



ALTERNAUTAS

(Re)Searching Development: The Abya Yala Chapter

Commoning a “Dead” River in Colombia: Assessing Collaborative Research and Curatorial Methodologies through the RÍO BOGOTÁ Project

Laura Giraldo-Martínez , Lisa Blackmore  & Carolina Neu 

Wageningen University; University of Virginia; Independent Scholar

Accepted: 7 July 2026 / Published online: 31 July 2026

Alternautas is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes content related to Latin American Critical Development Thinking.

It intends to serve as a platform for testing, circulating, and debating new ideas and reflections on these topics, expanding beyond the geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries of Latin America - Abya Yala. We hope to contribute to connecting ideas, and to provide a space for intellectual exchange and discussion for a nascent academic community of scholars, devoted to counter-balancing mainstream understandings of development.

How to cite: Giraldo-Martínez L., Blackmore L. & Neu C. (2026), Commoning a “Dead” River in Colombia: Assessing Collaborative Research and Curatorial Methodologies through the RÍO BOGOTÁ Project. *Alternautas*, 13(1), 199-238, DOI: 10.31273/swnd5b05.

University of Warwick Press

<http://www.alternautas.net>



ISSN - 2057-4924

Laura Giraldo-Martínez¹, Lisa Blackmore² & Carolina Neu³

Commoning a “Dead” River in Colombia: Assessing Collaborative Research and Curatorial Methodologies through the RÍO BOGOTÁ Project

Abstract: Emergent scholarship on rethinking human-river relations offers generative conceptual frameworks such as “river commons” and “riverhood” (Boelens et al., 2023), and hydrocommons cultures (Blackmore, 2022a; 2025b). However, a gap remains in the empirical assessment of the changes generated by collaborative actions, methodologies, and impacts of “river co-learning arenas” working at the interfaces of water scholarship and commoning initiatives (de Souza et al., 2025a). Addressing this gap requires theoretically grounded discussion and “ongoing reflexivity” about projects and methodologies (de Souza et al., 2025a). This article advances this agenda through the case study RÍO BOGOTÁ (2023-ongoing), a project for collaboration, co-creation, and co-learning developed by the arts-led

¹ Laura Giraldo-Martínez studied Philosophy, holds a master’s degree in Geography, and is a PhD researcher at Wageningen University in the River Commons Project. Her research interests include the political ecology of water, critical geography, pedagogy and memory studies. She is part of the entre—ríos (entre-rios.net), and cocurator of the RÍO BOGOTÁ project. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7377-9866>

² Lisa Blackmore is Professor of Spanish and Faculty Director of the Digital Humanities Center at the University of Virginia. In 2019 she founded entre—ríos (entre-rios.net) as a confluence of arts-led projects exploring continuities between bodies of water, human bodies, and territories. Recent publications include “Art for the Hydrocommons” *Environmental Humanities* (2025) and *Hydrocommons Cultures: Art, Pedagogy and Practices of Care Across the Americas*, *LA ESCUELA JOURNAL* (2024). Her second monograph, *Hydrocommoning: Water, Art, and Collective Action in Latin America*, is forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press in Spring 2027. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0472-9419>

³ Carolina Neu Samper holds a BA in Anthropology from Universidad de Los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia) and an MA in Participation, Power and Social Change from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (Brighton, UK). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4092-8235>

platform entre—ríos with river caretakers across Colombia’s critically polluted Bogotá River watershed. We present a methodology inspired by the scalar dimensions of levels of change frameworks to assess how two initiatives support river commoning: *Piquete del Río Bogotá* (2023), a communal meal gathering river caretakers around food from the watershed, and *Cómo cuidar un río* (2023-2024), the co-creation and dissemination of a publication mapping the watershed. Drawing on participant feedback from interviews and focal group discussions across different process stages, we analyse how our initiatives fostered river enlivening and commoning actions around a river declared “dead.” We identify scales of commoning from participant consultation and pinpoint how our project methodologies support people’s identification as *riberños* (river dwellers) through knowledge exchange, collaborative co-creation, facilitating a multi-actor river network for dialogue, commons thinking, and collective action. The article offers insights for researchers and practitioners pursuing similar approaches in degraded rivers across Latin America and beyond, and it identifies key challenges in sustaining such work.

Keywords: river commoning; hydrocommoning; collaborative research; curatorial methodologies; care practices; Bogotá River.

Introduction

Over the past decade, an emergent body of scholarship and practice has plotted a global map of conceptual frameworks and contextual settings where communities are working to enliven human-river relations in places where processes of industrialization, extractivism, and urbanization have harmed or severed coexistence. Political ecologists have produced generative concepts such as the “hydrosocial cycle” (Linton and Budds, 2014), “hydrosocial territories” (Boelens et al., 2016), “river commons” and “riverhood” (Boelens et al., 2023), and “hydrocitizenship” (Evans, 2019; Geary et al., 2019) to identify patterns of water stress and inequity and to propose critical vocabularies to ask what conditions enable “hydrosolidarities” (Boelens et al., 2025a; Loopmans & Hoogesteger, 2024) to manifest as praxis, both between people and rivers in specific locations, and between translocal network of allied causes. Alongside rising research on water justice movements, alliances between academic and activist groups have emerged to produce collaborative spaces to foster exchange and to produce and disseminate co-created knowledge.

This dovetailing of water scholarship and activism has brought a proliferation of water-enlivening initiatives that involve multi-actor and multi-level dialogue and action. Scholars conceptualize such spaces as “river co-learning arenas” (RCAs), which take the form of “debate platforms, sites of struggle and disruptive action, purposeful assemblies, and/or deliberate dialogical processes” that enable researchers, grassroots river initiatives, and cultural practitioners to engage in

“collaboration, co-creation and co-learning” to co-produce knowledge oriented to river regeneration and ecosocial justice (de Souza et al., 2025a, p. 73). Participatory methods emphasise experimental pedagogies and creative processes, which include river expeditions on foot or water; citizen science; critical cartography; immersive experiencing; collaborative making and storytelling. Moreover, the recurrent production and dissemination of films, artworks, publications, and exhibitions in these processes demonstrates the importance of biocultural efforts and ecologically engaged “art for the hydrocommons” in water care and defence work (Blackmore & Ponce de León, 2024a, 2024b; Blackmore, 2025). The importance of biocultural water work tracks with a parallel phenomenon in environmentally engaged artistic practice, notably through examples of long-term arts-led research platforms that do site-specific work to bridge academic, artistic, political, community, and scientific actors, and that develop public engagement programs to address environmental challenges and stimulate change in ecosocial relations (Blackmore, 2022b).

Such intersections of action research, creative praxis, and public engagement bridges engaged social sciences scholarship and environmental humanities practice, making inter- and transdisciplinary methods and public engagement core values in these processes (Ludwig and El-Hani, 2025; Merçon, 2021). Amid this explosion of water-enlivening initiatives and collaborative research, a gap in knowledge persists around the empirical capacities of specific projects and methodologies to bring about change. Existing publications (e.g. Blackmore & Domínguez Londoño, 2021; Fowkes and Fowkes, 2015; Lemos, 2024) tend to prioritize documentation of ephemeral site-specific processes and foreground accounts of the rationale for their staging and contributions by participants. By contrast, an evaluative turn in recent scholarship is beginning to assess transdisciplinary and participatory methodologies, asking how site-specific learning fosters “fluvial networks of creative resistance” (Underhill, 2025), how critical cartography activates ways of “seeing rivers otherwise” (de Souza et al., 2025b), how culinary curatorial projects can foster “hydrosocial metabolism” (Blackmore, 2025b), and how literary “hydronarratives” envision equitable water futures through environmental justice frameworks (Matthew, 2023). Such contributions are valuable but rarely offer methodologies for rigorous qualitative assessment of collaborative water work, likely due to the complexity of gauging perceptual and attitudinal change over time.

Ongoing critical water stresses make it ever more urgent and necessary to ask *if* and *how* research projects foster river enlivening and commoning. This article contributes to this research gap and evaluative turn by offering a theoretically grounded account of two curatorial processes in the RÍO BOGOTÁ project (2022-ongoing) and by designing and applying a methodology to assess what scales of change they have produced. RÍO BOGOTÁ is a collaborative project that promotes a culture of connection to and care for the critically polluted Bogotá River in Colombia,

developed by entre—ríos (a curatorial platform based at the University of Essex from 2019-2025, <https://entre-rios.net/>) in alliance with River Commons (a doctoral training project focused on action research at the University of Wageningen, 2020-2027, <https://www.movingrivers.org>). Taking this case as a “river co-learning arena” (RCA), below we ask: *How do collaborative and curatorial methodologies support river commoning practices among direct participants and wider publics? What scales of change do they generate in these diverse participant groups?* In so doing, we trace how curatorial encounters with the river amplify transformations at personal, relational, organizational, and social scales, forging the conditions for river commoning and caring that sustain it. Our assessment and analysis of change are based on theoretically informed accounts of project objectives and rationale, including assumptions, actions, claims, and methodologies. We draw on consultation with diverse actors involved in participatory research, co-learning, and dissemination to reflect on the changes experienced through the project. We analyse alignment and/or dissonance between project objectives and evaluation of reported changes. And, we consider broader limitations and affordances of RCAs, especially when they occur at the nexus of academic research and community action (de Souza et al., 2025a, p. 72).

Our discussion proceeds in four sections. First, we situate the conceptual framework of river commoning through political ecology and environmental humanities scholarship. Second, we introduce entre—ríos’ curatorial practice as “hydrocommoning” (Blackmore, forthcoming) to contextualize the RÍO BOGOTÁ project and two key initiatives: *Piquete del Río Bogotá* (Bogotá River Picnic, 2023), a communal gathering of river caretakers to share food grown in the watershed, and *Cómo cuidar un río* (How to care for a river, 2023), a watershed map cocreated with riverine communities and disseminated in public workshops. Third, we present our methodology of gathering participant feedback to assess curatorial approaches and discuss our findings across interconnected scales of change. The fourth section assesses if RÍO BOGOTÁ has cultivated a river commoning network and considers limitations of our project’s institutional framework within academia. Ultimately, the paper offers insights for researchers and practitioners implementing similar approaches in riverine contexts across Latin America and beyond, contributing to theoretical understandings of human-river relations and practical applications of collaborative research.

