represents ten ethnic groups and 19 indigenous communities in the Amazon state, which means that their actions will impact the preservation of numerous lives and rights of indigenous communities living in the Amazon Basin.

The Strengthening the Capacity of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon project, or **SCIOA**, is increasing indigenous people's influence in the governance of the Amazon region in order to protect the region's environment and the rights of its indigenous people. Through evidence-based programming, an emphasis on learning by doing and adapted, culturally relevant capacity development tools, Pact is building the capacities of indigenous organizations to access and manage financial resources and take ownership of their own development planning and priorities in the Amazon rainforest of Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Suriname and Guyana.

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