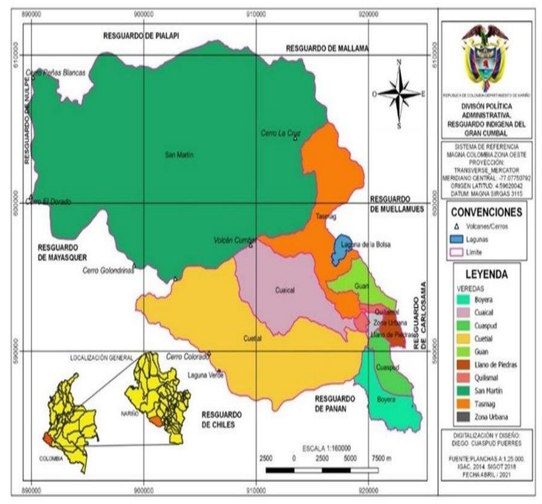
Co-design of touristic route in Colombian indigenous territory: GTA for landscape conservation and women transformation

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INTRODUCTION- Gender research on biodiversity in Andean and indigenous context

- In the indigenous territory of Cumbal (Colombia), gender research, **within CGIAR Multifunctional landscape (MFL)** science programme, is **examining the role of women in biodiversity conservation.**
- **Multifunctional landscape** is a relevant entry point for research on gender, intersectionality, and biodiversity conservation: In a context of globalization, indigenous people are looking for alternative livelihood strategies that lead to a revalorization of the **multifunctional character of rural areas** (Gerritsen, 2014).
- **Agrotourism:** a strategy based on endogenous potential of rural populations to achieve, in rural areas and among rural populations, local development (Setyowati et al., 2024; Gerritsen, 2014) and rural area revitalization (Meutia et al., 2022; Gil Arroyo et al, 2019). Builds on rural landscape, agriculture (uniqueness and diversity of farming production) and culture (traditional medicine, gastronomy, artisanal workshop) to develop activities and services and acts as educational means not only for tourists but also for the rural population involved. Enhances environmental conservation, rural community welfare and empowerment while having a minimal impact on culture and environment.
- **Women's involvement and participation** in agrotourism have the potential to reduce **gender** inequality (Setyowati et al., 2024; Chhetri, 2024) and even to potentially empower rural women at psychological, social, political, and economic levels (Gil Arroyo et al, 2019).
- **Knowledge gap:** Latin America and Colombia as understudied geographic area: in particular in Andean and indigenous contexts where the traditional social and cultural structures can limit women's ability to empower themselves.



Map of Cumbal (Nariño, Colombia)
Source: Impulso Verde, 2026

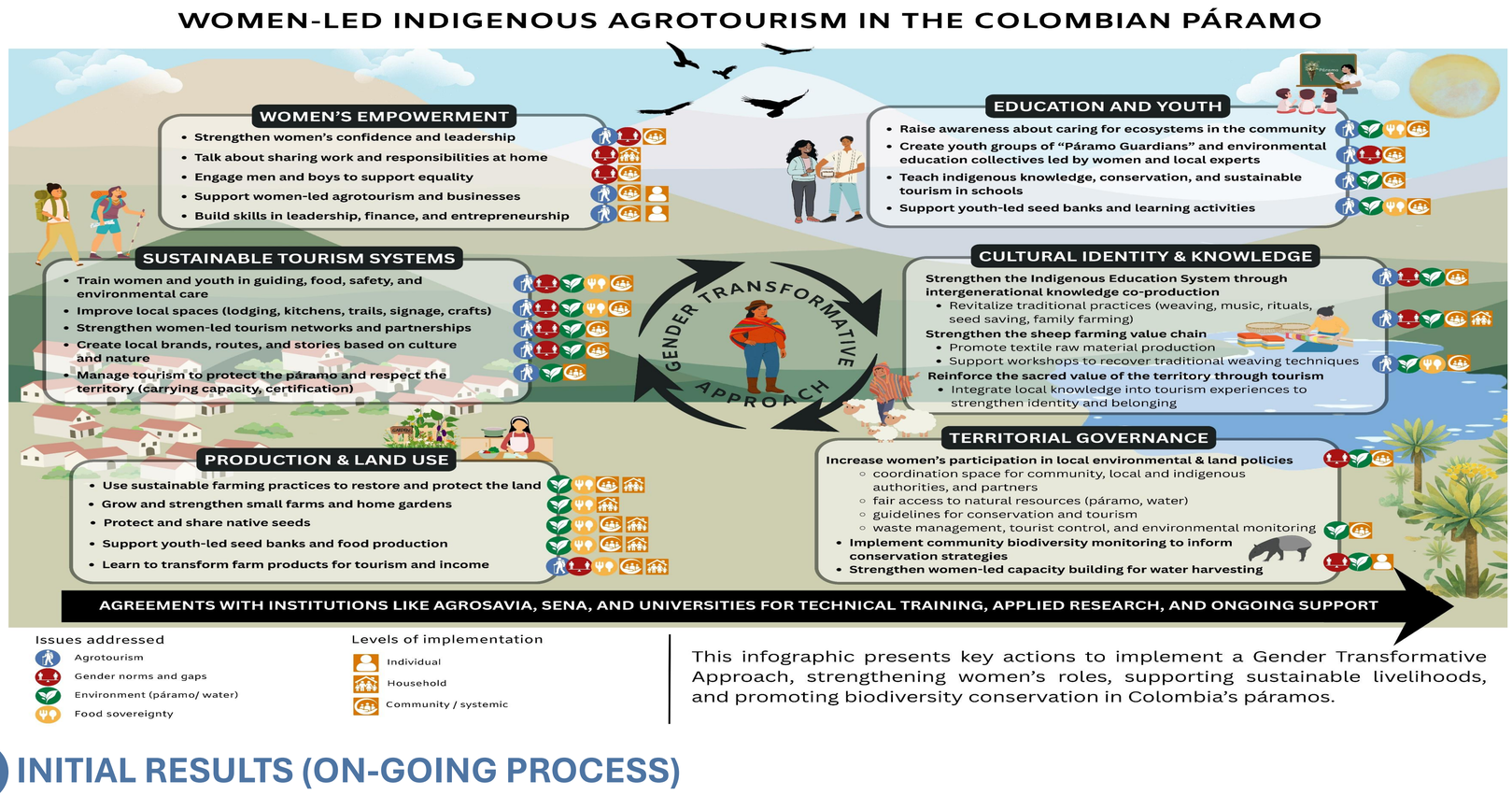
- **Innovative approach:** Use of: **Gender Transformative Approach (GTA**) and **Feminist Political Ecology (FPE)** at **Landscape level**.