Enlivening Connections to Rivers

River Ontologies in Political Ecology and Action-Research

Contemporary debates on human-river relationships emerge alongside global patterns of harm, like pollution, privatization, groundwater depletion and damming, and the parallel growth of initiatives to protect, defend, restore, or reclaim rivers (Vos, 2024). This context is energizing critical revisions of river ontologies that

seek “alternative ways of being with and acting in socio-ecological riverine systems to reverse the trends of environmental degradation” (de Souza et al., 2025a, p. 59). Such is the extent and growth of awareness of river degradation that the question “is a river alive?” has become a mainstream concern (Macfarlane, 2025), fostering discussion around what rivers are and how humans relate to them. Recent approaches to “river ontological turns” (Boelens et al., 2024) build on the complexity of rivers as dynamic assemblages of material, legal, juridical, cultural, societal, and political forces (Cantor et al., 2020; Kinkaid, 2019). The conceptual framework of “riverhood” provides analytical lenses for inquiry into the diverse ways rivers are produced, defined, imagined, and experienced as socionatural, political-economic, and cultural-symbolic systems (Boelens et al., 2023, p. 1127-1128). This framework positions rivers as socionatural entities formed dynamically as nature, society, and technology mutually constitute each other (Latour, 2004; White, 2011; Bakker, 2012; Wantzen et al., 2016).

Within the “riverhood” framework, two sub-ontologies—“river-as-ecosociety” and “river-as-movement”—inform this article’s assessment of river enlivening and commoning methodologies. Conceiving rivers as eco-societies rejects the “modern water” paradigm (Linton, 2010) that figures rivers as mere flows of H₂O and foregrounds instead the complex socio-ecological entanglements that co-produce rivers across multiple scales (Bakker, 2012; Ulloa & Romero-Toledo, 2018; Acevedo, 2018). Understanding river basins, wetlands, streams, and hydrological cycles, as emerging through the interplay of hydrology, ecology, climate, geography, with cultures, institutions, technologies, and politics (de Jong et al., 2024; Yates et al., 2017; Krause & Strang, 2016; Wantzen et al., 2016), demonstrates that enlivening rivers requires integrated analytical and methodological frameworks capable of addressing both their material and cultural dimensions. Approaching “rivers-as-movement” recognizes them as catalytic forces that move, inspire, and mobilize people and actions toward river enlivening and commoning initiatives enacted through “radical collective practices of place and community making, wresting rivers away from influences that enclose, commodify or pollute” (Boelens et al., 2023, p. 1123).

Commoning and Caring in Practice

Scholarship on *commons* and *commoning* thinks through those alternative practices of place and community making with rivers in a theoretical framework where water and commons are not “things” or commodities, but relationships rooted in specific environmental histories and community struggles against dispossession (Roca-Servat et al., 2021; Ulloa, 2020; Oslender, 2002). River commons are “networked socio-ecological arrangements that embrace and mobilize the social and the natural – human and non-human – and practice river stewardship based on their

mutual interdependence on shared riverine livelihood interests, knowledge and values” (Boelens et al., 2023, p. 1132). *Commoning* names an active process involving different actors and relations shaped by values, practices and norms crafted by daily actions and collective processes beyond the hegemonic governance patterns of states, markets and elites (Castro et al., 2016; Suhardiman & Middleton, 2020). As commoning actions encompass “practices and struggles that resist riverine privatization pressures and aspire to de-commodify private property, rendering rivers non-alienable” (Boelens et al., 2023, p. 1132), they enact place- and community-making processes that constitute a radical alternative to commodification and its exclusive property relations or market-transferable goods (Firat, 2021). However, the fact that their “ideas, principles and practices are often sidelined from legal frameworks, governance debates, and policy innovation processes” signals an enduring challenge in their capacity to garner public dissemination and engagement (Boelens et al., 2023, p. 1127).

Approaching river commoning as a verb shifts the analytical focus onto the relational, situated interdependence of human and non-human actors as “river-as-ecosociety” and as a continuous “river-as-movement” and the affective attachments that sustain the disposition to care for rivers (Bresnihan, 2015, p. 96). Specific processes show how these conceptual frameworks emerge *from* action. Attachment and disposition to care for rivers underpins collectives’ strategic deployment of alternative river ontologies and practice of hydrosocial relations across multiple scalar dynamics. Here, care means the “manifold range of doings needed to create, hold together, and sustain life and continue its diverseness” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, 70). As such, care is transversal to the diversity of actions that affirm rivers as co-constitutive with humans, including legal representation of riparian communities in rivers recognized as subjects of rights (e.g. Cuerpo Colegiado de Guardianes del Atrato, following Colombian Sentence T622 of 2017); river valley interactions that promote systemic regional transitions (e.g. Un Río Cauca, Muchos Mundos, since 2018); watershed-specific activism (e.g. Un Río Sin Viaducto, 2025); counter-cartography that invigorate translocal coalitions for sharing river knowledge, narratives, and struggles (e.g. Travelling Rivers, see Boelens et al., 2025b); or coalitionary efforts (e.g. Ríos to Rivers, 2025) that network struggles across local and global frameworks. In these movements rivers are not merely as objects of protection but active agents that inspire collective action, generate alternative socioecological relationships, manifest in shared narratives and imaginaries, engage in solidarity actions at different scales and devise hybrid river defence strategies (e.g. Giraldo-Martínez et al., 2025; Boelens, et al., 2025b; Cuevas Parra & Arbeláez Trujillo, 2026).

Thinking and Making with Water in Creative Practice

Alongside political ecological perspectives, humanist inquiry and creative practice are vital conceptual and methodological avenues for enlivening hydrosocial connection. Environmental humanities scholarship that thinks “with” water (Chen, MacLeod & Neimanis, 2013; De Wolff, Faletti & López-Calvo, 2022) and feminist theorizations of the hydrocommons as a medium of more-than-human interdependence (Neimanis, 2016) raises the question of how the politics and ethics of watery relation plays out through embodied experience and cultural production. Water stories and storytelling (Harris, 2021) can change understandings and engagement with socionatures, while also interrogating power relations by asking “who is authorized to speak, whose stories are heard, as well as the ways that communities construct meaning of the world and our role in it” (Houston and Vasudevan, 2018). The perspective from which rivers are imagined, represented and “hydronarratives” are told can challenge dominant hydrosocial regimes and stimulate energy around river enlivening and commoning (Bailey-Charteris, 2024; Bieke and Sewald, 2024; Henry, 2023).

In Latin America, where our project is located, cultural production indexes “troubled waters” (Pettinaroli and Mutis, 2013) harmed by colonization, industrialization, and urbanization, but it also reimagines and enacts alternative hydrosocial relations and ethics of care as “art for the hydrocommons” (Blackmore, 2025). Examples abound but among the most well-known manifestations of “river-as-movement” (where it is rivers that catalyse creative actions) are works by Carolina Caycedo that critique the deleterious impacts of megadam construction and centre activist groups that defend rivers (Blackmore, 2020; Rudas Burgos, 2025; Saramago, 2025). Works by Indigenous artists from the Amazon that foreground lively waterworlds have achieved global circulation in recent years (Borea, 2020; *Listening to the Voices of Rivers*, 2025). River commoning also includes community-driven biocultural work, which bridges craft and activism in local contexts (e.g. *Río Simpson Tejido*) as well as weaving connections between different water ecologies through long-term situated and translocal processes (see, for example, Marambio 2024). Rather than pursuing “more accurate” maps or settled accounts of “what exists,” the *Travelling Rivers* initiative uses countermapping to co-discover, together with grassroots river communities, re-politicized notions of what a “river” means, bridging river initiatives across borders and engaging in knowledge co-creation toward “river commons” and alternative river futures (Boelens et al., 2025b, 11). Expanding the reach of stories, images, and cultural practices that enliven the hydrocommons as an ontology of mutual connection and interdependence through water requires practices of curating that constellate individual artistic practices with others across different contexts (Bailey-Charteris 2024, 24) and do site-specific work that can do river enlivening work in local settings.

