# A bioregional transition design project in Colombia: Joining the (meta) conversation

**Arturo Escobar and Cauca Valley Tapestry of Transitioners**

## R3.0 Conference

**Bioregional Regeneration as Collapse Resilience: Earth-centric Biocultural Kinship, Knowledge & Governance**

**September 8-10, 2026**

Source: Angie Vanessita

# Threads

Manhattan “the city that shouldn’t have been” (Le Corbusier)

I. Designing for systemic bioregional just transitions in the Cauca River Valley, Colombia

II. Collapse resilience as just transitions for civilizational de/re-patterning. (Affinity of inquiry)

Source: Zapatista art, Oventik, 2016, https://www.tumblr.com/search/oventik

Manhattan Island 1609

Manhattan 1949

# The biophysical and ontological occupation of a bioregional commons

Source: Harold Martínez
Universidad del Valle, Cali

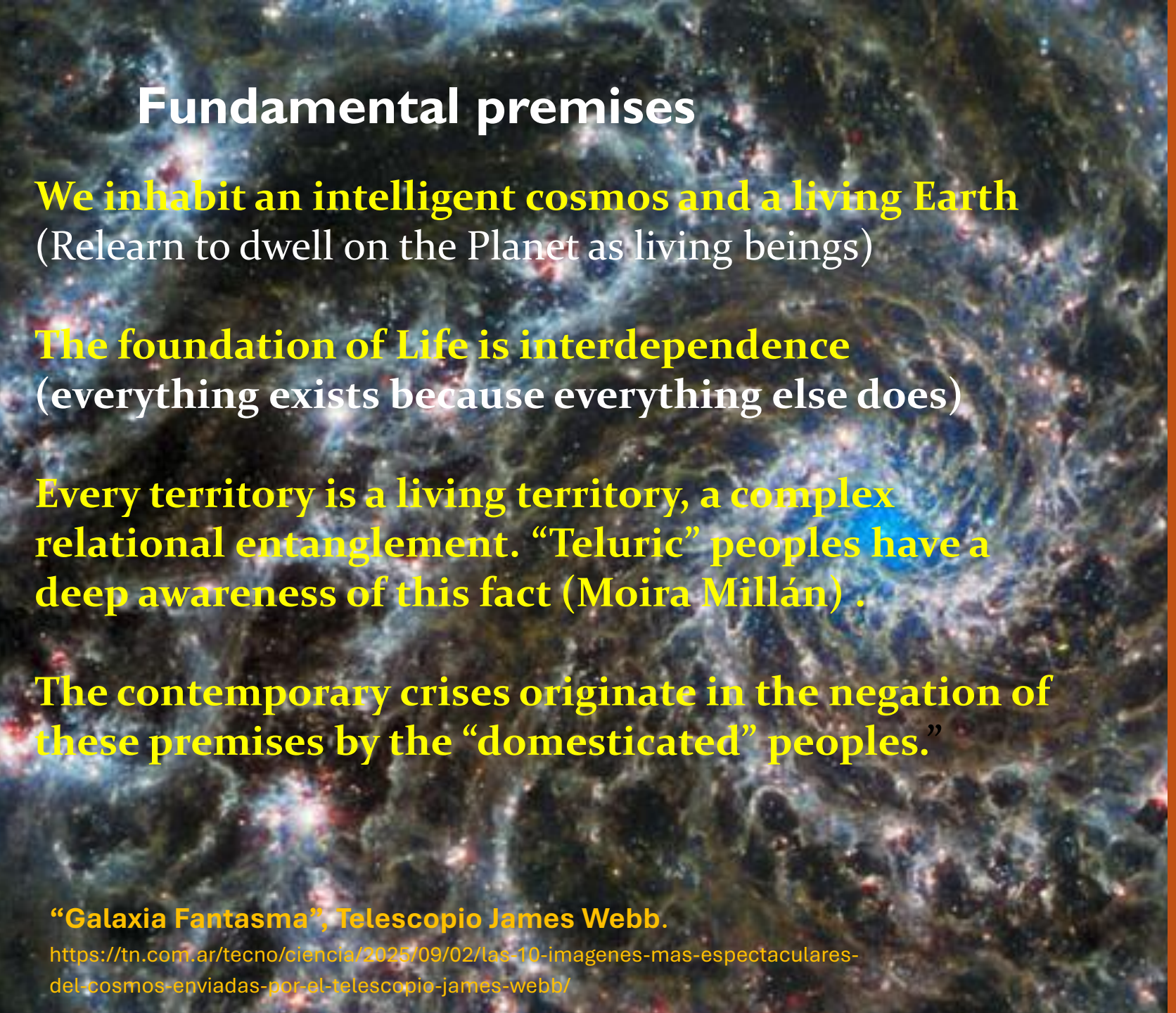
# Fundamental premises

**We inhabit an intelligent cosmos and a living Earth**
(Relearn to dwell on the Planet as living beings)

**The foundation of Life is interdependence**
**(everything exists because everything else does)**

**Every territory is a living territory, a complex relational entanglement. "Teluric" peoples have a deep awareness of this fact (Moira Millán) .**

**The contemporary crises originate in the negation of these premises by the "domesticated" peoples."**



**"Galaxia Fantasma", Telescopio James Webb.**
https://tn.com.ar/tecno/ciencia/2025/09/02/las-10-imagenes-mas-espectaculares-del-cosmos-enviadas-por-el-telescopio-james-webb/

