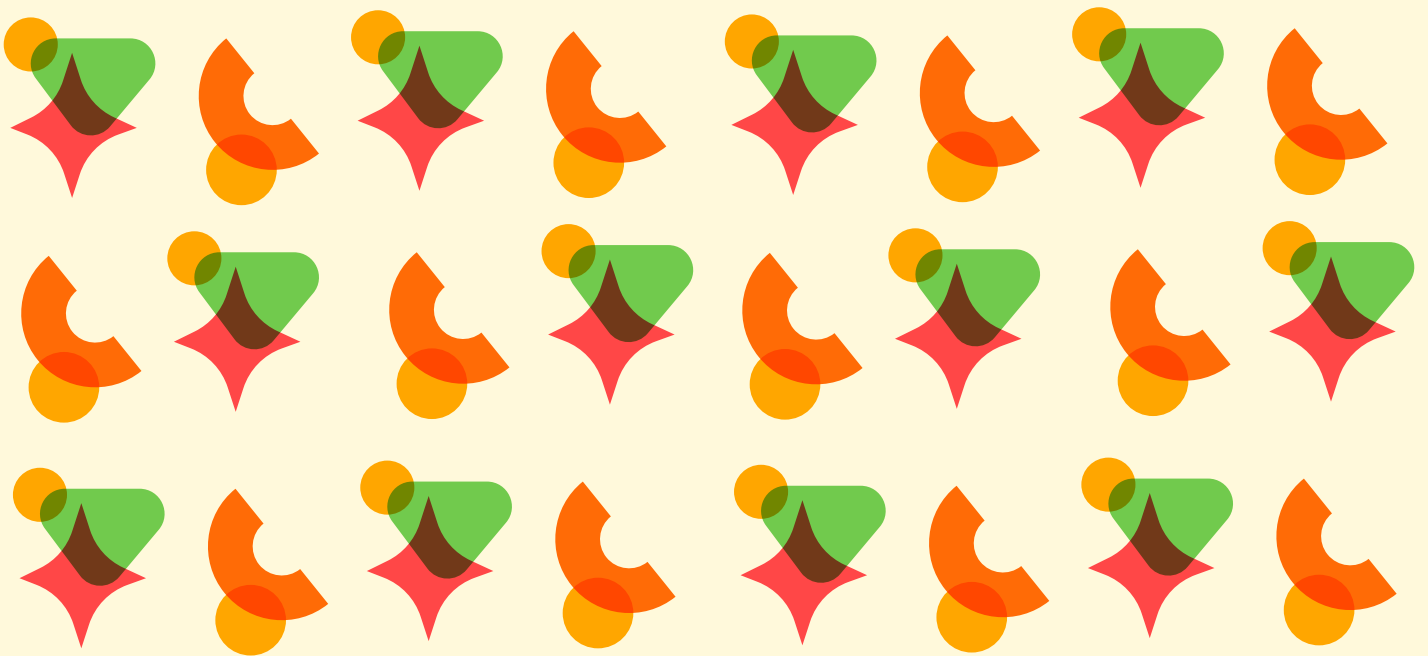


# MANI FESTO



Dear friends and colleagues, traditional communities, public institutions and international cooperation organisations,

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we present to the public the **MULTICULTURAL LIVING TERRITORIES NETWORK**. It was officially founded in early 2023, as a final result of the Care, Gender and Territory: reflections from Latin America and the Caribbean conference, which took place in Rio Branco<sup>1</sup>, Acre, Brazil, from March 13 to 16. The conference was organised by the Gender Responsive Resilience and Intersectionality in Policy and Practice project (GRRIPP)<sup>2</sup> in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), with funding from the UK Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research Fund (UKRI – CGRF). Among other goals, the event was aimed at bolstering the formation of networks that nurture territory care from an intersectional approach, linking leaderships and representation from institutions and collectives from Northeast Brazil, Brazil's Legal Amazon and Guatemala.



# The MULTICULTURAL LIVING TERRITORIES NETWORK

is a Brazilian collective with networks in Brazil and Guatemala, built upon an understanding of each territory's worldviews, and led by their processes and territory flows, based on a cultural, identity, education, political, ethical, social and economic standpoint. It strives to reach other communities working for their territories, as well as establishing strategic alliances with public institutions and international cooperation organisations.