Curating as Hydrocommoning

entre—ríos and the RÍO BOGOTÁ Project

The RÍO BOGOTÁ project is carried out through *entre—ríos* (between rivers, in Spanish) a curatorial platform active since 2019, founded by Lisa Blackmore at the University of Essex, UK.⁴ Through in-person and online collaborative arts-led research and public engagement projects, *entre—ríos*’ methodologies prioritize embodied attunement to water through field visits and artworks; conversations between art, science, and communities; relationships built on slow, embodied, and in situ exchanges; and digital channels for gathering, learning, and dissemination (Blackmore, forthcoming). In Latin America, *entre—ríos* contributes to network-building across different scales, through site watershed-specific curatorial projects (e.g. RÍO BOGOTÁ, 2023; *Porosibilidades*, 2023; *Carriço: gestar la vida*, 2024) and fostering regional connections (e.g. Blackmore and Ponce de León, *Hydrocommons Map*, 2024a) between initiatives engaged in art, pedagogy and care, whose methodologies include fieldwork, experimental and embodied education, transdisciplinary research, community organizing, and public engagement. *entre—ríos* reflects a rise of initiatives intersecting academia, artistic research, community organizations, and public programming, which include Anthropocene Curriculum’s Mississippi River Open School (2013-2022); Berlin’s Floating University (2018-ongoing); TB21’s Ocean Academy (2019-ongoing). It anticipated a now widespread curatorial turn to water, conceptualized variously as “tidalectic curating” (Hessler, 2020) and “meandering” (Lemos, 2024; Klaver, 2019), and thematically as a contemporary “hydrocene” that centres water to disrupt “the terrestrial dominance of the Anthropocene” (Bailey-Charteris 2024, 14).

entre—ríos advances an agenda of curating as a mode of “hydrocommoning” (Blackmore, forthcoming) that differs from the abovementioned initiatives by allying directly with water care and defence initiatives. With funding from the University of Essex and in alliance with River Commons, *entre—ríos*’ RÍO BOGOTÁ project began in 2022, in the Bogotá River watershed

⁴ *entre—ríos*’ first, eponymous project in 2019 was curated by Lisa Blackmore and María Fernanda Domínguez Londoño. It took place in Bucaramanga, Santander, Colombia, with support from the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), a fund created to foster collaborative research toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with support from Producciones del Espacio, Bucaramanga, El Bodeguero del Campo, and faculty and students at the Universidad Industrial de Santander. The GCRF fund at the University of Essex also provided support for subsequent iterations and projects, along with other internal funds: the Arts & Humanities Impact Fund; Centre for Policy and Policy Engagement; Economic and Social Research Council; QR Impact Fund; CPPE Policy Impact Fund. See: Blackmore & Domínguez Londoño, *entre—ríos: del páramo a la represa*.

in Colombia, one of the world's most polluted rivers. Along its 380-kilometre course from protected highland *páramos*, via rural towns and the capital city, to the Magdalena River, the Bogotá River becomes so contaminated with domestic and industrial waste that it is rendered anaerobic (Santos & Camacho, 2010; Rodríguez et al., 2013). Its present malaise exacerbates centuries of degradation that have separated people from the river. The Spanish invasion in the 1530s began this process by killing and displacing Indigenous Mhuysca peoples who had created amphibious ways of occupying the floodplains (Rodríguez Gallo, 2019). Modern industrialization imposed drainage and hydraulic works (Ramírez Espinosa, 2021), while erratic urbanization led to widespread pollution. Despite citizen mobilization in the 1990s that led to a court ruling (Concejo de Estado, 28 de marzo del 2014) mandating the river's immediate remediation, the river remains critically contaminated and underserved by water treatment infrastructure. Today, the watershed is shaped by multiple forms of enclosure and fragmentation, from the legal and physical delimitations of the *páramo* highlands, via the agricultural frontiers of intensive potato production, dairy farming, and tanneries, through to encroaching urbanization, and water and land grabbing.

Critical pollution across 160 kilometres of the river, where it flows anaerobically, without oxygen, has led it be declared “dead”. Recurring zero-oxygen readings have generated dominant narratives across actors, raising the question of who names the river “dead” and why. The national press (tracked from 1994 to 2024) reiterates, almost as a static value, a dramatic death plot: the river “dies,” the city “kills” it, becoming a “liquid corpse,” an “irretrievable sewer,” nearly incapable of revival. Environmental authorities draw on the same diagnosis to justify decontamination mega-infrastructure and narrate institutional progress, as the environmental authority describes the stretch facing the Salitre water treatment plant as going “from an irretrievable sewer to a navigable river” (Semana, November 22, 2016). Yet what the river means remains at the centre: civil-society foundations restoring it counter that “the death persists because the response is engineering-based, not ecological, social, or environmental” (La Silla Vacía, September 20, 2023).

While pollution is admittedly critical, we cannot generalize the river's death from one stretch, since, as civil engineer and professor Luis A. Camacho affirms, “the river, today, here and now, is made up of waters from different sources across the whole watershed”; water quality is dynamic, as “measurements are only a snapshot of a single moment” (entre-rios.net/pulsos/). This is what he calls the river's pulses: a mountain river is a lotic system—from the Latin *lotus*, the past participle of *lavare*, “to wash”—transforming and flowing. Without diluting polluting actors' responsibility (absent treatment plants, toxic industrial waste, corruption, urban expansion), rigorous research must identify them while revealing life sustained through care across the watershed by, as we propose, mapping and connecting river care and

enlivening practices. Repeating that the river is dead forecloses the possibility of imagining it otherwise.

RÍO BOGOTÁ contests the dominant narrative and imaginary that frame this polluted watershed as “dead” by supporting river enlivening and commoning to resignify the river as a commons where people feel like *ribereños*—river dwellers identified with and attached to the watershed. This objective translates to collaborative and curatorial methodologies that seek to connect river caregiving initiatives and cultivate a felt and shared sense of being *ribereño* (a river dweller) and to scale up this identification by engaging other neighbours of the watershed with the river.

Methodologically, the RÍO BOGOTÁ project draws on participatory research traditions (Piazzini Suárez & Montoya Arango, 2022; Roca-Servat et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012; Oslender, 2002, 2021; Fals Borda, 1987) that prioritize co-creation and the transformation of power dynamics through horizontal dialogue and reflection between participants. This approach allows to create communities of inquiry dedicated, for example, to nurture river care practices, where research and action converge to bring about change at personal, relational—involving both human and non-human actors—and societal level (Bivens, 2014). The project is further shaped by research-creation processes as transdisciplinary praxis (Truman, 2021); multi-actor collaboration to enrich story gathering and telling (Harris, 2021; Schneider-Mayerson, 2023); and gatherings for river knowledge exchange and ongoing reflexivity (de Souza et al., 2025a). Together, these reflections inform the project core objectives and values:

1. Co-creating knowledge with riverine communities;
2. Fostering embodied, affective, and political ties with the river;
3. Centring historically, ecologically, and symbolically resonant sites that invite physical and symbolic “returns” to the river;
4. Connecting Indigenous and vernacular knowledge, scientific disciplines, and artistic practices;
5. Fostering network-building among diverse actors throughout the watershed.

In the RÍO BOGOTÁ project, these objectives and values translate into processes and outcomes that have included river walks and visits to collectively document community initiatives; communal meals to gather grassroots actors; water monitoring workshops bridging art-science-community; the creation of publications, documentary films, and a digital platform documenting the project; a collective timeline of riverine life; exhibitions; and workshops to disseminate publications (<https://entre-rios.net/rio-bogota/>).

Mapping and Connecting River Care Initiatives

Drawing on the four co-curators’ research, curatorial practice, and networks in the watershed, RÍO BOGOTÁ began with a research trip to map citizen initiatives across six locations from the river’s source to its most critically polluted point at Tequendama Falls.⁵ Working in the shadow of large-scale sanitation and legal infrastructures, these citizen initiatives are a life support network for the watershed practicing care, understood as an affective state, ethical obligation and practical labour that entails “everyday practical doings that engage with the inescapable troubles of interdependent existences” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, p. 197) to interweave body, self, environment in “a complex, life sustaining web” (Tronto, 1993). The river enlivening initiatives we identified to collaborate on RÍO BOGOTÁ are not an exhaustive representation of river care in the watershed. Those selected are distinct in scale and context, and their participants vary both in terms of age, socioeconomic position, and posture vis à vis official policies (Table 1). Their efforts operate as daily care practices in specific territorial contexts, with geographical scales and organizational forms defined according to each location and capacity. Their locations span farmlands close to the headwaters; rural towns in the flat river valley; the wetland areas in Bogotá itself; rural towns located after the city as the river becomes a mountain river again; and the Tequendama Falls, a major hydrogeological formation that marks the start of the lower basin.

LOCATIONS	RIVER CARE INITIATIVE	ORGANIZATION/ PARTICIPANTS	RIVER ENLIVENING PRACTICES
VILLAPINZÓN (upper basin: headwaters)	Refugio de Guacheneque	Family-run community nature tourism project, spanning three generations of the Pedraza family.	Environmental education about the role of the páramo in the hydrosocial cycle; familiar orchard cultivation supplying traditional cuisine and recipes for visitors.

⁵ Regarding positionality and the use of the first-person plural, the article’s first two authors are members of the entre—ríos collective and co-curators of the RÍO BOGOTÁ project, alongside two other curators; the third author joined during the analytical and writing stages. Throughout, “we” primarily refers to the curatorial team. Where the analysis draws on collective reflection that extends beyond this team—encompassing the third author and consultant participants—we signal this expanded “we” explicitly, reflecting the relational nature of knowledge production central to our approach.

	La Merced Community Aqueduct	Peasant-founded community aqueduct (1980) currently presided over by one of its founders; volunteer committee for communal water management.	Handmade infrastructure distributing Bogotá River water through 150+ access points connecting households to the mountain watershed.
SUESCA (upper basin: riverine villages and micro-basins)	Alliance between Fundación El Silbido de la Montaña (FESM); Manos a la Cuenca Project; Asociación Solidaria de Recicladores Unidos por Cundinamarca (Asoruc)	Multi-actor alliance linking rural peasant communities, an academic engagement project, local NGOs, schools, and waste/recycling management.	Sowing practices and agroecological restoration along micro-basins; soil recovery; school engagement; community aqueduct networks for territorial governance.
	Fundación Al Verde Vivo	NGO (est. 1994) doing ecological restoration in partnership with the private sector, working within carbon offsetting schemes and restoration legal frameworks.	Plant nurseries of native species for restoration; riparian plantings and forest restoration along the river corridor.
SESQUILÉ (upper basin)	Cabildo Indígena Mhuysqa de Sesquilé	Multi-generational Indigenous <i>cabildo</i> (council) (est. 1999, legally-recognized <i>resguardo</i> (reserve) since 2023).	Autonomous education and intergenerational knowledge transmission; spiritual practices and ceremonial offerings; traditional medicine; cultivating ancestral crops in organic gardens rooted in Mhuysqa water-land cosmology.
	Reserva Tomsatyba	Small-scale, individually-run agroforestry reserve collaborating closely with the Cabildo.	Water and forest safeguarding through regenerative agriculture; audiovisual training to territorial memory transmission.
BOGOTÁ WETLANDS (middle basin: urban wetlands)	Alliance between: Red Conejera; Thomas van der Hammen Reserve defence; local schools; Cabildo Mhuysqa de Suba	Multi-actor network founded in 1993 for citizen mobilization; initiated the Red de Humedales de la Sabana de Bogotá.	Wetland micro-basin protection; environmental education evoking Mhuysqa water-land relations; ecological corridor restoration linking Cerros Orientales to the river valley.