# Agreements

**Unprecedented planetary *crises* – of modes of being human and of inhabiting the Earth.**

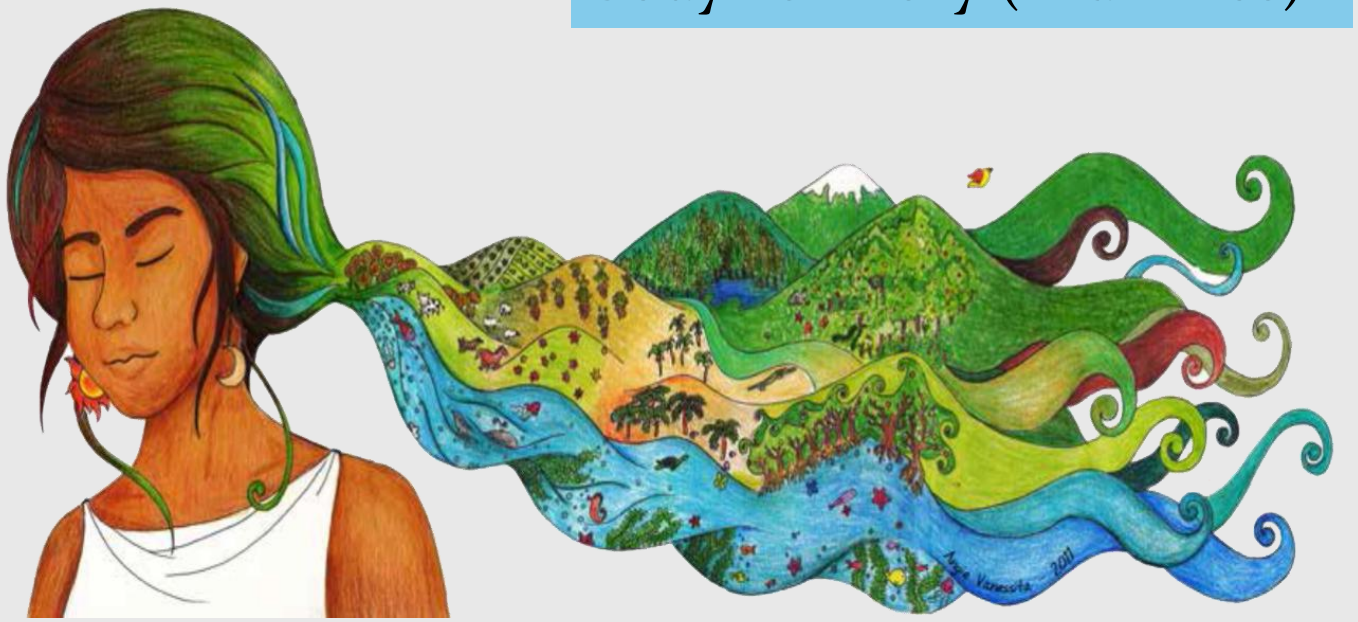
**Most modern "solutions" have become part of the crisis.**

**Civilizational imperative: ecosocial transitions based on interdependence and care.**

**We are all summoned to remake our (habitual ways of) making.**

**Relationality,** a re/emergent way of understanding reality. Radical interdependence, *beyond the narrative of separation.* ***Ubuntu***

We are earth-beings, body-territory ( + artifice)