Our organisation and approach is based on multiple community experiences, on our own experiences, on our daily struggle, our tasks, our narratives and *escrevivencias*<sup>3</sup> in the Coletiva Chã de Terra, the Instituto Mulheres da Amazônia (Women of the Amazon - IMA), Centro Cultural Quilombo Catucá (Quilombo Catucá Cultural Centre) and Fundação Kemb'alil (Kemb'alil Foundation), in addition to the presence and contributions – and the essential backing – of other people that have been present in our meetings, as a result of the relationships established through project GRRIPP.



<sup>1</sup> The event at Rio Branco was organised in collaboration with the Instituto Mulheres da Amazônia (Women of the Amazon Institute).

<sup>2</sup> GRRIPP is a project coordinated by University College London (UCL). In Latin America and the Caribbean it is carried out by Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

<sup>3</sup> *Escrevivencia*, a term coined by Conceição Evaristo, fuses the words "writing" and "experience". The power of this concept lies not only in this agglutination; it is also in the idea's genealogy, in the place and manner it emerged and in the ethnic and gender experiences it is linked to, as the writer and educator has explained.





Chã - Coletiva da Terra is a civil society organisation that emerged from the aspirations and needs of Brazilian women, especially those from the Northeast Region. Its purpose is furthering training, research, trades and cultural practices focused on regenerative agriculture, social-environmental justice and autonomy. In the past years it has covered, with special emphasis, the three following regions, and their different existing biomes, in Pernambuco state: (1) Serra dos Paus Dóias, in the Exu-PE council (Sertão do Araripe region); (2) Serra dos Xukurus do Ororubá, in the Pesqueira-PE council (Agreste Central region); (3) Sítio Malokambo, in the Tracunhaém-PE council (Zona da Mata Norte region). Pernambuco, a state with a huge cultural activity and great biodiversity, contains a variety of ecosystems and faces different challenges.



The Instituto Mulheres da Amazônia (Women of the Amazon Institute – IMA) is focused mainly on a gender approach and the environment. It is the continuation of the Movimento Articulado de Mulheres da Amazônia (Articulated Movement of Women of the Amazon – MAMA), and its actions span the nine States of Brazil’s Legal Amazon: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins. The IMA shines a light on the women of the Amazon and bolsters their role as protagonists, underscoring their social, economic and cultural specificities and respecting their cultural identities, as well as their diversities regarding class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, production, territory, knowledge and traditional and ancestral lore. The IMA’s actions evolve fundamentally around Amazon women’s competences, bolstering their leading role in the protection of the forests and its inhabitants, in defence of the bodies-territories, striving to ensure the integrity of the world’s greatest biodiversity, thus ensuring the perpetuation of LIFE.





Quilombo Catucá, which emerged from the remaining peoples of Quilombo, in Pernambuco, furthers relationships and organises cultural, territorial, artistic, education and religious activities. It aims to interweave the collective's experiences with those of peoples from other territories and projects, in order to mitigate the effect of global climate crises, especially in regard to bodies that are marginalised, Black, LGBTQIA+, with their own identities, histories, vibrations, worldviews and ways of being and existing in the world.

Fundação Kemb'alil (Kemb'alil Foundation) aims to further collective, reciprocal and supportive processes, based on ancestral lore and practices, in order to enable being and doing among women, men and youths, for our people's common good. It is a space of learning, resistance and resilience. The spirit of each action is coexistence, community life and shared knowledge.





Our network emerges in these challenging times, when the social-environmental problems faced by Brazil and Latin America are ever more urgent and complex.

Climate changes are striking us with greater force than ever, threatening life in our planet to an unprecedented extent. We are more impacted by social-climate crises and we suffer more intensely systemic social inequalities and human rights violations. We are repeatedly denied our right to life, to food security, to health, to education, to housing, to our cultural and religious expressions, to the effective exercise of political rights, of our dignity and citizenship. In addition, we ourselves are targeted by systemic and environmental racism. All of these factors collide, making us – indigenous peoples and members of traditional communities, we who protect and value biodiversity – those most intensely affected by these crises.