	LabSit (Laboratorios Sociales de Innovación para las Transiciones)	Research program in alliance with the National University of Colombia at Humedal Jaboque.	Knowledge dialogues platform bridging science, technology, and art; engagement with Mhuysqa landscape memory (ditches, raised fields); wetland defence as spaces of water recovery.
EL CHARQUITO (middle basin: rural Soacha)	EPAP (Escuela de Pensamiento Ambiental y de la Paz Humedal El Charquito)	Grassroots and community-led environmental education network (est. 2018), mainly led by a multi-generational group of women.	Wetland restoration; communitarian orchard (<i>chagra madre</i>) maintenance; native tree planting; bird watching; food memories and knowledge transmission.
TEQUENDAMA FALLS (boundary middle-lower basin)	Casa Museo Salto del Tequendama	Museum and educational platform founded and run by two co-directors (acquired 2011); National Cultural Heritage Site declaration (2018); Natural Heritage Site recognition for Salto del Tequendama (2019).	River heritage valorisation; sensitizing communities and visitors to the Bogotá River and Tequendama Falls; advocacy for the river's legal subject recognition in local communities and beyond.
	Fundación Ecológica Granja El Porvenir	Foundation (est. 2007) created by the directors of the Casa Museo Salto del Tequendama on land under restoration since 1994.	Cloud forest restoration and conservation; agroecological and silvopasture practices.

Table 1. Bogotá river enlivening initiatives mapped in the RÍO BOGOTÁ project and featured in the publication *Cómo cuidar un río* (2023).

Commoning through Commensality, Mapping, and Listening

This article focuses on assessing commoning methodologies through two curatorial projects, a communal meal called *Piquete del Río Bogotá* (2023) and a publication-exhibition entitled *Cómo cuidar un río* (2023-2024), selected for two key reasons: 1. Both are major, emblematic initiatives that have contributed to imagining, building, and strengthening a river network, a core objective of the RÍO BOGOTÁ project. 2. They enable iterative assessment of methodologies across multiple participant interactions, allowing us to analyse change not as a single methodology or moment but as an embedded reflexive practice that evolves alongside the project

itself, best captured through unfolding, qualitative accounts rather than quantitative metrics.

Communal Meal: Piquete del Río Bogotá (2023). After our first research trip to meet the initiatives in Table 1, we (the four co-curators) devised a gathering to symbolize their shared vocation of care, seed potential affinities and exchanges, and generate an encounter that could be documented and circulated to wider publics. Having recognized food as a constant presence throughout the upper and middle basin—integral to tending to land, caring for water, and nurturing community—we envisioned a communal meal staged on the terrace of the museum facing Tequendama Falls, with the waterfall as backdrop to a banqueting table.

The *Piquete del Río Bogotá* drew inspiration from early twentieth-century traditions of riverside picnics (*piquetes*) where people feasted on local produce along the Bogotá River’s banks. Yet this meal was paradoxical. Tequendama Falls is the most visually sublime and the most polluted point on the river, so our curatorial wager was that this dissonance would spark conversations and capture public attention. We invited anthropologist Cristina Consuegra and artist Carlos Alfonso to join the collaborative research, design, and prepare the menu, drawing on their approach to food as a medium of conscious, “care-full” metabolic relation that creates “mutual worlds” inside and beyond us (Consuegra & Alfonso, 2020). By collaborating with communities at our six focal points, visiting family and community gardens, listening to stories and recipes transmitted through generations, they ensured the menu emerged from direct engagement rather than extraction, incorporating ingredients that sustain river ecosystems and communities. As part of our action research methodology, this process situated participants as protagonists in the making of a culinary journey along the watershed in a communal, metabolic framework: from planting, to cooking, to eating together (Blackmore, 2024).

On April 23, 2023, sixteen river guardians gathered at Casa Museo del Tequendama. After Mhuysca elder Abuela Blanca Nieves’s offering (*pagamento*) to animal and river kin, the meal began with a ritual where each diner wet their hands with a bowl of water collected near the river’s source. Served on raw terracotta dishes, made with clay from the Magdalena River, each dish was a waymarker—the *river broth* evoked traditional riverside soup (*sancocho*), banana-leaf tamales honoured traditional *piquete* food, and fermented *chicha* and *masato* brought Mhuysca ancestral practices to the table (figs 1-2). Interviews with participants and the meal were filmed with full consent and subsequently edited by the curatorial team into three video documentaries hosted on entre-rios.net/rio-bogota.





Figures 1-2. *Piquete del Río Bogotá*, 23 April 2023. Photographs: Gabriela Molano, courtesy entre—ríos.

Publication and Workshops: Cómo cuidar un río (2023-2024). After the *Piquete*, with Consuegra and Alfonso, we (the four co-curators) initiated collaborative research to create a publication to disseminate river care practices across the six locations. This culminated in *Cómo cuidar un río* (How to Care for a River, 2023), a print and digital publication comprising six folded, two-sided posters (figs 3-4), each telling stories of river actors, initiatives, and river dynamics at a specific location on one side, with hand-drawn illustrations of the socioecosystem on the other. Together, they can be read as a folding book or assembled and displayed as a wall-mounted map. In our editorial emphasis on biocultural memory, heritage, life’s abundance, and care practices, we used mapping and storytelling as vehicles to convey riverhood and river commoning actions from distinct perspectives and sites that cantered social and environmental leadership.

SEMBRAR EL RÍO

EDUCADOS POR EL RÍO

La Escuela de Pensamiento Ambiental y de Paz Humedal El Charquito (EPAP) es una organización comunitaria que surge en el 2018 en la vereda El Charquito, en la parte rural de Soacha.

La necesidad de los charquinos de ampliar sus conocimientos en educación ambiental le da origen a la EPAP. Por años, la comunidad ignoró la existencia del humedal El Charquito y lo utilizó como lavadero, además de que su nacimiento fue la principal fuente de agua de la que se abastecieron las familias de la vereda antes de la construcción del acueducto. **Los Lavaderos** fue el nombre local de este cuerpo de agua hasta que la comunidad descubrió que se trataba de un humedal. Este hallazgo y el llamado a cuidar el medio ambiente y preservar la vida terminó por impulsar la creación de la Escuela y consolidar sus líneas de trabajo.

Restaurar y conservar el humedal, cuyas aguas desembocan en el río Bogotá, es uno de los proyectos centrales de la EPAP. Al hacerlo, esta red de cuidadores pone en evidencia que el río es su cuenca y que su regeneración es relacional y sistémica. La práctica cotidiana de resistir, por medio de diferentes acciones de cuidado, para que haya agua limpia y comida en el territorio, es una forma de garantizar que los haya para todas las formas de vida que cohabitan en él: **cuerpos ave, cuerpos humano, cuerpos río.**

CON EL TIEMPO VOLVERÁ EL AGUA

“La chagra es un organismo vivo, por eso la importancia de sembrar con amor y de pensar las plantas como una comunidad, así como lo es la EPAP”.

De los abuelos aprendieron a sembrar. Gracias a ellos, los integrantes de la EPAP saben que al tocar la tierra, sus manos contribuyen a que la vida en latencia contenida en una semilla germine y se convierta en raíz, tallo, hoja, flor y fruto, para regresar de nuevo a su expresión original, la de la semilla. De los abuelos también comprendieron que la vida es un pulso rítmico y que lo que llamamos muerte no es sino el umbral de una transformación.

Para la EPAP, sembrar la tierra es una forma de sembrar el río. Unidos, sus integrantes han sembrado el río por medio de plantar árboles nativos y comida, de restituir la abundancia en el territorio y de encontrar en el gesto de los abuelos su arraigo a este. Sembrar el río es igualmente la posibilidad de recuperar la memoria de sus aguas y de cultivar su futuro. Los abuelos tomaron agua del río, nadaron y pescaron en él. Esos abuelos también somos nosotros.

PULSOS DEL RÍO

“Uno ve que el agua sigue fluyendo, se ven cangrejos al lado del río, la vida se mantiene”.

Al referirse al río Bogotá, los habitantes de El Charquito coinciden en afirmar que este está vivo. Al mismo tiempo, todos son testigos del estado crítico de contaminación de sus aguas, el cual ha transformado radicalmente la relación que los charquinos tienen con él. Como cuentan los miembros de la EPAP, los vecinos recuerdan que cuando empezó a bajar espuma del río, tuvieron que buscar otras fuentes de agua. La contaminación no solo ha desplazado la vida acuática, sino el vínculo material y afectivo que la gente ha establecido con el río.

A la contaminación se suman los impactos que ya había traído la construcción de la hidroeléctrica El Charquito –emblemática por ser la primera del país– a finales del siglo XIX, pues con esta se redujo el caudal de las principales fuentes hídricas de la vereda. La abundancia de agua que tuvo este territorio y que ahora está ausente ha hecho que la comunidad se organice y trabaje unida por el río.

En El Charquito, el río Bogotá vuelve a comportarse como un río de montaña. Después de pasar por Bogotá y encontrarse con las compuertas de Alicachín, donde su pulso se detiene, sus aguas bajan hacia la vereda y se lavan gracias a la velocidad y turbulencia que adquieren con la caída. El río revive, pero no deja de estar contaminado. Se oxigena su atmósfera subacuática, nuevamente respira, pero la lluvia ácida de río sigue oxidando los alambres de púas y los marcos de las ventanas. Los cantos rodados de su cauce guardarán por cientos de años la memoria de este daño.

entre — ríos

Figure 4. “Sowing the river. Over time, water will return.” El Charquito poster in *Cómo cuidar un río* (entre-ríos, 2023).