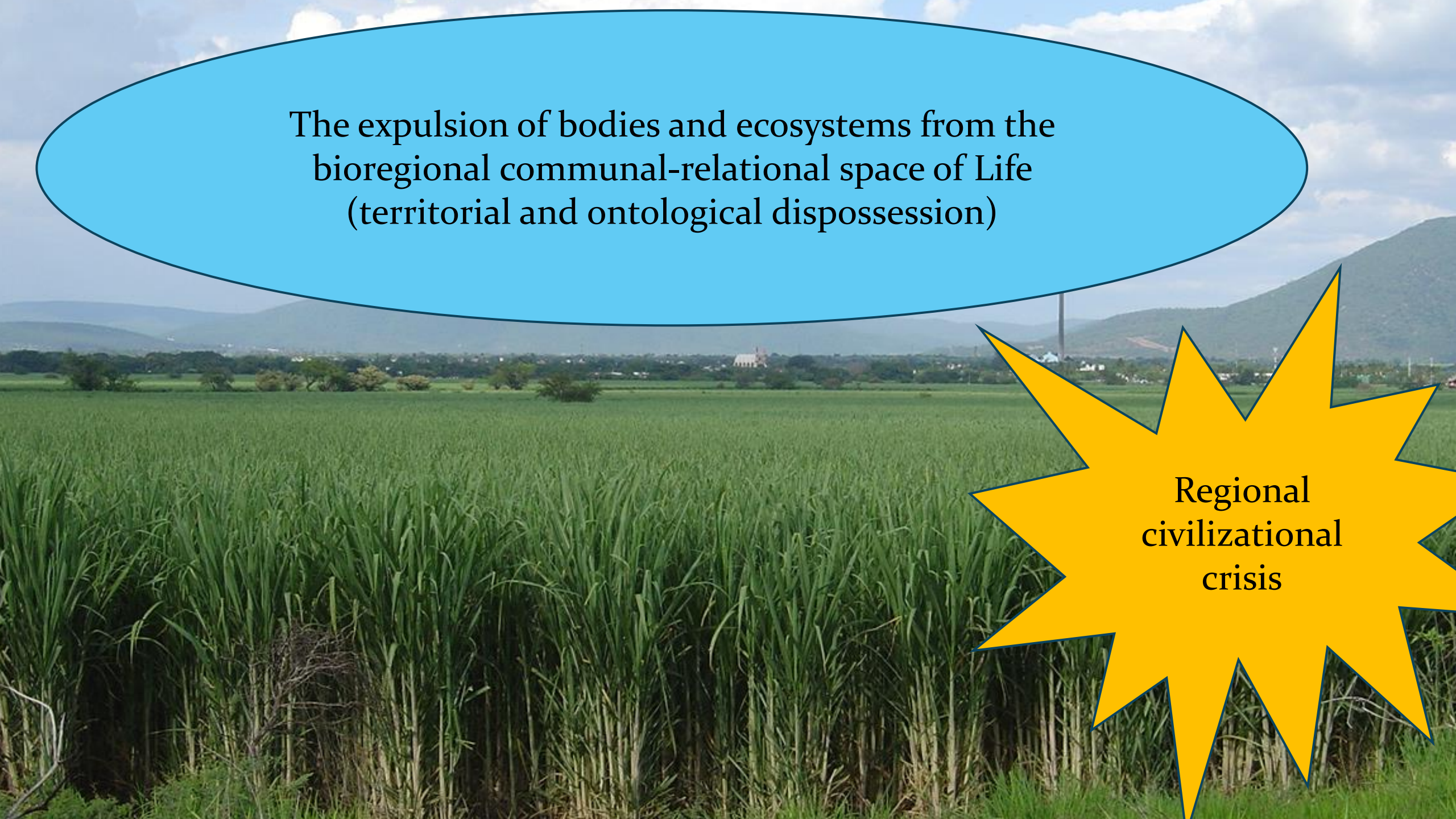


"Cabellos de Vida", 2009
Fuente: Angie Vanessita

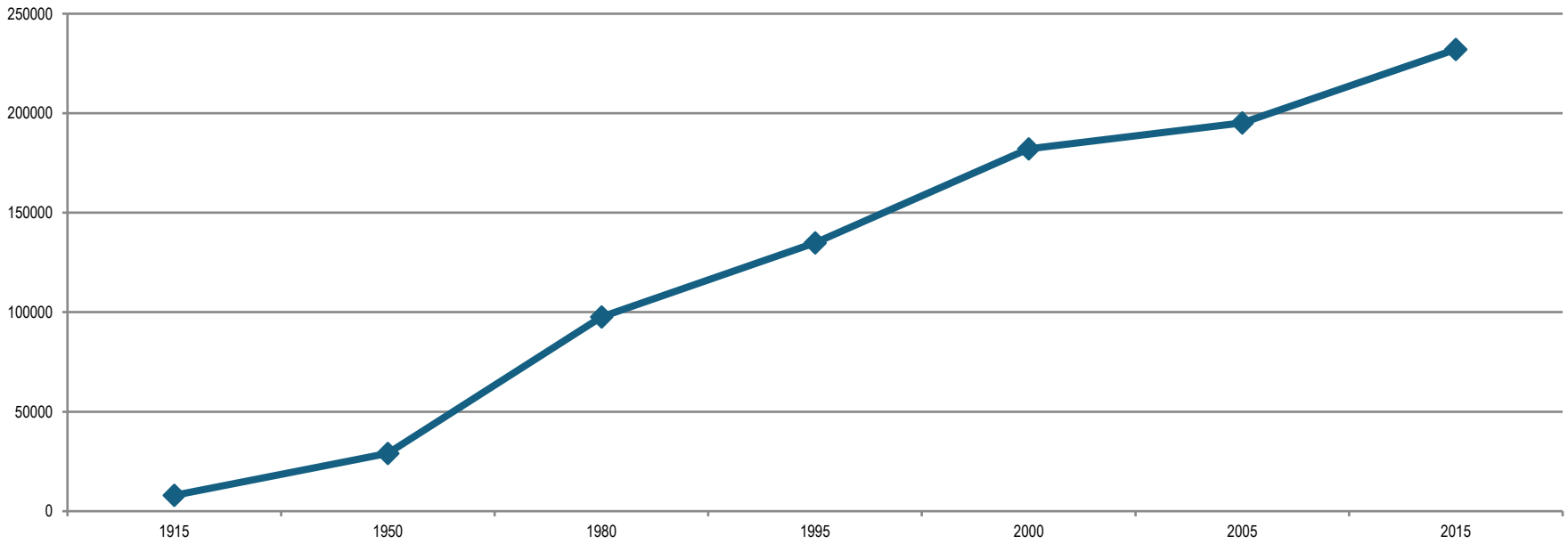
"We consider this relationality foundational to bioregioning" (*Seeds* 2)