In synergy with nature and everything that surrounds human beings, furthering equity, intersectionality and equilibrium, the network is articulated around five core issues:

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## 1. Ancestral lore and health.

### Aim

To acknowledge and safeguard the lore and activities of indigenous, Black, terreiro and other traditional communities; to bolster dialogue between public health and sustainable development under an institutional perspective and ancestral and traditional lore; to carry out strategies and actions to safeguard ways of life, lore and care practices for humans and the environment related to the preservation of our biomes, our cultures, agriculture, food and community health; to implement popular participation methodologies; to promote the creation of folk schools, libraries and community museums (incentives policy) – a space for lore preservation, a space for knowledge, for memory, for the construction and permanent transformation of the human being.

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## 2. Gender and intersectionalities

### Aim

Empowering women in the political, economic and cultural spheres, making our realities, our different natures and ways of being in our territories visible, and highlighting our plurality; ensuring our leading role as subjects of our own history, of our bodies-territories; challenging every form of violence against women, striving to eradicate the extermination of our bodies, the practice of femicide, lesbicide and transfemicide; establishing a conversation with the institutional





powers responsible for carrying out public policies, in order to ensure policies that guarantee humanitarian care in women's integrated health, respecting their practices in traditional and ancestral medicine; reducing child and teenage pregnancies, as well as keeping early mothers in school, and provided for, financially; proposing inclusive work policies, respecting their diversity in production practices and economic autonomy; acknowledging the ancient practice of Traditional Midwives, through the inclusion in the Unified Health System.

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### 3. Health and Food Security

#### Aim

Providing shelter to the community, in an integrated manner, and furthering integrated health, with cultural pertinence and quality; reducing damages caused by the use of narcotic substances and promoting/supporting antidrug policies; improving municipal public health services; implementing strategic incentives and acknowledging (1) the practices and lore of popular and traditional agriculture (regenerative and low-carbon emission agriculture); (2) productive and medicinal gardens, in order to help remedy health issues in the communities through folk and traditional medicine, as encouraged by the motto "Our medicine is our food", as well as acknowledging the preventative health benefits to be found in plants and in everything that comes from Mother Earth.





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## 4. Human rights and confronting violence based on gender, race and ethnicity

### Aim

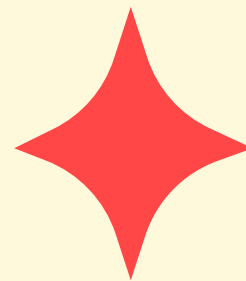
Carrying out strategic actions to (1) confront structural racism, also regarding the environment and religion; (2) healing, repairing and preventing the violence inflicted on indigenous and Black women and young women; (3) fighting for the right to express and preserve African- and indigenous-based spirituality in the territories.

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## 5. Environment and territoriality

### Aim

Ensuring the protection of the rights of native and traditional peoples, as well as their territories; adopting and bolstering actions that further their food and nutritional security, as well as guaranteeing their land rights and fostering the recovery of their knowledge, ancestral practices and sacred rituals for coexisting with nature.





## The LIVING TERRITORIES SCHOOLS

will be the instruments for carrying out the networks' actions, through the introduction of the folk school, operating as part of a network – together with the territories – to create intergenerational and intercultural dialogue processes, as well as coexistence in community. These schools will be led by the women in the network, taking into account their experience and trajectory in order to ensure the continuity of the formative processes. In addition, the network intends to implement a community communication programme for our territories, training young local communicators skilled at articulating interterritorial networks, as well as furthering contact between youths and elders (intergenerational and intercultural dialogues).





Our actions are guided by the following principles:

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# 1.

## **Defending the sovereignty of the Amazon**

Implies protecting the greatest biodiversity in the planet! It implies ensuring the human rights of its peoples and territories. It implies social and environmental justice in its ample reality, and treating the Amazon as a womb, creating and generating life in the planet. It is our Mother Earth. It implies, above all, respecting its cosmic, social, environmental and cultural role. It implies ending social, economic and regional inequalities. It implies understanding its multiple role, as well as preserving its ancestral values and lore, taking into account biodiversity and its ethnic-racial aspect. It implies ensuring life – diverse, ancestral life –, establishing a pleasant relationship with florestania, in harmony with life in the territories and its amazonality and fascination.