Figure 3. “The Bogotá jumps. The time of the forest”, Tequendama Falls poster in *Cómo cuidar un río* (entre—ríos, 2023).

The methodology for co-creating the publication recognized and highlighted the value of territorial care work. This entailed returning to key sites between July and September 2023 to conduct in-depth interviews, informal conversations, river walks, and visits to community gardens. This collaborative data collection comprised personal fieldnotes, photographic and audiovisual recordings, group discussions, collection of traditional recipes, and archival research. This multi-modal approach involved transcribing and systematizing this material, selecting key information and collective memories for synthesis into short texts that amplified values motivating care work while respecting positional and territorial heterogeneity. Illustrations made visible both the physical watershed and its ecosocial networks, integrating ancestral knowledge about ecosystems with daily river enlivening practices. We distributed two thirds of the thousand printed copies to community river guardians who participated in its making and the remaining copies via universities, schools, and public libraries, gaining academic visibility at institutions across Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the United States.

From July-September 2024, the first author designed and delivered a cycle of workshops with Bibliored (Bogotá's public library network) around the publication, entitled *Escuchar al río* (Listening to the river), across five libraries located near the river and urban wetlands. Each workshop engaged diverse audiences, and together with an invited guest from the extended entre-ríos network who shared their collective's work to chart the river's course from its headwaters through the city. The workshops aimed to present and listen to diverse voices, memories, geographies, and care practices around the Bogotá River to foster sharing of diverse perspectives and intergenerational dialogue about river-community relationships and environmental awareness. Through them, children, senior citizens, students, library staff, and community users engaged in synesthetic exploration through listening, vocal work, creative writing, drawing and collective composition⁶ to transform the sounds of the river's journey into visual and textual narratives (Giraldo-Martínez et al. 2026). These writings formed the basis for a collective composition capturing diverse river stories, gradually enriched with texts from all five libraries.⁷

⁶ Inspired by the "Chorus of Singing Rivers" (see more: www.chorusofsingingrivers.org), in the *Escuchar al río* workshops we addressed a choral listening methodology "that attends to the polyphonic voices (human and more-than-human) that constitute riverine worlds, while remaining attuned to the cacophony of socio-ecological relations, and the resonances of solidarity" (Cuevas et al. 2024; forthcoming).

⁷ For disseminating the workshop outcomes, we created a creative score weaving 57 creative writing exercises from participants titled *Río polifónico: Partitura colectiva para leer en voz alta* (Polyphonic River: A Performative Reading of the Bogotá River) (Giraldo-Martínez et al. 2026).

Assessing Curatorial Methodologies for River Commoning

Continuous Reflexivity and Scales of Change

Sustained individual and collective reflexivity across project stages is essential to understanding how methodologies support river commoning. Static “anticipatory reflexivity” proves insufficient; instead, “continuous” or “relational” reflexivity is necessary because positionalities and subjectivities shift through fluid interactions and “through multiple interplays and exposure to alternative perspectives, dissonance, disorienting dilemmas, and questioning what is normal” (de Souza et al., 2025a, p. 70). This paper therefore grounds reflection and assessment of the RÍO BOGOTÁ project as a continual, relational process (Table 2). We (the co-curators of RÍO BOGOTÁ) built participant feedback into the *Piquete* and engaged in continuous reflection during the project’s iterative process to inform decision making at each stage. We (the authors of this paper) designed and implemented a methodology inspired by Theory of Change frameworks to assess how the *Piquete* and *Cómo cuidar un río* support river commoning among participants by tracing changes at different phases of these methodologies, and across different scales. We (the coauthors) also transcribed, systematized, and analysed the sources.

YEAR	PROJECT ACTIVITY	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE / VALUE	SOURCES
2023	<i>Piquete del Río Bogotá</i>	Culinary gathering fostering riverine community connections	Assess personal, relational and affective dimensions of commoning through food.	16 participants’ written testimonies gathered during the meal, responding to: “What did you feel when meeting others dedicated to river care?”; “What reflections did eating the Bogotá River bring?”
2023 - 2024	Co-creating and workshoping <i>Cómo cuidar un río</i>	Collaborative editorial process and library-based community workshops	Reflect on pedagogical methodologies and potential to transform collective and social perceptions of the river.	19 testimonies from the participants addressing whether workshops changed participants’ river perceptions and how Transcription of 57 creative writing exercises made by the participants.
2025	Individual in-depth interviews	Consultancy led by River Commons project and GX	Identify perceived changes at personal, relational, collective, and social levels	Six semi-structured in-depth interviews from participants from: Villapinzón (networking);

and focus group	Samper Arquitectos	through <i>Sistematización de experiencias</i> (Jara, 2018) ⁸ and levels of change frameworks ⁹	Suesca (community-based network); Villapinzón and Suesca (activism; public-private alliances); Conejera Wetland, Bogotá (legal activism); Jaboque Wetland, Bogotá (academic alliances); El Charquito (community-based organization).
		Focus group using curated interview quotes; reflection on participants' perceptions of river network (highlighting learnings, successes, and gaps).	One focus group with 11 key participants: interviewed plus participants from Salto del Tequendama (long-term river defenders; forest restoration); cocurators of RÍO BOGOTÁ, and one member of a headwaters community aqueduct.
		Group reflection exercise to envision collective river actions and reflective practice.	One collective writing exercise about shared ground on river commoning.

Table 2. Curatorial, editorial, dissemination activities, consultation processes, and sources used in assessment of project methodologies.

The methodology to gather participant feedback through written reflections, semi-structured interviews, and focus group activities, is inspired by “levels of change,” a method of mapping the multiscalar dimensions of experienced transformations in action-research and participatory processes to ascertain the most significant changes across personal, relational, collective or organisational, and social levels (Davies & Dart 2005). This approach moves beyond quantitative metrics (e.g. attendance

⁸ *Sistematización de experiencias* (systematization of experience) is a method developed in Latin America by Oscar Jara as a collective process to interpret lived practices, identifying meanings, contradictions, and learnings (Jara, 2018), rather than just a tool to organize information. This method emphasises experiential knowledge and frame monitoring as a reflective and dialogical practice.

⁹ These interconnected scales of change draw on Theory of Change thinking (Hivos, 2015), the Most Significant Change (Davies & Dart, 2005), and the levels of change (Bivens, 2014) frameworks which inspired and informed the design of research instruments for the consultancy.

figures, total participants, or social media engagement) to emphasise the experiential dimensions of encounter: what is sparked when people with different viewpoints come together around a shared river, and what changes emerge from those exchanges. Following de Souza et al. (2025a), this framework “differs from conventional expectations of innovation processes, where people typically strive to maintain momentum and explore ways to scale up” (p. 73), prioritizing instead the quality and depth of engagement. By eliciting personal, relational, collective/organizational, and social changes, this methodology centres participants’ own assessments of meaningful transformation by documenting and analysing which changes were significant, why, and how they related to specific curatorial methodologies. Our assumption is that river commoning is not a pre-existing fact, but a fabric of social structures and processes woven from patterns of thinking, learning, and acting together toward shared goals (Bollier & Helfrich, 2015, p. 2) and constantly shaped through self-reflection, dialogues between actors, and collective exchange of insights. Hence, mapping changes across different scales of perceived change affords a framework to gauge commoning as an individual, relational, collective, and watershed-wide process. Mapping changes at different scales allowed us to identify and analyse how RÍO BOGOTÁ’s collaborative research and curatorial work can ignite and support river commoning practices among participants, as well as blind spots in the process.

Identifying and Understanding Change

In what follows, we draw on the analysed testimonies to pinpoint how participation in RÍO BOGOTÁ’S curatorial and collaborative methodologies of communal eating, mapping, and listening, foster commoning processes across interconnected scales and what specific experiences led these changes to occur. The **personal** scale revealed transformations in self-understanding and individual riverine identity; the **relational** scale encompassed transformations in how participants connect with each other, their communities, and the river itself; the **collective or organizational** scale highlighted transformations in the practices, capacities, and internal dynamics of collectives; and the **social** scale referred to changes that reshape collective narratives, public perceptions, and the potential for river networks.

Personal Scale

Testimonies of commoning at this scale highlighted participation in the *Piquete* as an experience that anchored *ribereno* identity in river memories and vernacular food traditions, as well as the embodied experience of eating watershed-grown foods. Menu co-creation cantered collective listening to translate territorial stories and memories into shared culinary experiences. Participants identified in this collaborative process a form of recognition that was not just symbolic, but connected

foods cultivated and harvested in family and community gardens with recipes transmitted through generations, recognizing them as valuable vessels for stories of riverine life that could be shared with others. For Claudia, who runs a family-based community nature tourism project in Villapinzón, the turning point came when the research team first “went to our family orchard and began thinking about the menu.” (Interview, June 2025). “From that point on, we felt very involved in the process,” she recalls. For her father “it was very important that the ‘peas in pods’ [a childhood memory of the watershed] were part of the menu. They listened to him.” This individual recognition laid foundations for community: “from that moment he felt part of a community that is weaving together ... where we all contribute.”

Through menu co-creation, other participants noted personal shifts toward previously undervalued riverside foods. For Paula, who belongs to a grassroots environmental education network and wetland restoration in El Charquito, experience with spaghetti squash exemplifies this transformation: “the *Piquete* was very exciting because personally it was a reconciliation with squash.” (Interview, June 2025). She explains how squash abundance in El Charquito had been taken for granted, recalling childhood memories of her grandmother’s frequent preparations that she had disliked. The process allowed her to “reconcile with the food and see it from another perspective,” prompting deeper reflection on foodways and environmental change, where the process moved her to “think about the river in my family’s recipes, to consider what we eat in El Charquito (one of the most polluted parts of the river), why we eat what we eat.” Contrasting past and present diets, she observed how “we used to have a fish-based diet but no longer do due to contamination.” This personal dimension reveals how collective eating can activate processes of memory and territorial identity operating at intimate and familial scales.