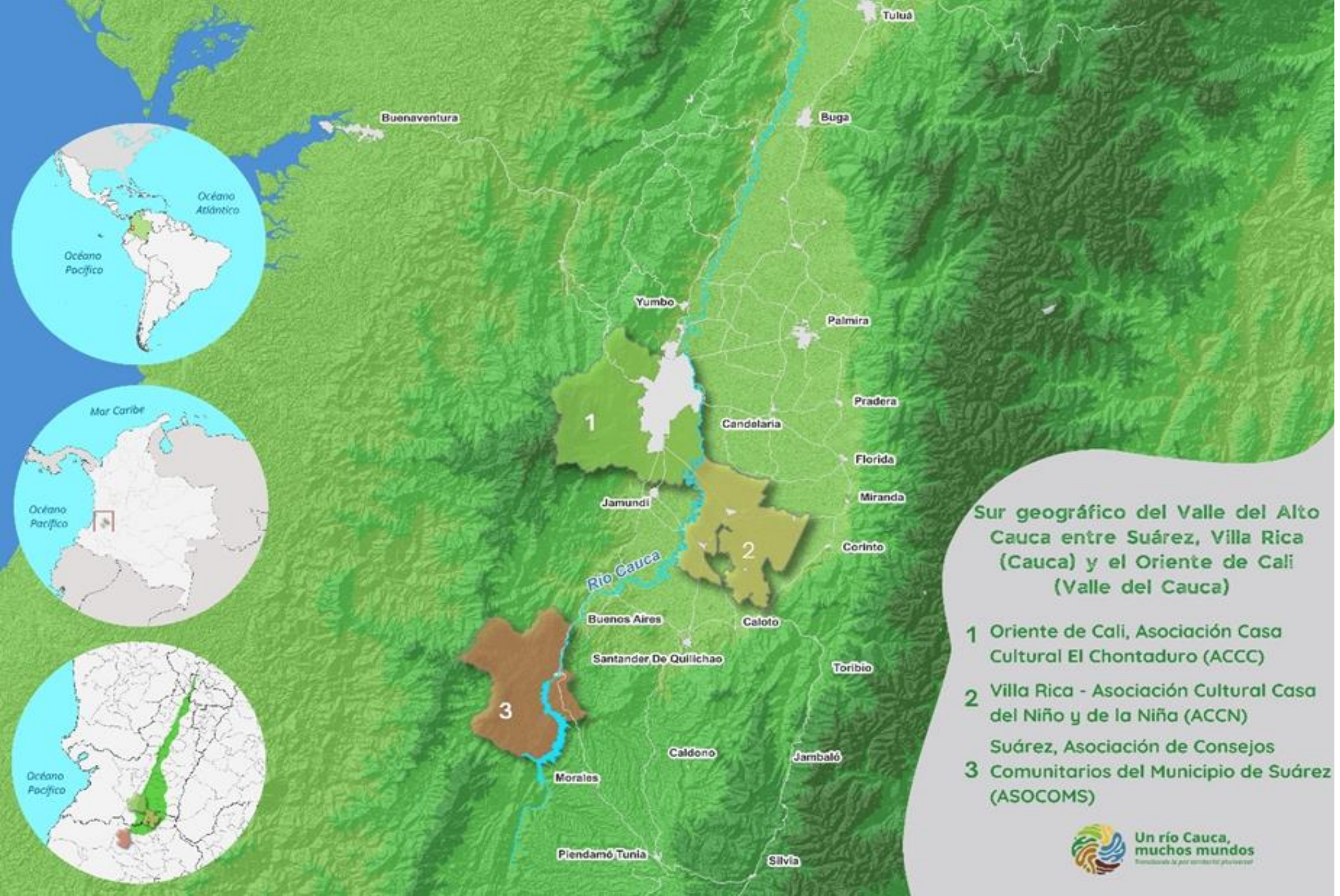
# Un río Cauca, muchos mundos

*Transitando la paz territorial pluriversal*

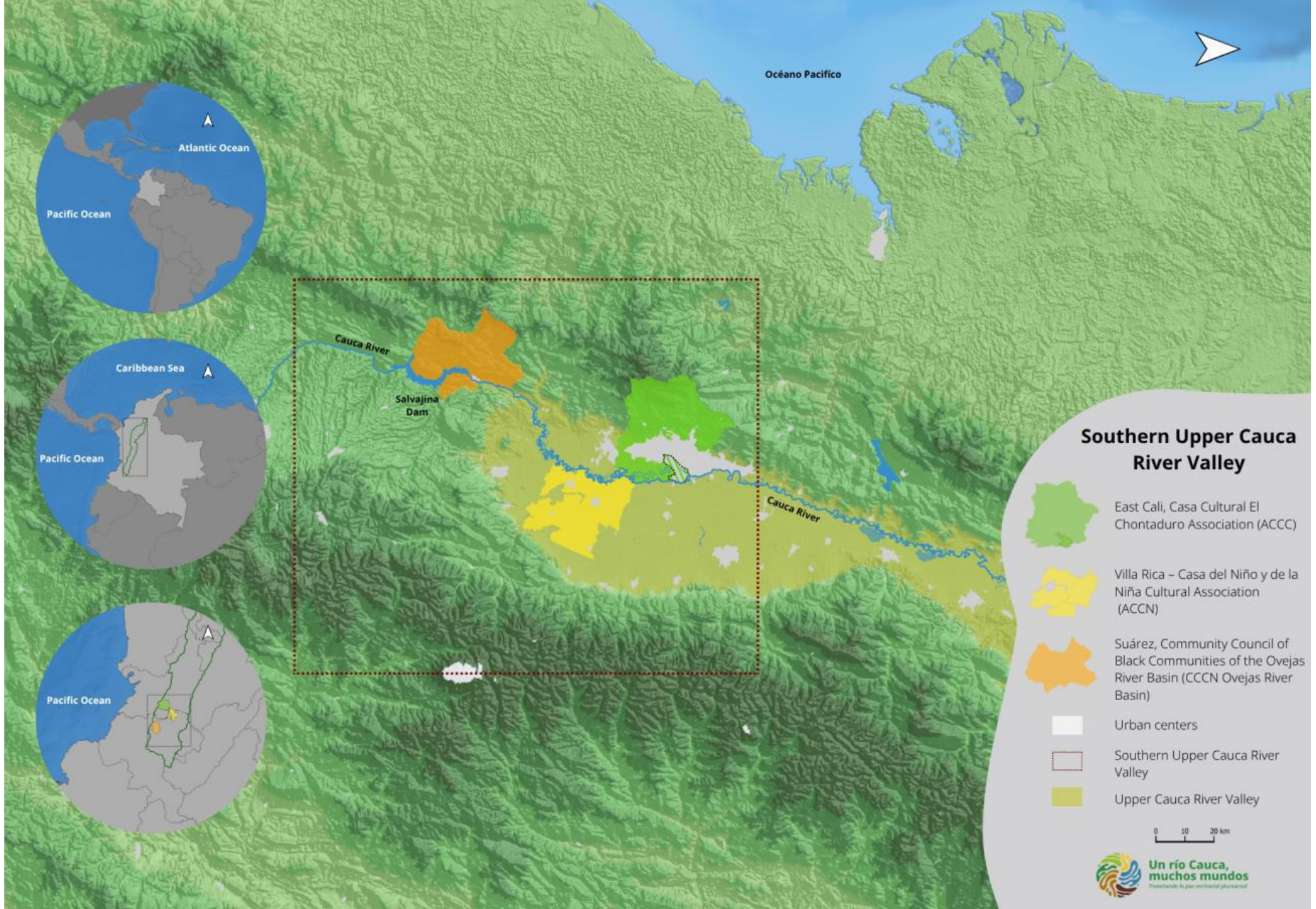

The expulsion of bodies and ecosystems from the bioregional communal-relational space of Life (territorial and ontological dispossession)
Regional civilizational crisis

*Sugar cane in the Upper Cauca River valley (1915-2015).*
(Hernando Uribe 2018: 61*)*






The geographic southern region of the Upper Cauca Valley (Collaboratory of critical cartography and territorial co-design, 2024)


Océano Pacífico
Atlantic Ocean
Pacific Ocean
Caribbean Sea
Pacific Ocean
Pacific Ocean
Cauca River
Salvajina Dam
Cauca River