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# 2.

## **Defending the sovereignty of the Northeast Regions**

Understanding that the Northeast Regions are part of Brazil's national territory, comprising a diversity of biomes and biodiversities that are extremely important for the planet, such as Caatinga – the largest part of the Northeast (an exclusively Brazilian biome, with a semi-arid climate, under threat of desertification, and a source of endemic plant species that are the most efficient Brazilian plant species for carbon trapping); the Cerrado biome (West Bahia, Piauí and East Maranhão), the Mata Atlântica biome (Northeast coast, up to Rio Grande do Norte); and the Amazon Rainforest (West Maranhão). In addition to valuing its great biodiversity, it is extremely important to acknowledge the need for the collective to have the right to avail itself of the environment; the Brazilian State, in cooperation with Brazilians and resident foreigners,



has the duty and capacity to manage its territory, without this impinging on the rights of the entire planet's inhabitants to carry out efforts to ensure a balanced environment, essential to healthy quality of life and the wellbeing of present and future generations.

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### 3.

#### **Furthering climate justice**

In search of solutions regarding the climate crisis, taking into account the need for a fair division of investments in financial capital and of responsibilities among the other hyper-industrialised countries in the world – which consume the planet's energy and vitality – in the fight against the climate emergency, as well as towards the historic and colonialist reparation for the experiences the living territories have undergone throughout our histories.

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### 4.

#### **Fighting for the right of expression, preservation and respect of the different manifestations of spirituality with African and indigenous roots in Brazil's territories**

Understanding that, even at present, our living territories are tormented by violence, prejudice and discrimination towards our religious, spiritual and cosmologic manifestations of Black and indigenous origin.





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## 5.

**Acknowledging, valuing, empowering and preserving the ways of life, lore and native, popular, traditional and ancestral cultural practices for human and environmental care**

To reinstate in the present, with dignity, our perspectives for wellbeing, based on our rites, experiences and ways of understanding the world.

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## 6.

**Complying to gender, race and ethnic intersectionality**

Allowing an understanding of gender, class, race and ethnic intersectionality to influence a reorganisation of relationships, institutions and the abiding power structures in our worlds.





We maintain that the existence of traditional communities is related intrinsically to the sense of belonging to our territories. For centuries – even more so in the present – our existence is threatened by monoculture, land-grabbing, extensive agribusiness, mining, deforestation, the devastation of our forests, environmental pollution and biopiracy, among others, under the guise of development projects. We have been cast out of our territories, by the violence that is a consequence of land-grabbing, invading and violating our bodies-territories, by being forced to flee extreme climate events or by the pollution that makes it impossible for us to remain in the places of our ancestral experiences. Losing our territories threatens our culture and our ways of life, essential elements of our identity that make us the guardians of the biodiversity we protect and value, for the benefit of all peoples.

In this context, the **MULTICULTURAL LIVING TERRITORIES NETWORK** is configured as a tapestry woven of encounters between lives, experiences and work devoted to care, by humans, Mother Earth and Territorialities. It is a ray of hope in the midst of this emergency that subjugates us all, gathering together Brazil's organisations, collectives and territories, from the Northeast region and the Amazon, towards a common goal: safekeeping living territories and furthering sustainability and wellbeing practices, so we can live with dignity, respecting nature – of which we are part – and our powerful cultural diversity.






Here, our folk and ancestral cultures are valued as a source of wisdom, resistance, resilience and strategic capacity regarding the social and environmental challenges we face. It is from this standpoint that the LIVING TERRITORIES MULTICULTURAL NETWORK makes sense; it gathers Brazil's collectives and territories around common goals. Among these solutions we find: family agriculture practices, urban agricultural ecology, environmental preservation, preparation of remedies based on our rich biodiversity, blessings and prayers, use of traditional and ancestral medicines, respecting and valuing traditional and ancestral cultural practices, promoting culture and arts, community development, formation and strengthening of abilities and political incidence.