Self-identification as *ribereño* emerged as a further significant personal transformation. While this awareness was first ignited during the *Piquete*, interviews two years on showed it to be among the most recurrent changes, sustained and deepened by participants’ ongoing involvement in the broader project. Sabina, active in defending the Thomas van der Hammen Nature Reserve and collaborator of the Red Conejera, reflected on how her own self-recognition emerged in its wake: “In Bogotá, we don’t feel like *ribereños*, even though we are. We have the river so hidden because we put up a wall so we wouldn’t see it. So this process becomes a very compelling invitation to think about the river. The river is the territory. And the river’s territory is bigger than just the sewage water that passes through cement, or like ‘that contaminated river over there far away,’ as if we weren’t part of it. But it’s our river!” (Interview, June 2025).

Other participants concurred that “feeling like *ribereñas* is something we’ve been working on *en el caminar*”—literally meaning “in the walking” (Interview, June 2025), a phrase that frames this self-recognition as an ongoing journey rather than the effect

of a precise moment or specific methodology. This “walking” is both metaphor and practice: feeling like a *ribereño* means experiencing oneself in relationships of interdependence with other river dwellers and the river itself. This recognition thus operates across two relational scales at once; one’s own riverine identity and the collective processes and actions of care that strengthen territorial bonds. This dual dimension reflects on how individual transformation and collective action are inextricably linked in the construction of riverine consciousness.

Relational scale

In the RÍO BOGOTÁ project, relational changes emerged from methodologies that prioritized gatherings, encounters, co-creation, and mutual recognition. Testimonies traced this shift from the personal scale of recognition of being a *ribereño* scaled up from self-understanding to mutual validation, translating into river relational understandings and interactions across the watershed that might sustain expanded scales of commoning.

By gathering river guardians, the *Piquete* made participants’ often-invisible territorial care work visible to others engaged in similar practices. Paula identified “a change in our vision of ourselves,” noting “you don’t realize the impact of what you do, which is unique... you normalize it and don’t realize it’s something extraordinary” (Interview 6, June, 2025). This recognition through and from others operates across personal and relational registers simultaneously; participants saw their care work reflected and amplified by similarly engaged river defenders. The affective dimension Paula emphasized shows this is not merely cognitive but felt validation, sustaining commitment to river care through concrete actions over time.

Commensality between river caretakers at the *Piquete* created the material and affective conditions for this mutual validation. As Sabina reflected, “when we sit down and gather... There’s a beautiful potential, or rather a force of the methodology—the joy sharing food generates meaningful connections.” (Interview, June 2025) She noted, “it’s not easy to get people to connect. So there has to be something shared—and food proved particularly powerful.” Sharing food in a ceremonial setting thus turned abstract networks into embodied, metabolic and affective relations (Blackmore, 2025a).

Interviewees also shared how RÍO BOGOTÁ’s gathering methodologies foster mutual recognition across geographical and intergenerational scales. Leyla, member of a social and environmental foundation in Suesca, noted that while each person constantly carries out many local actions, entre—ríos’ collaborative mapping (fig 5) provides “a vision of not being isolated, but integrated into broader processes, and that gives encouragement. That generates not only natural bridges with others but also motivates you—we’re not thinking alone, we’re not outside a common framework, but we can work together” (Interview, June 2025). This sense of

belonging to a larger watershed movement demonstrates river-as-movement as a catalytic force, where the river becomes the focal point through which diverse actors coproduce knowledge, bridge contexts, and mobilize collective recognition beyond individual territories (de Souza et al., 2025a).

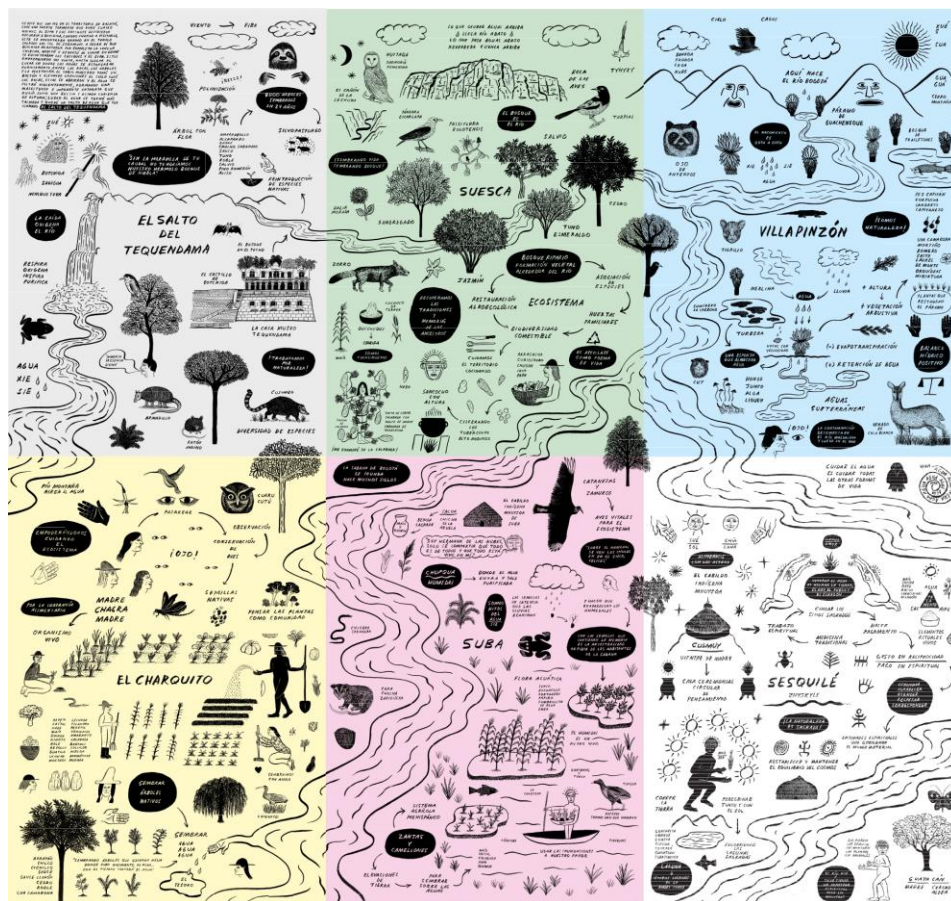


Figure 5. Co-created map. *Cómo cuidar un río* (entre—ríos, 2023).

Alongside connectivity between different points of the river, mutual validation across intergenerational divides emerged as a significant relational change. Claudia described how her father “had been connected with the village aqueduct his entire life, since its beginnings,” and how external recognition that water had brought 150 families together over many years transformed their intimate relationship with the river. She emphasized the significance of this belated validation: “For him, that recognition has

been profoundly meaningful. At seventy-seven years old, my father had never received acknowledgement for his lifelong work with the river” (Interview, June 2025). This reinforced river commoning as intergenerational practice, sustained by daily work and by long-standing commitments that are often overlooked. Gatherings thus strengthened watershed stewardship across generations, since, as Claudia concluded, the recognition “confronted us with our reality—who we are, where we are situated, and how we communicate through our connections to water, the river, and the *páramo*.”

Beyond interpersonal connections, eating together at the *Piquete* changed participants’ relational bonds with the river itself, enacting what Blackmore (2025a) frames as “metabolic literacies”—embodied awareness of river-territory-food-body as an integrated socioecological network. This challenges reductive frameworks treating rivers as mere resource flows, foregrounding instead the socio-nature entanglements through which rivers emerge. Tracing each food item to specific watershed locations generated what Sabina described as “territorial awareness by recognizing the journey of each food and its connection to places along the river,” inviting participants to reconceptualize the river beyond the limited, contaminated image most urban residents hold. As she noted after the gathering: “We hide the river in many ways... it’s an invitation to think deeply about the river: the river’s territory is larger than the sewage water we all see, that contaminated river far away passing through cement” (Interview, June 2025).

During the preparatory stage, the curatorial and food research teams had discussed concerns about the effect of staging an act of eating at such a polluted site, where the smell is undeniably present and travels on the mist rising from the waterfall. However, participants’ comments celebrated the vitality that the abundant food served—produce that came from the land, soil, water, human relations in the wider riparian ecosystem—embodied for all gathered. In verbal and written reflections shared at the *Piquete*, river stewards expressed a deep sense of connection to the watershed materialized through the act of eating.

These new senses of riverine connection reveal a fundamental perceptual shift—from experiencing the river as a distant geographical feature to relating to it as a commons. Paula described how participation in RÍO BOGOTÁ had heightened her situated, relational awareness of being part of the watershed: “We’re in the middle basin of the Bogotá River, which I wasn’t attuned to before entre—ríos. We take it for granted, due to our decontextualized education. I studied next to the river daily, and no teacher said: ‘the river is born in the Guacheneque páramo’...I had no idea about that.” (Interview, June 2025) The *Piquete*, in turn, showed Claudia that “living next to the river is not just ‘being next to it,’ but recognizing my riverine ancestry in both families,” establishing for her family “different communication with our community, in Villapinzón and with everyone who arrives at the Refugio de

Guacheneque [the family's small ecotourism complex] from different places" (Interview, June 2025).

As Sabina reflected, the gatherings are "invitations to open conversation based on tangible territorial elements—the possibility to think together that these waters come from the earth, that something material shows the connection of river, water, and food" (Interview, June 2025). Commoning here means reconnecting to the river by confronting the "giant challenge of thinking about a river we're so disconnected from around food, when it generates everything except the desire to eat." She concluded, "we face a reality of disconnection with the river we must deal with"—a disconnection the *Piquete* addressed by creating space for communities to grapple with environmental loss and restoration possibilities.

