



Central American Network of Indigenous Community Radios: Network Description

The significant Indigenous population in the region and the growing number of Indigenous community radios that are promoting Indigenous Rights and media democratization in order to ensure that they are serving their communities and contributing to political change is the motive for Indigenous community radios from all seven countries in the region (Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama) coming together for the first Central American Network of Indigenous Community Radios, with the support of Cultural Survival, Fundación Comunicándonos, AMARC Central America, Voces Indígenas Panamá and Asociación Sobrevivencia Cultural.

This Central American Network of Indigenous Community Radios, with an intercultural, gender focus, has as its objectives:

1. To strengthen the identity and defense of Indigenous Rights as “Indigenous Voices that Weave Together the Region”;
2. To accompany and share best radio broadcasting practices, political and judicial lobbying strategies and communicational and technical resources;
3. To drive national and international actions that demand that States have legislations and public policies that permit the democratization of communication for Indigenous Peoples;
4. To multiply the efforts of existing networks towards the right to communication and freedom of expression;
5. To propel formation processes to strengthen capacity for Indigenous Peoples that work in community communication in Central American countries.

In order to operationalize the fulfillment of these goals, a Regional Commission was formed of two representatives from each of the member countries.





Indigenous Voices Weaving Together the Region

This is an Indigenous Community Radio Network for everyone and by everyone. Many Indigenous Community Radios in each country already belong to national and regional networks, and the network has as one of its goals, to strengthen and collaborate with existing networks.

Gender Policy

As the Regional Commission of this Network, we promote and support women’s participation and women’s development as community leaders through radio broadcasting and we will promote the creation of projects that benefit them. We will create spaces for education on feminism, new masculinities and gender equality in order to ensure that members of this network are educated in order to continue promoting women’s rights as a principal in each process in which we enter.

In addition, we condemn any type of abuse, violence and aggression towards women. Sexist behaviour and gendered violence are unacceptable to the Regional Commission and member organizations.

The network seeks our representation of community radio stations in all countries in the region and hopes to increase in number and capacity. In the same vein, we aim to create spaces for





interactive and horizontal participation such that participants in the network are part of the decision making process regarding the development and direction of the Network.

Legal Panorama

This initiative is preoccupied that the judicial political frameworks that administer the radio electric spectrum and technological convergence, especially digitalization of communication in the region, do not recognize the three functioning sectors of communication: public, commercial and community, and in addition, they favour the concentration of media by media oligopolies.

For this reason it is important to demand that all Central American States comply with international treaties like agreement 169 of the OIT, and national laws that guarantee that Indigenous Peoples have direct access to radio and television frequencies as a form of revitalizing and protecting their identity, complying with their right to communication as a medium for unifying and supporting efforts in their respective communities. Indigenous Peoples have a unique need for community media, as it is through this that they may communicate and stay informed on topics that affect them, as well as organize to protect and strengthen their languages and cultures. This is why legalization of Indigenous community radio is of the utmost importance: Indigenous Peoples require a space to communicate, exchange and learn about and implement their rights in their own languages.

Criteria for Participation:

- a) The radio self identifies as an Indigenous community radio
- b) The radio is administered by the community and Indigenous organizations
- c) The radio has content and programming that promotes the identities, cultures, languages and rights of Indigenous Peoples
- d) The radio is not tied to churches or religious tendencies
- e) The radio is not tied to a political party

Sustainability of the Network

Once the Regional Commission formally constitutes the network, it will be following up with each country regarding project that permit the strengthening and follow up of the Network to benefit its members.