Southern Upper Cauca River Valley
East Cali, Casa Cultural El Chontaduro Association (ACCC)
Villa Rica – Casa del Niño y de la Niña Cultural Association (ACCN)
Suárez, Community Council of Black Communities of the Ovejas River Basin (CCCN Ovejas River Basin)
Urban centers
Southern Upper Cauca River Valley
Upper Cauca River Valley
0 10 20 km
Un río Cauca, muchos mundos

*“Food sovereignty is sown in the ancestral territory” (*Deyanira Gonzalías,Villa Rica, June 2024)

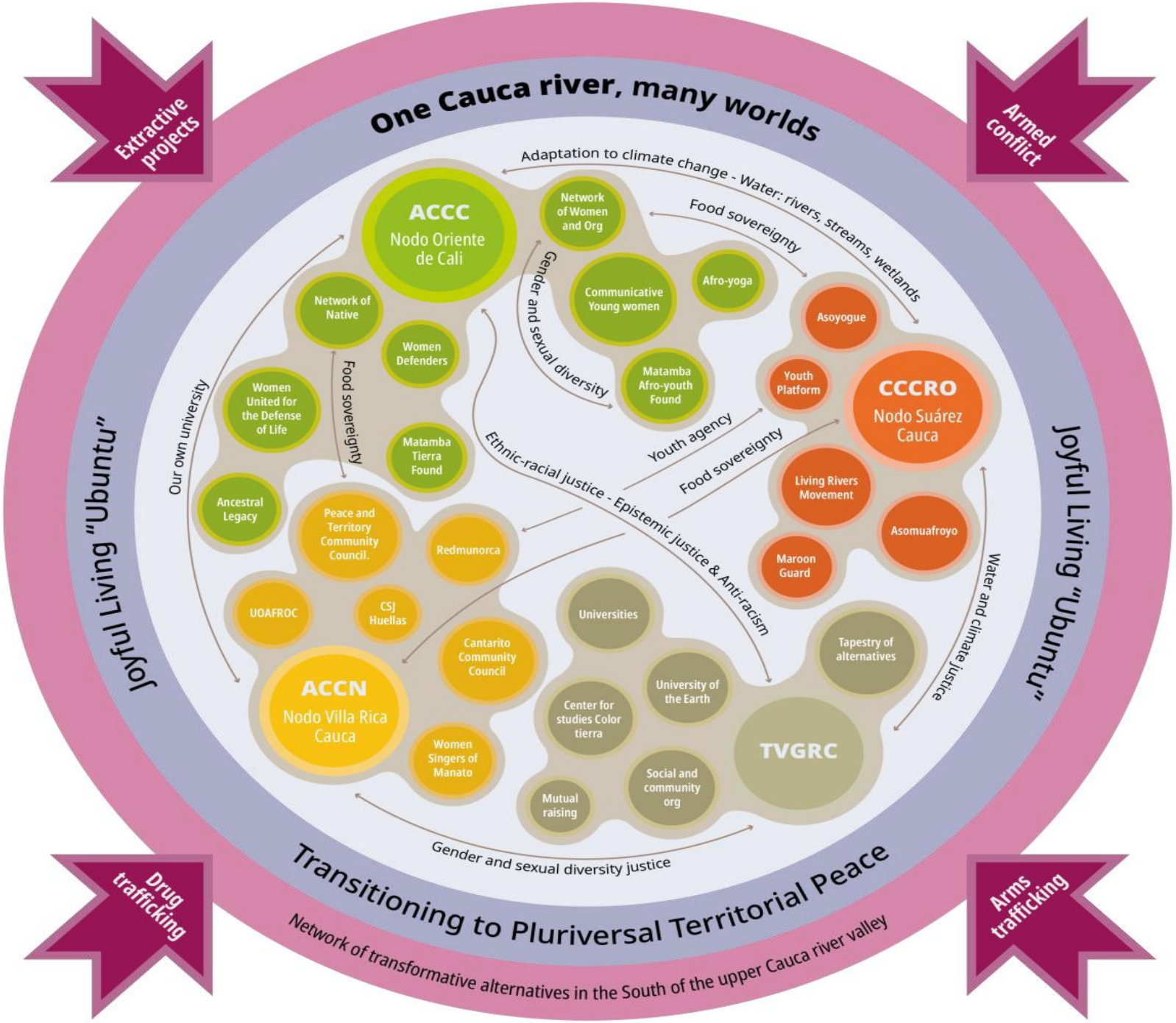
*“We are regaining our deepest senses, we are imagining a valley of rivers and lagoons again”* (Vicenta Moreno, Casa Cultural El Chontaduro, Cali, 2019).

