

This project works with the indigenous Tacana people to enhance sustainable management of the Amazon rainforest

Bolivia

**Sustainable forest management and livelihood improvement project by Tacana people
News from the field (July 2024 – April 2025)**

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Conservation International



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Madidi National Park, located in northeastern Bolivia, straddles the Andes Mountains and the entrance to the Bolivian Amazon (elevation 200-1,200 m). The park is considered one of the world's most biodiverse areas due to its diverse terrain and climate conditions. However, in recent years, agricultural conversion and illegal logging have progressed, and the effects of climate change have caused damage, such as forest fires, to expand year by year, putting significant pressure on the forest ecosystem.

This project aims to strengthen the forest management capabilities of the Tacana indigenous community living in the surrounding area, with the goal of promoting sustainable forest use and establishing a conservation system that respects the traditional way of life in the region. Additionally, we will support the activities of women's groups to help the local community build its resilience to climate change and other challenges.

1. Forest conservation activities

1-1. Selecting participating communities

CI Bolivia, in collaboration with the Tacana Indigenous People Council (CIPTA), surveyed sustainable livelihoods in the Tacana I indigenous community. This survey serves as a foundation for future livelihood activities, and 39 various livelihood improvement activities were listed as potential future activities for each community, including non-timber forest products, traditional textiles, community tourism, agroforestry, sugarcane cultivation, and small-scale food processing. Moreover, the SWOT analysis identified traditional knowledge and product quality as strengths of the Tacana communities, along with access to natural resources. At the same time, the analysis also identified challenges including funding, technology, market access, deforestation, and climate change. Opportunities are also seen in ecotourism, organic products, and fair trade.

Based on these survey results, we prioritized the projects in terms of economic impact, feasibility, and sustainability, and decided to focus on the following activities in future project activities:

- a) Enhancement of the business management capabilities of operators
- b) Training in financing
- c) Support for obtaining commercial licenses and food hygiene permits
- d) Strengthening marketing strategies
- e) Monitoring of areas where natural resources are used, conservation of wildlife habitats, and implementation of training on environmental laws and regulations and risk management



Photo: Survey on sustainable livelihoods in the community ©CI, Juan Corminola

1-2. Formulation of activity plans for selected target communities

Based on the initial survey results, CIPTA leaders and the CI Bolivia team selected seven highly promising livelihood improvement activities as final candidates based on criteria such as activity duration, value chain type, relationship with forest products, and number of beneficiaries. In addition, we engaged in discussions with other organizations operating in the area, such as Practical Action, and confirmed that we would divide activities and cooperate with each other in accordance with the community's priorities.

The series of surveys will be crucial in maximizing the 10-year activity period and considering investments for forest conservation and livelihood improvement from a long-term perspective.

2. Biodiversity

2-1. Enhancement of CIPTA's monitoring program

The current management plan for the Tacana tribe's residential area is set to expire in 2025, and we are currently developing a new management plan (2025-2035). The new plan will identify development and conservation projects to be prioritized over the next 10 years and will also establish monitoring and indicators to measure their progress.

The revision process involved CIPTA's key members evaluating the existing 2015-2025 plan, including analyzing and verifying the progress of activities. This participatory approach will enable the identification of principal issues to be followed up in the next 10-year plan and their incorporation into the monitoring process.

The new 10-year plan will establish monitoring methods and strengthen the capacity necessary for monitoring.

3. Improving the livelihood of communities

3-1. Improving the quality and expanding the sales channels of traditional textiles made by the Tacana tribe

The Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group produces and sells traditional Tacana Tribe textiles, serving as a valuable source of income for the community and its women. During the 2022-2023 season, large-scale fires broke out across a wide area, destroying the forest and leaving people without a source of food. The income generated by this activity significantly supported the local people's livelihoods.

However, sales for the current fiscal year (July 2024 to April 2025) have decreased significantly. Compared to last fiscal year (July 2023 to June 2024), when sales amounted to 233,699.86 bolivianos (approximately 4,884,330 yen), sales for the current fiscal year have fallen to 64,577.55 bolivianos (approximately 1,349,680 yen). The decrease in sales is because we actively conducted sales campaigns last fiscal year, whereas this fiscal year, the entire country has been in a recession. Although the period covered by this fiscal year is shorter, there is a clear difference between the monthly average of 19,474.98

bolivianos (approximately 407,027 yen) last fiscal year and 6,457.50 bolivianos (approximately 134,972 yen) this fiscal year.

