



Conclusions

1. The 18 case studies of partnerships between indigenous women and agencies of the United Nations system articulate and depict the unique challenges and opportunities experienced by indigenous women in different areas including their participation and leadership as actors in the projects.
2. The talent and capabilities of the leaders, both women and men, are essential for projects to function. They are the ones responsible for encouraging and mobilizing people, and may require external support, including specialized training and opportunities to share and exchange experiences and lessons learned with other projects and processes involving indigenous communities, in order to compare, learn and connect to wider processes. Capacity development initiatives such as leadership training, capacity-building, technical assistance and alphabetization are predominant in the case studies collected. Post-literacy support should focus on improving training processes and capacity-building, going beyond the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic to enable women to better carry out their productive activities and increase household income.
3. Strengthening the skills of community members, both women and men, prior to the planning of projects enhances beneficiary participation and builds the sense of ownership needed to ensure that the schemes will be appropriately managed and maintained by the communities.
4. In most cases, a close partnership and the exchange of information were successfully achieved among indigenous women's organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations and the United Nations country offices as well as the other actors involved.
5. Legal security and law enforcement with regard to the different aspects of the lives of indigenous persons (citizenship, identity papers, the right to individual and collective ownership, rights to land and territory, intellectual property rights etc.) are an important element for the sustainability of their development process.
6. One challenge demonstrated by the case study projects was the tension that arose as indigenous women sought to claim both their collective rights as indigenous people and their individual rights as women. By pressing for equal treatment by gender, indigenous women are often accused of undermining the unity of indigenous movements advocating for collective rights. Furthermore, there is

uncertainty as to the extent to which the right to gender equality infringes upon indigenous cultural traditions and customs, although experience has shown that reinforcing women's rights benefits community as a whole. Hence, there is also a need to translate the rights of women as outlined in international treaties into culturally relevant concepts and priorities. Good-practice studies that can be replicated exist in this regard.

7. Although indigenous women continue to be marginalized and discriminated against, the projects demonstrated that through the involvement of government offices and indigenous organizations, encouraging partnerships, opportunities do exist to improve recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and women, to address patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes and to improve equality of opportunities in the public sphere.
8. The creation of synergies between governmental offices and United Nations country offices was important in developing a systematic programme for analysis and reform of existing legislation, legal training and broad-based interaction involving indigenous organizations, especially women, public and local authorities and other social actors.
9. Increasing decentralization and devolution to local governments, and its effects on local-level power and public investment, are opening up new spaces for indigenous participation in local government administration and management of territories, communities and neighbourhoods, with a legitimacy that is sustainable over time.