# Project's architecture: *Trayecto / proyectos*

- Four **nodes**.
- Five **threads**: justices, food sovereignty, water, climate change, territorial planning
- 1 "**Transformative Alternatives**"
- Three **collaboratories**:
  - Transition thought and design
  - transition narratives
  - critical cartographies and territorial codesign

- **Three design axes***:*
  - *economic and productive transformations* → food sovereignty and regenerative economies
  - *eco-ontological restoration* → creating a bioregional identity as a pluriversal territory of water
  - *historical reparations* → *territorial peace with justices*

- **Overall goal**: Reimagine and reconstitute the bioregion as an *agropolitan*, *aquapolitan,* and *multipolitan pluriversal territory*

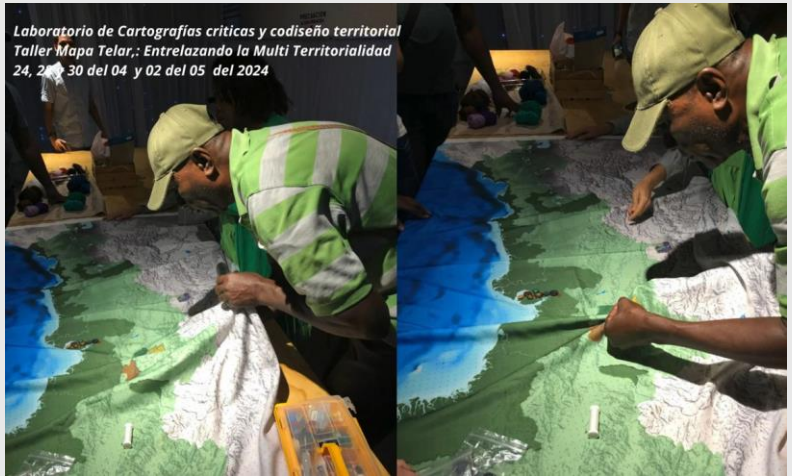

One Cauca river, many worlds
Extractive projects
Armed conflict
Drug trafficking
Arms trafficking
Joyful Living "Ubuntu"
Joyful Living "Ubuntu"
Transitioning to Pluriversal Territorial Peace
Network of transformative alternatives in the South of the upper Cauca river valley
Adaptation to climate change - Water: rivers, streams, wetlands
Food sovereignty
Gender and sexual diversity
Our own university
Food sovereignty
Youth agency
Food sovereignty
Ethnic-racial justice - Epistemic justice & Anti-racism
Water and climate justice
Gender and sexual diversity justice
ACCC
Nodo Oriente de Cali
Network of Women and Org
Communicative Young women
Afro-yoga
Network of Native
Women Defenders
Women United for the Defense of Life
Matamba Afro-youth Found
Matamba Tierra Found
Ancestral Legacy
Asoyogue
Youth Platform
CCCRO
Nodo Suárez Cauca
Living Rivers Movement
Asomuafroyo
Maroon Guard
Peace and Territory Community Council.
Redmunorca
UOAFROC
CSJ Huellas
ACCN
Nodo Villa Rica Cauca
Cantarito Community Council
Women Singers of Manato
Universities
Tapestry of alternatives
University of the Earth
Center for studies Color tierra
TVGRC
Social and community org
Mutual raising

*Collaboratory of Narratives for Transitions (sound and radio production workshop).*

