



SYSTEMATIZATION OF GOOD PRACTICE:

**PROJECT: EMPOWERMENT OF  
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES  
FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**



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## CREDITS

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BGB</b>	Black Giant Bird
<b>DC</b>	Directive Committee
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GLDA</b>	Guyana Livestock Development Authority
<b>MIPA</b>	Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs
<b>NAREI</b>	National Agricultural Research & Extension Institute
<b>NTC</b>	National Toshias Council
<b>MG</b>	Main Groups
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SC</b>	The Steering Committee
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration

# CONTENTS

CREDITS .....	3
ABBREVIATIONS .....	4
CONTENT .....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	6
CONTEXT .....	6
DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE .....	7
IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD PRACTICE .....	9
LESSONS LEARNED .....	10
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	11
ANNEXES.....	12

## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Guyana in recent decades has prioritized sustainable and inclusive development, working with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Guyana has developed a long-term strategy called the “Green State Development Strategy”, which highlights the need for resilient development for all citizens, the provision of education, quality medical care, social protection, new economic opportunities, justice and political empowerment, all efforts to protecting the environment.

The United Nations has collaborated on the SDGs through access to financing sources/funding of related projects, as well as facilitating technical cooperation and being partners of the State of Guyana for the development and implementation of its objectives.

The project is framed by these objectives<sup>1</sup>, being part of a pilot project executed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from the Office of Guyana. The project is called Empowerment of Indigenous Communities for Sustainable Livelihoods and was carried out in Region One, Guyana.

The activities of this project involve families from Region One, which is located northwest of Guyana, and which is inhabited mostly by Amerindian groups. The main economic activity in the region is the production of subsistence food.

The documentation of this experience is thanks to the support of Eraina Yaw, Project Coordinator.

## CONTEXT

Region One or Barima-Waini of the Republic of Guyana is located in the Northwest of the country, on the border with Venezuela. White Water and Yarakita are villages in Region One with mostly Amerindian populations. The population of this region lives in vulnerable conditions and has limited access to basic services such as drinking water, medical care, electricity and food.

White Water and Yarakita’s livelihoods are based on subsistence agriculture, hunting, fishing, and foraging, maintaining the traditional life of Indigenous communities, including cooperative work. These practices are limited due to economic and technical deficiencies, as well as the lack of agricultural tools to support small-scale agriculture.

In these communities there is evidence of a high level of unemployment among women (UNICEF, 2017<sup>2</sup>), who mostly stay at home to care for their children and carrying out subsistence farming activities. Furthermore, there is an increase in women as heads of household in this region.

A study on violence against Indigenous women and girls carried out by UNICEF (2017) showed that the increase in woman-headed households in this region, increased economic vulnerability. Likewise, the rate of unemployment among women is high, as women are likely to stay in their homes taking care of children and carrying out subsistence agriculture activities.

Job opportunities in Indigenous communities are scarce and community leaders express an interest in developing new economic initiatives that allow valuing and taking advantage of the wealth of Indigenous agricultural systems, as well as protecting Indigenous ways of life.

In 2018, approximately 600 new migrants from Venezuela were registered in Guyana. Among those returned to the area were Guyanese, including women and children. The increased number of migrants to Region One puts the communities in a complex economic development situation.

<sup>1</sup>The has been paraphrased from the document “Enhanced and Integration Approach Regarding Information of Return and Reintegration in Countries of Origin”, 2012 (irrico.belgium.iom.int).

<sup>2</sup>More information about the “Welcome Home” program is available here: [https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return\\_migration\\_development\\_070708/pres\\_alvarez.pdf](https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/return_migration_development_070708/pres_alvarez.pdf)

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