FPE premises:	GTA premises:	Landscape level:
Critical lens for understanding environmental inequalities shaped by gender and to think about women's social movements, empowerment and environmental justice (Ulloa, 2020; Rocheleau 1995; Elmhrist, 2011). The dissociation between humankind and nature is the product of a society based on anthropocentrism, hetero-patriarchal capitalism, colonialism, class, and racial oppression; it is the root of crises such as hunger and climate change (Portocarrero Lacayo, 2024). Gender imbalance between rights and responsibilities that influences all rural peoples' abilities to apply their ecological knowledge and constrains their efforts to provide for their families and protect the complex ecosystems on which they depend ' (Rocheleau, 1995).	Designing and implementing solutions aimed to remove the underlying structural constraints rooted in discriminatory social, economic, and formal and informal institutions, policies, and laws, and addressing underlying social norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate gender inequalities (Howland, 2025). Through community engagement, it is possible to use natural resource management and agriculture interventions as entry points to address structural gender inequalities (McDougall et al., 2021). Gender accommodative approaches are insufficient to contribute, on their own, to women's empowerment and gender equality while GTAs are presented as a new paradigm for gender and development based on core feminist principles and focusing on social transformations (Ibid.).	Includes: cash crops, subsistence food crops, plant and animal species infrastructure, sacred and cultural sites. Natural resources management can involve a wide range of rural people's priorities, also influenced by social obligations, and cultural and religious connections to 'nature' (Rocheleau, 1995). Analysis of spatial patterns of activity and resource use and understanding of relations of power embedded in the hierarchies of use and access (Ibid.).

RESEARCH QUESTION: To what extent women's participation and leadership in indigenous agrotourism can foster nature conservation at landscape level, while addressing gender inequalities?

METHOD AND DATA PRODUCTION STRATEGY

- Participatory workshops, semi-structured interviews, participatory observation and literature review.
- Participatory method of co-designing a touristic route with women involved in indigenous agrotourism initiatives.



This infographic presents key actions to implement a Gender Transformative Approach, strengthening women's roles, supporting sustainable livelihoods, and promoting biodiversity conservation in Colombia's páramos.

INITIAL RESULTS (ON-GOING PROCESS)

- Participatory method of co-designing a touristic route has the potential to improve biodiversity conservation while strengthening women's cultural identity, self-esteem, empowerment, networking and income.
- The co-design of touristic route as a participatory methodological tool appears as innovative and relevant to address both conservation and gender issues, that could be reproduced in other contexts.
- It is key to select complementary agrotouristic initiatives that can together build a coherent touristic route around one central topic: "biocultural knowledge".
- Six experiences from the Pasto Indigenous Pueblo, Cumbal, Nariño, united by one thread: **ancestral knowledge that safeguards seeds, páramo, weaving, and flavors as one living heritage**. (1) Monte Oscuro Hierba Amarilla *(seeds & weaving), (2)* Chinguad Chinguad Family *(native potatoes), (3)* Yarpuran *(community tourism), (4)* El Manantial *(páramo conservation), (5)* Cumbe Agricultural School *(seed bank), (6)* Traditional Cooks Collective *(ancestral flavors)*
- The capacity strengthening process led by indigenous women to achieve engagement, legitimacy and relevancy of the process can articulate gender and social inclusion discussions, biodiversity conservation, traditional indigenous knowledge and economic pathways for empowerment.
- Initial changes are related to self-recognition of women's traditional knowledge and role in biodiversity conservation.

FUTURE STEPS

- Coordinate initiatives through a network and conduct a pilot implementation of the roadmap.
- Support digital marketing efforts and establishing support network for women to articulate similar experiences and as source of resources, mentorship and information to overcome challenges.

Related publications

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Lack of women participation in indigenous local authorities and local governance, women land access and ownership.
- Risk of perpetuation of women's traditional domestic roles within the touristic business.
- Risk of inequality in economic benefits redistribution between men and women involved in touristic initiatives.
- Indigenous women disproportionately affected by multidimensional poverty within agriculture sector face access limitation to finances and loans, technical support that restrict their autonomy and mobility.
- Information asymmetry, insufficient venture capital, and the absence of cooperative organizations.

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