In response to this situation, the project will provide technical support to enhance product quality, develop new products, and explore new markets and sales channels, to support women's weaving activities in contributing to the stability of their households.



The Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group sells their handicrafts in the urban area ©Pedro Laguna

3-2. Renovation of the Tacana Cultural Center

The Tacana Cultural Center, located in San Buenaventura, serves as a hub for passing on the traditional culture of the Tacana tribe. CIPTA aims to increase income opportunities while promoting the culture of the Tacana tribe throughout the year by establishing a new exhibition space and sales center for traditional crafts and handicrafts of the Tacana tribe. The center's facility renovation is expected to be completed by 2027. This fiscal year, we are finalizing plans for the building renovation and are in the process of purchasing the necessary equipment and materials.

3-3. Better access to social media for the Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group

CI Bolivia has been supporting the Takana community in improving their online sales by promoting their products on social media since July 2024. The initial target of an 80% increase in access from social media was achieved within three months of the launch in July, which was a significant result for the future.

With increased access to social media, the value of the Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group's brand has grown through storytelling linked to traditional culture, leading to expanded sales channels to wider markets such as urban areas and contributing to the economic independence of women.

As part of the Amazon Indigenous Women's Program, workshops were provided to improve the skills of women in weaving groups, including Microsoft basics (Word and Excel), budget management,

accounting records, inventory management, cost calculation, budget estimation, and social media (Facebook) utilization.

The workshops were held online and in person from August 21 to December 4, 2024, and follow-up support is provided to deepen learning. In addition, participants were provided with laptops, printers, and weaving materials. Ten women from the Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group participated.

3-4. Capacity building of women's organizations

CI Bolivia conducted a survey on the challenges women are facing through the Tacana Indigenous Women's Council (CIMTA). Based on the findings, an action plan was developed to enhance women's capacity and opportunities through the formulation and implementation of programs aimed at promoting women's participation in decision-making, improving girls' enrollment rates, advancing women's access to higher education, supporting women entrepreneurs, and preventing gender-based violence. Building on this, CI Bolivia will implement short-, medium-, and long-term programs focused on empowering women and promoting gender equality.

3-5. Strengthening the Tacana tribe's organization

The Tacana I residential area comprises 23 communities; however, the rights of the Tacana tribe are not legally defined, and access to natural resources and land rights are unclear, often placing community members at a disadvantage. CI Bolivia is therefore supporting CIPTA in strengthening its organization so that indigenous communities can legally obtain the rights they need.

As a first step this fiscal year, we held discussions with key stakeholders in the area regarding future policies.



(Photo left) CI Bolivia team visits community ©CI, Juan Corminola



(Photo right) A meeting of the Tacana Indigenous People Council (CIPTA) ©CI Bolivia

Others

4-1. Daikin's site visit

In February 2025, Daikin and CI Japan staff visited the project site. During the visit, we visited the Tacana I district of the Tacana residential community in Relena, where we engaged in discussions with the Tacana Indigenous People Council (CIPTA) and the Tacana Indigenous Women's Council (CIMTA) on the challenges we are facing and natural resource management. We also observed community activities that could be candidates for livelihood support.



Photo: Visit by Daikin ©CIPTA, Adalid

4-2. PR activities

As part of our PR activities, we collected the life stories of several beneficiaries of the project in its first year in order to compare the results of the Daikin project over a 10-year period. We plan to interview the same beneficiaries again in the final year of the project.

4-3. Challenges we are facing

Challenges we are facing include the prolonged rainy season, a consequence of climate change, which makes it difficult to travel to the communities targeted by the project, and the deterioration of Bolivia's economic situation, which has impacted the sales of the Tacana Tribe Women's Weaving Group.

In addition, the selection of communities to be supported by the project is being carried out more carefully from the perspective of a 10-year long-term activity, which is taking much longer than originally planned.

4-4. Future activities

In the next fiscal year, the main activities will be selecting target communities and concluding conservation agreements with them. In relation to this, we will confirm baselines and develop communication plans to measure the impact of our activities over the next 10 years.

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