From this common understanding – of the need to value popular culture and ancestral lore – we formulate in a network the principles here recorded, guided also by the contributions of Law 11.645/08 (which makes the study of indigenous and African-Brazilian history and culture compulsory), Law 10.639/03 (which included in the teaching network's official syllabus the obligatory topic "African-Brazilian History and Culture"), 7.716/64 (Law for Confronting and Fighting Racism), Law 6.938/81 (National Environmental Policy) and Law 4.319/64 (Human Rights). Their goal is to bolster political training, qualification and application, based on the principles exposed. Internationally, we answer to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.





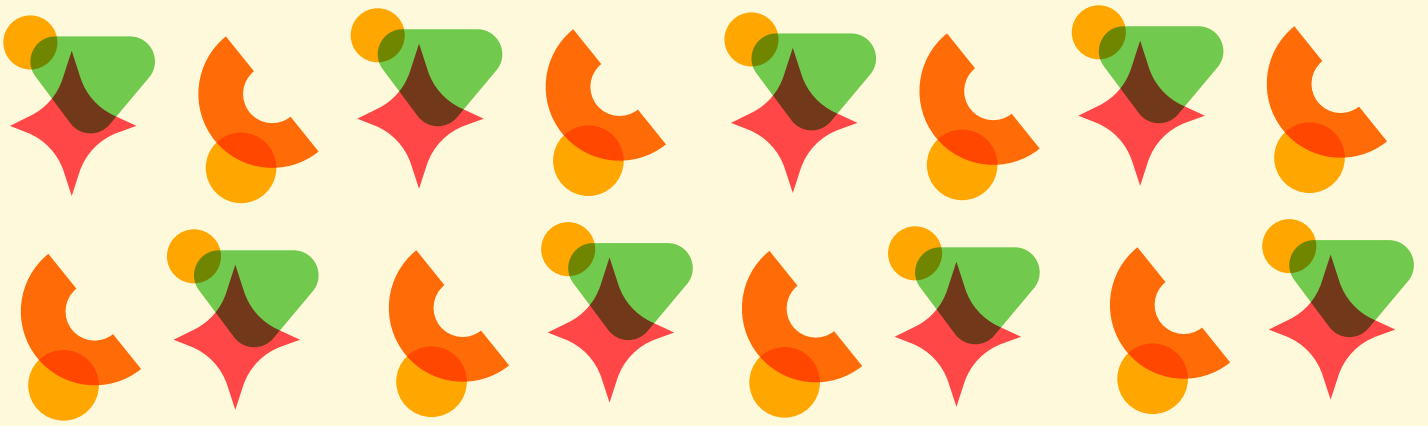


Thus, the **LIVING TERRITORIES MULTICULTURAL NETWORK** is also, to a certain extent, a call to all individuals, institutions and peoples that demonstrate we can build a diverse, healthy, harmonious and sustainable world, where different ways of life, as well as cultural, ethnic and social diversity, are understood as the outlook that will allow us to face our challenges.

We believe that, together, we can strengthen our communities and territories as spaces for living, for gathering, for the exchange of lore and celebration, facing social-environmental challenges in a collective, coordinated manner.

We believe reinventing another world is possible; a world striving for collective well-being, safekeeping our lore and ancestral practices for caring for humans and beyond: caring for the environment, in all its diversity and with its inhabitants.





The **LIVING TERRITORIES MULTICULTURAL NETWORK** is an instrument that will allow us to build this future we long for, where communities are main characters in their own histories, in their own development, and where we worship our own ancestral force and our Mother Earth, caring for the planet, caring for LIFE!

We count on you for this journey.

Yours sincerely,

**LIVING TERRITORIES MULTICULTURAL NETWORK**

*Centro Cultural Quilombo do Catucá;*

*Coletiva Chã de Terra (CHÃ);*

*Instituto Mulheres da Amazônia (IMA).*

*Rede de Mulheres Indígenas da Guatemala.*

*Fundação Kemb'alil (Guatemala).*