Photos. Anthony Soto. Collage Steven Melo

*Critical Cartography and Territorial Codesign Collaboratory.*

Photos: Anthony Soto. Collage: Steven Melo

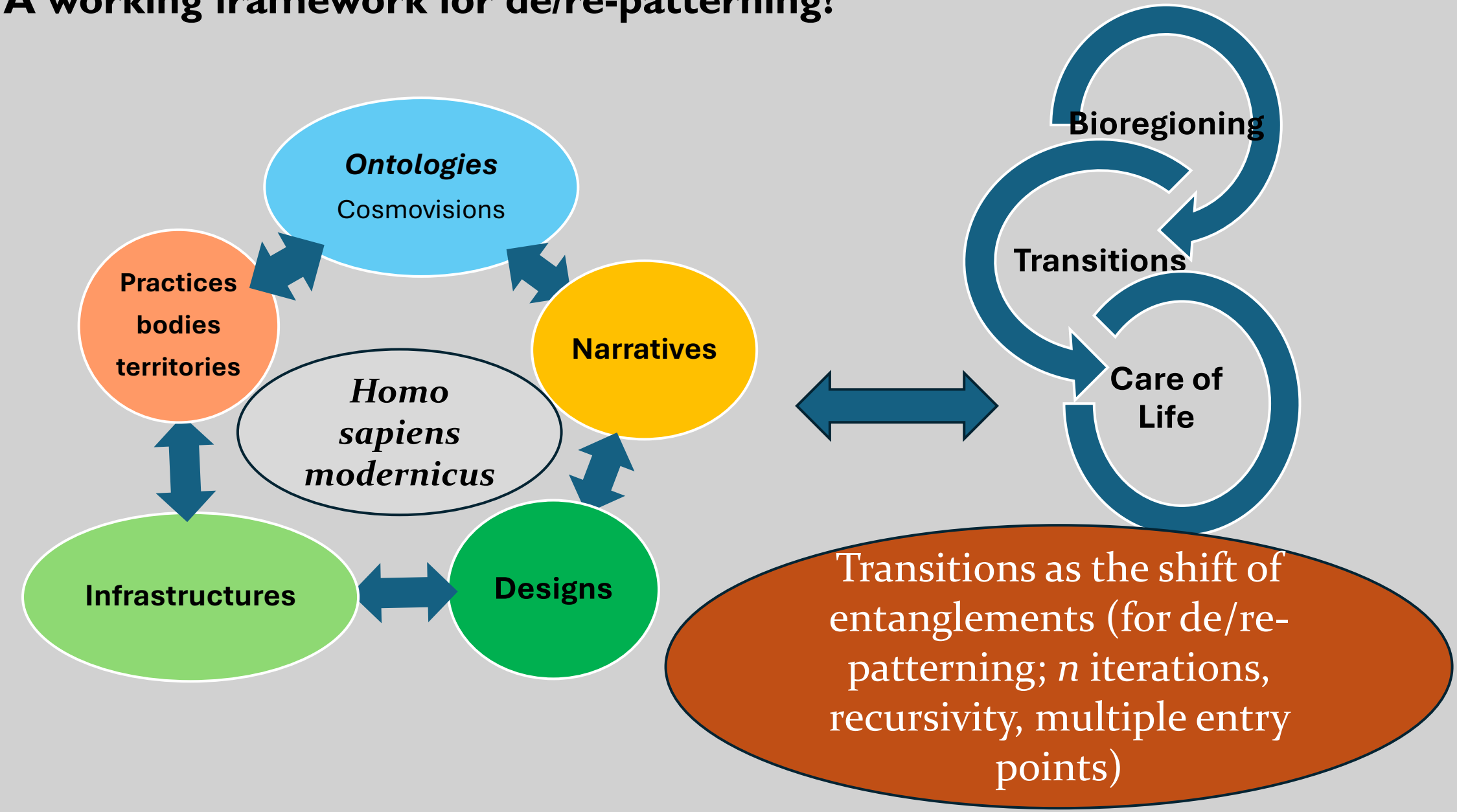



Collaboratory of critical cartography and territorial codesign. Immersive experience, La Tertulia Modern Art Museum (April-May, 2024).

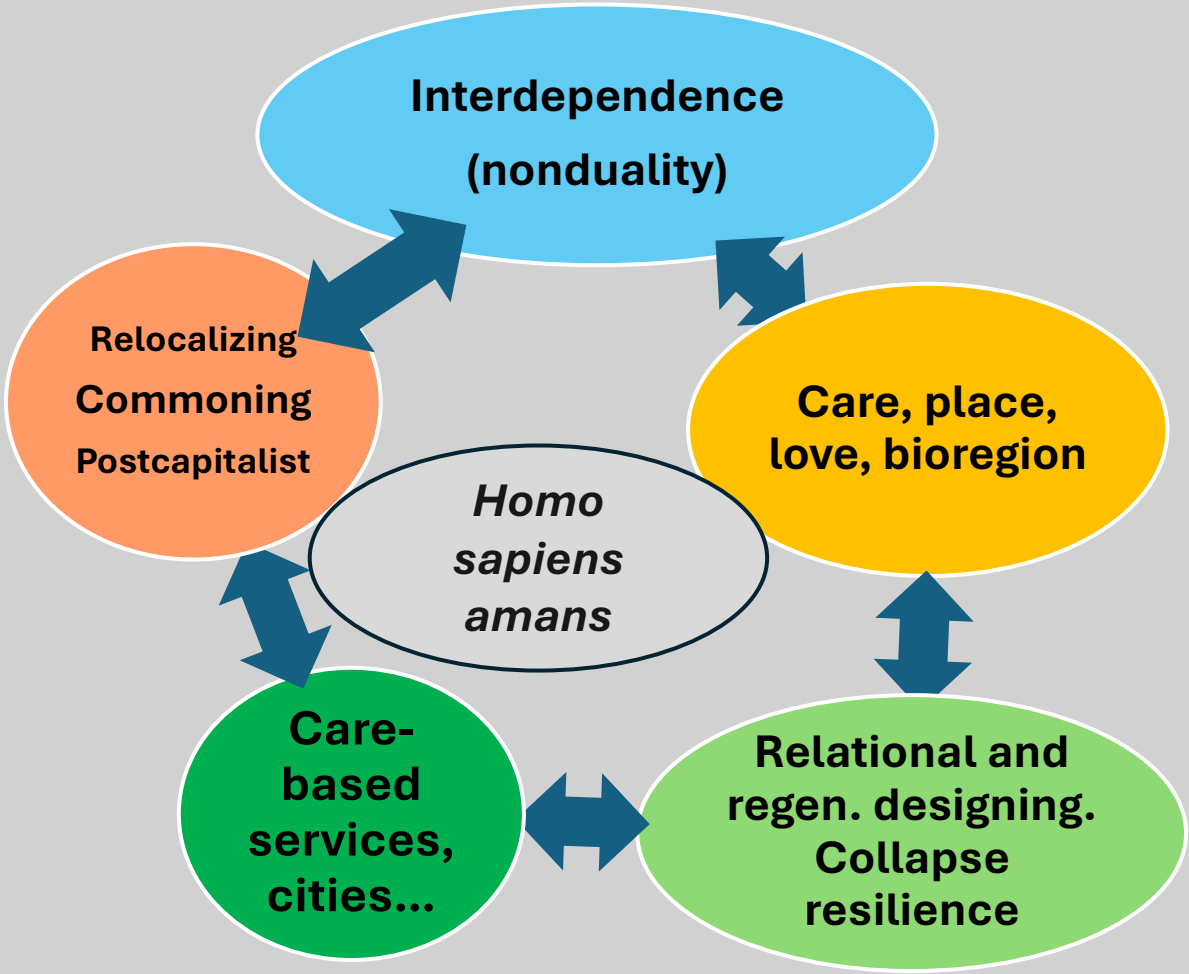
*A pilot project: codesign of the agro-food corridor "Agropalenke sovereignty of life".*