Collective or organizational scale

River commoning at this scale refers to changes that happen within collectives and organizations, impacting how they perceive and articulate themselves within wider networks. Collective storytelling through the co-creation of the map and stories in *Cómo cuidar un río* enabled participants to rethink how the river is narrated and engaged affectively and sensorially within their enlivening initiatives. Fundamentally, making the map, then interacting with it, scaled up participants' relational awareness of being part of the watershed. Participant feedback identified changes this has implied internally for their collectives or organizations. These changes support river commoning by amplifying new narratives about the river as a focus of watershed-wide care practices: connecting different sections into a single map surfaced and formally represented a network of collective actions emerging from the upper and middle basin.

The mapping and sharing of narratives of care highlighted local organizational agency within the watershed, amplifying the value of place-based practices by connecting 16 collectives across six locations along the river. As Claudia said, when they started showing visitors the map in *Cómo cuidar un río* at the Refugio, they moved from "presenting the river as a geographical accident to many things: a source of energy, a way of weaving and knowing, of feeding and sovereignty, and an energetic transformation." She explains how they "are prepared to show the river map... I like to manipulate it with people, work it on the floor and tell everything that happens in those six places" (Interview, June 2025). This narrative shift is bidirectional—"from outside in, how they see us, and from inside out, how we communicate." Simply put, the map transformed how the Refugio communicates outward, and how external actors position it within a networked view of the watershed. Communicating place from the map thus situates the watershed not as a closed text but as an emergent field of commoning, inviting others to connect diverse river memories and caring

practices into shared riverine identities. As Claudia emphasized, these shared narratives foster watershed-wide connection: “through relationships you can connect, communicate, and understand what others do” (Interview, June 2025).

The map’s handwritten format and focus on depicting people *doing* care actions emphasizes how social connectivity transcends linear boundaries, rigid institutional or legal frameworks, and ecological delimitations (Giraldo-Martínez et al., 2025). Each of the six maps enlivens the river as an affective assemblage of riverine forms (its different geohydrological stages); memories (rendered in words); non-human members (hummingbirds, bears, owls, and others); and people engaged in care and attachment actions (birdwatching, growing food, and so on) (see fig 5). For Paula, at the beginning of the lower basin, the mapping expanded knowledge of how communities organize around river care and taught her to “think beyond the municipality and local actors, alliances and connections”—a shift toward recognizing ourselves “as a basin, people care for the river from upstream” (Interview, June 2025).

Cómo cuidar un río galvanized organizational changes by depicting networked, and multiscalar social and environmental leadership. Marcela, a member of community-academic processes such as Labsit, working on environmental education, research and protection of the Jaboque Wetland, explained that by portraying “visible specific territorial initiatives that represent alternative forms of river governance and management” (Interview, June 2025), the publication challenges conventional representations that silence or marginalize environmental defenders while making. As Sabina affirmed, this validation of community-led work is multidirectional—between grassroots stewardship and institutional or academic actors—centring community care work within multi-actor river arrangements (Interview, June 2025). In doing so, collectives “hybridize and elaborate river enlivening proposals that pose alternatives to technocratic-hydraulic development strategies” (de Souza et al., 2025a, p.62), as ways of inhabiting and caring are exchanged across places, its very meaning is expanded and contested, opening space for commoning grounded in lived, place-based knowledge.

In sum, interviews and focal groups highlighted how collaborative creation, gatherings, workshops, and digital communications fostered mutual learning, information exchange, and trust-building among collectives—methodologies that animate connections between river care initiatives and amplify community-led commoning efforts within the wider watershed.

Social scale

River commoning at the social scale refers to changes that reshape collective narratives and public perceptions. Reaching audiences beyond those directly engaged in care actions has been a core project objective, pursued through participatory

activities (workshops, talks, exhibitions) with watershed inhabitants and neighbours. Changes at this scale demonstrate how the RÍO BOGOTÁ project's pedagogical methodologies (see 2.3 above) with *Cómo cuidar un río* shifted social perceptions of the river.

The cycle of workshops delivered in Bogotá's public library network, Biblored, focused on experiential and participatory pedagogy to transform public indifference into river consciousness and enhance river literacy (fig. 6). Feedback from each workshop attested to increased understanding of the river's hydrosocial entanglements, its importance for local communities, and acknowledgment of the diverse life forms that inhabit it despite severe pollution. As one participant wrote: "Discovering that the Bogotá River is not dead brings enormous relief from the climate anxiety that engulfs humanity and sometimes overwhelms us. Being able to eat vegetables, tubers, greens, and fish that are nourished by the Bogotá River's waters is something I never thought possible" (Workshop participant, September 20, 2024). By animating new connections, participants enlivened the river—disputing dominant narratives of river death or reductive framings of the river as a water resource. Other participants emphasized that the river "evolves, changes and re-signifies itself along its course," and crucially, "is recoverable"—a shift from viewing it as fixed, degraded waters toward recognizing it as a dynamic living system with regenerative capacity.



Figure 6. Sharing the history of the Thomas van der Hammen Forest Reserve and La Conejera Wetland. Fontanar del Río Public Library, 23 July 2024. Photo: Laura Giraldo.

The workshops advanced the RÍO BOGOTÁ project’s aim of scaling up the feeling of being *riberños* beyond activist or environmentalist circles and into broader public spaces. As a guest co-facilitator from the Conejera Wetland emphasized, they involved “people who didn’t know much about the river, but represent potential for river consciousness” (Interview, June 2025). The listening and writing exercises shared at the end of the sessions included reflections on river life and demonstrated heightened attunement to river connectivity: “Water does not live alone—the wind is always there. And it always accompanied someone. A constant, continuous breathing can be heard, speaking of each life that gathers upstream, downstream. Rivers born where others die. Rivers that never die: for life cries out” (Workshop participant, July 13, 2024).

The speculative creative writing exercise demonstrated how sensory attention to the sounds of the river’s pulses and flows through the watershed foster more-than-human bridging, rendering embodied experience the ontological claim that the river is alive, which underpin entre-ríos’ curatorial approach and RÍO BOGOTÁ. This sensory disposition toward river life also transpired in another testimony—a letter dedicated to the river—which expressed deep affective attachment and a desire for the river’s enduring vitality, metaphorized through the river’s voice: “I love all your sounds, from the whisper when you are a fragile thread of water to the roar of your torrent when you descend imposingly. Sometimes you are sharp and intermittent and sometimes deep and overwhelming. In your sound, birds learn to highlight their song, you are a sonic base for so many other animals. May your voice accompany us much and always.” (Workshop participant, September 20, 2024). In other testimonies, this attachment emerges as a more-than-human kinship where people address the river as “*abuelo*” (grandfather) or elder: “I could also call you grandmother, cousin, aunt, mother. I spent many years forgetting that we are family and you run through my blood.”

Overall, workshop feedback showed significant perceptual shifts, demonstrating that effective river enlivening requires transforming how society perceives, relates to, and cares for rivers as complex social-ecological networks. As Boelens et al. note (2025b, p. 28), “when rivers are approached as co-constituting and interdependent human and ecological communities, rivers and riverine knowledges may travel and enrich each other, cross-culturally, translocally.” *Cómo cuidar un río* enacts precisely this by challenging official cartographies (Giraldo-Martínez, et al., 2025) and re-presenting the river as an interwoven social and ecological community, it advances alternative proposals for living-with-the-river that are at once perceptual, affective, and political.

Conclusions: Commoning Changes and Challenges

This article has taken RÍO BOGOTÁ as an example of one of the many “river co-learning arenas” (RCAs) emerging at the intersection of water scholarship and public engagement. To address a research gap in theoretically grounded accounts of RCAs and systematic approaches to gauging their empirical capacities, we presented a methodology to assess how involvement in specific collaborative, curatorial projects supports river commoning among direct project participants and wider publics across analyse multiscalar changes. This involved gauging the project’s capacity to do enact change by uplifting and connecting river enlivening initiatives and by resignifying the dominant narrative of a “dead” river into a commons that people feel attached to as *ribereños*. Analysis of individual interviews, written testimonies, creative writing exercises, and focus group discussions demonstrates how experiences of eating, mapping, and listening in the communal meal, co-created publication, and participatory workshops fostered river commoning across multiple, interconnected scales of change:

- **Personal scale:** Embodied commensality—eating river-grown produce at the *Piquete*—fostered commoning by affirming a sense of being *ribereño*, anchoring riverine identity in river memories, vernacular food traditions, and watershed-grown foods, transforming contaminated waterscapes into sources of nourishment.
- **Relational scale:** Collaborative menu preparation and gathering at the *Piquete* supported commoning by scaling up individuals’ self-understanding as *ribereños* to collective to mutual recognition—connecting participants with each other, other riverine communities, and the river itself, validating efforts across sites and generations, and strengthening support networks among river actors.
- **Collective or organizational scale:** Collaborative storytelling of watershed sites and their representation as a connected, affective map in *Cómo cuidar un río*, strengthened commoning by shifting narratives from river-as-dead to river-as-alive—challenging collective perceptions of contamination, death, and fragmentation through creative communication that fostered emerging alliances and bridges across collectives, generated shared meaning-making about river enlivening possibilities, and expanded potential collective action.
- **Social scale:** Pedagogical and dissemination spaces that workshoped *Cómo cuidar un río* with broader audiences and riverine inhabitants, expanded the scope of commoning by scaling up the feeling of being *ribereños* among workshop participants—weaving shared river meanings across territories, communities, and care practices, opening pathways to shift social

perceptions of the river and build watershed interconnectivity. This aspect of the research-creation process engaged translocal riverine knowledge in which, following Boelens et al. state “river movements map, mapping moves rivers” (2025b, p.28). Workshop feedback attests to perceptual shifts, showing that effective river enlivening requires transforming how society perceives, relates to, and cares for rivers as complex socio-ecological networks.