Photos: Anthony Soto. Collage: Steven Melo

# A conceptual entanglement
# A working framework for de/re-patterning?



# Towards healing loops of relationality



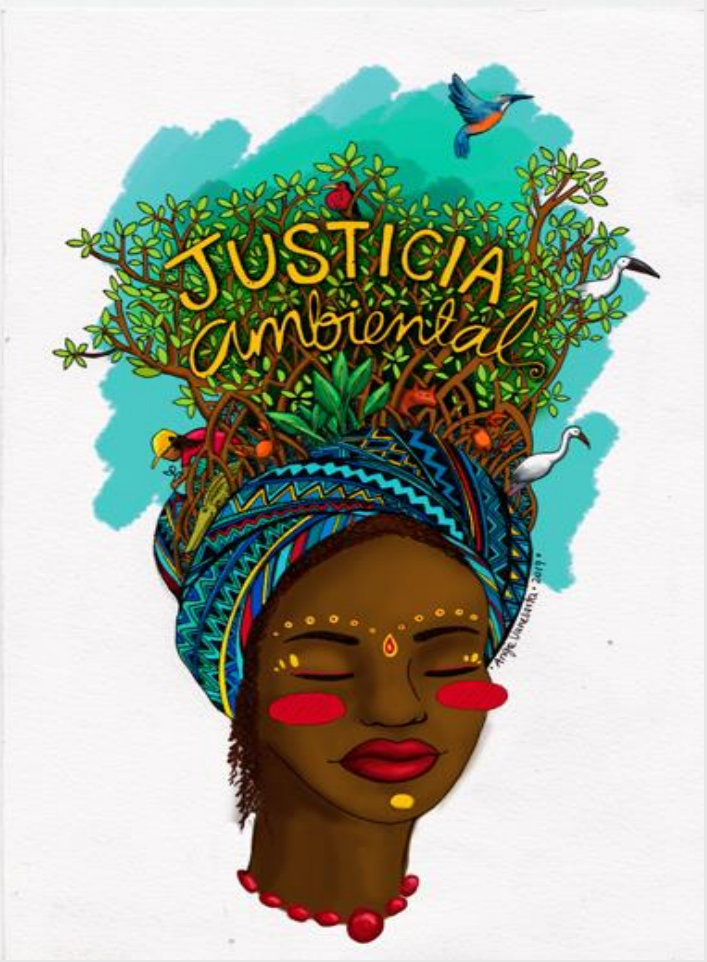

Bioregional designing
as the healing
Of the web of life.

A Revolution of Care!

"**An ecology of care taking**… For Nishnaabe, the way we live makes the world…. **Living life in a way that brings forth more life**" [intercommunalism, resurgence] (L. B. Simpson, *Theory of Water*)

*Seeds vol. 2 "focuses on the collapse resilience necessary to de-pattern away from the entrenched template of civilizational collapse cycles, and re-pattern through a just transition toward regenerative economies, cultures, societies, and ecologies" (*Seeds 2)

*"The ultimate direction of travel is clear: to collectively shepherd a new civilizational [entanglement?] --a regenerative bioregion."* (Seeds 2)




Source: Angie Vanessita

Making life otherwise: Transition relational designing in support of the world-making potential of local communities and struggles, from toxic to healing existence. Re-place ourselves in the networks of life. **A Revolution of Care**

A decolonial pluriversal political imagination

Designing as mobilizing for relational conditions for **being human** and **dwelling** on the Earth.

“A commitment to “a lived relationality” (Seeds 2)

*Bioregional transitioners as mindful and effective repairers and “regenerationers” of the mesh of life.*

NIKE

Carlos Jacanamindoy. “Al ritmo de la respiracion” (2022)

*Beyond reason there is a pluriverse of colors*

(A. Albán Achinte)