The empirical and evaluative turn in scholarly discussions asks for the capacity of “alternative ways of being with and acting in socio-ecological riverine systems to *reverse the trends of* environmental degradation” (de Souza et al., 2025a, p. 59; emphasis added). Place-based practices river commoning are articulated in specific conditions, manifesting in emergent forms that vary by context. However, as an example of community action in the face of a critically contaminated urban river, the Bogotá River watershed offers insights relevant to water scholars and practitioners in other regions. Sharing among diverse settings, histories, phases of struggles, and political contexts through collaborative methodologies and multi-actor exchanges, as Boelens et al. (2025b, 11) suggest, “may entail strong opportunities for mutual learning, insertion of novel strategic arms, and engagement in complementarity and solidarity action.” In RÍO BOGOTÁ, river commoning means active, situated, and relational practices through which local care actions that enliven the river connect and exchange across diverse watershed actors and multiscalar dynamics, challenging dominant hydrosocial narratives that frame water-as-resource and river-as-dead.

Participant feedback converged on the finding that the communal meal and collaborative publication supported river commoning by deepening and amplifying a core ontological, affective claim being *ribereno* (belonging to the river). In the face of systematic hydrosocial disconnection that emerges in contexts of environmental degradation, our analysis demonstrated how this claim galvanizes affective energy around the river as a common cause—for individuals, between collectives, and beyond them in wider publics. Insofar as RÍO BOGOTÁ addresses the challenge of reversing trends of environmental degradation that de Souza et al (2025a) and others lay out, practicing active and ongoing reflexivity also entails accounting for the gaps and limitations of specific methodologies in RCAs. When we asked focus group participants *what we have in common* across care actions, convergent issues, concerns, and practices, the consensus was: “What’s common is our shared affect and respect for the river. There’s no question about that” (María Victoria, co-director of a museum and educational platform and co-founder of an environmental foundation for ecological restoration in the Tequendama Falls, focus group, June 24, 2025). During collective reflection on whether RÍO BOGOTÁ had materialized a river commoning network, several challenges arose around how to enable connections that bridge river actors while respecting different interests and positions. Prompted to identify a common objective among *entre*—ríos and collaborators, and ways to guide possible collective action, participants outlined distinct paths as the possible

focus of future activities: environmental education and ecological restoration processes, food sovereignty, and legal defence and protection, and political participation in public policy engagement.

Forging a collective pathway through which RÍO BOGOTÁ would endure over time and have a more tangible impact on reversing environmental degradation poses significant challenges for future work. Answering that question is beyond the scope of this article but does raise pertinent questions about the capacities and limitations of RCAs that are germane to other initiatives, across Latin America and beyond. Given that RCAs have no “format or blueprint ... set in stone” (de Souza et al, 2025a, p. 73), nor an ideal duration or lifetime, some claim they should be “transient configurations that last as long as the energy balance of the learning configuration remains positive” (p. 73). Herein lies a key challenge for RCAs like RÍO BOGOTÁ which emerge at the nexus of academic research, research-creation, curatorial practice, and community action: sustaining collaboration and co-creation is predicated on maintaining successive stages of project funding, a demand made complex by changing funding priorities and opportunities beyond the control of academic lead investigators. Our processes of continual reflexivity identified converging and divergent institutional, social, and contextual temporalities and agendas of organizations and individual commitments as the major challenge—one that can be mitigated by securing alternative sources to academic funding, and by rotating roles for fundraising work and seeking partnerships.

Most importantly, just as assessing methodologies for collaboration, co-creation and co-learning requires open and reflexive dialogue, so too do decisions around the capacity to sustain RCAs. In the case of RÍO BOGOTÁ, achieving networked collaboration with capacity to materially impact the reversal of ecological degradation, beyond the individual commoning efforts, requires methodologies oriented to that objective. Establishing those methodologies must balance emergent, process-driven work that is responsive to context with a concerted direction for strategic, ongoing action, enacted, in our case, through iterative processes of culinary gatherings around the river and workshops with our films and publications¹⁰. As one participant in our focus groups aptly put it: “We’re learning by doing, designing the strategies and purposes that unite us: What river do we want? A decontaminated river? What legal frameworks protect it? What alliances do we need?” (Fernando, director of an NGO dedicated to the ecological restoration of riparian forest in the upper basin, focus group, June 24, 2025). This interrogative, process-based approach

¹⁰ Following the *Piquete del río Bogotá* insights, in 2025 we developed the project *Convites de río*, organizing four food gatherings in the upper and middle basin of the Bogotá River among diverse actors, that resulted in the publication *Cómo volver al río* (How to return to the river) (entre—ríos, 2025).

reflects the river network not as a fixed structure but as a dynamic field of actors with different claims and agendas requiring—as part of the organic fabric of commoning—continual reflexivity to set future pathways for action.

Acknowledgements

Our gratitude goes to all RÍO BOGOTÁ project collaborators. Special thanks to participants from Villapinzón, Suesca, Bogotá, El Charquito, and Tequendama Falls, who joined this active and ongoing reflection. Warm thanks to all who have participated since 2023 in workshops, gatherings, communal meals, seminars and exhibitions. We hope to continue meeting around river care. The article was written as part of research being developed within the project “River Commons” at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Funding: Wageningen Interdisciplinary Research and Education Fund (INREF) and “Riverhood”, European Research Council (ERC) (grant No. 101002921).

References

- Acevedo Guerrero, T. (2018). Water infrastructure: A terrain for studying nonhuman agency, power relations, and socioeconomic change. *WIREs Water*, 5(5), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wat2.1298>
- Bailey-Charteris, B. (2024). *The Hydrocene: Eco-aesthetics in the Age of Water*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003397304>
- Bakker, K. (2007). The “commons” versus the “commodity”: Alterglobalization, anti-privatization and the human right to water in the global south. *Antipode*, 39(3), 430–455.
- Bakker, K. (2012). Water: Political, biopolitical, material. *Social Studies of Science*, 42(4), 616–623. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312712441396>
- Bieke, W., & Seewald, R. (2025). *Aquatic environments: Literary hydropolitics in Latin America*. Transcript Verlag.
- Bivens, F. (2014). Networked Knowledge as Networked Power: Recovering and Mobilising Transformative Knowledge through Participate. In J. Howard, S. M. Ospina, & D. Burns (Eds.), *Knowledge from the Margins: An Anthology from a Global Network on Participatory Practice and Policy Influence*. Institute of Development Studies (IDS).
- Blackmore, L. (2020). Turbulent river times: Art and hydropower in Latin America’s extractive zones. In L. Blackmore & L. Gómez (Eds.), *Liquid ecologies in Latin American and Caribbean art*. Routledge.

Blackmore, L. (2022a). Imaginando culturas hidrocomunes: Investigaciones interdisciplinarias y prácticas curatoriales entre ríos. *Heterotopías, Materia fluvial. Configuraciones estético-políticas de las cuencas de América*, 5(10), 43–72.

Blackmore, L. (2022b). Cultivating Ongoingness Through Site-Specific Arts Research and Public Engagement. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 31(1), 159–176.

Blackmore, L. (2025a). How to eat a polluted river? Curatorial practice, metabolic literacies, and cultures of care. In L. Gómez & F. Liptay (Eds.), *Eco-operations* (pp. 109–140). Diaphanes.

Blackmore, L. (2025b). Art for the hydrocommons: Rethinking human-water relations in Latin America. *Environmental Humanities*, 17(1), 23–44.

Blackmore, L. (Forthcoming 2027). *Hydrocommoning*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Blackmore, L., & Domínguez Londoño, M. F. (Eds.). (2021). *entre-ríos: del páramo a la represa*. University of Essex. <https://entre-rios.net/del-paramo-a-la-represa/>

Blackmore, L., Giraldo-Martínez, L., Piñeros García, D., Steiner, J., (2023). *Cómo cuidar un río*. entre—ríos. <http://www.entre-rios.net/rio-bogota>.

Blackmore, L. & A. Ponce de León. (2024a). “Hydrocommons Map.” In *Hydrocommons Cultures: Art, Pedagogy, and Care Practices across the Americas*. *LA ESCUELA_JOURNAL*, 1. 492–516.

Blackmore, L., & Ponce de León, A. (Eds.). (2024b). *Hydrocommons cultures: Art, pedagogy and practices of care across the Americas*. *LA ESCUELA_JOURNAL* NO. 1. <https://laescuela.art/en/campus/library/journal/hydrocommons-cultures-art-pedagogy-and-care-practices-across-the-americas-index>

Bresnihan, P. (2015). The more-than-human commons: From commons to commoning. In Kirwan, S., Dawney, L. & Brigstocke, J. (Eds.), *Space, power and the commons* (pp. 93–112). Routledge.

Boelens, R., Hoogesteger, J., Swyngedouw, E., Vos, J., & Wester, P. (2016). Hydrosocial territories: A political ecology perspective. *Water International*, 41(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2016.1134898>

Boelens, R., Escobar, A., Bakker, K., Hommes, L., Swyngedouw, E., Hogenboom, B., Huijbens, E. H., & Wantzen, K. M. (2023). Riverhood: Political ecologies of socationature commoning and translocal struggles for water justice. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(3), 1125–1156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2120810>

Boelens, R., Hommes, L., & Hoogesteger, J. (2024). Ontological politics in river defence debates: Unpacking fields of contention in eco-centric and non-human turns. *Water Alternatives*, 17(3), 649–668. <https://www.water-alternatives.org/index.php/alldoc/articles/vol17/v17issue3/762-a17-3-4/file>

Boelens, R., Hommes, L., Hoogesteger, J., Swyngedouw, E., Vos, J., & Wester, P. (2025a). Hydrosocial territories: Imaginaries, materialities, and struggles over knowledge, order and meaning. *Water International*, 50(5), 426–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508060.2025.2528261>

Boelens, R., Duarte-Abadía, B., Arbelaez-Trujillo, A. M., Forigua-Sandoval, J. Giraldo-Martínez, L. Reyes-Bejarano, S., Tubino-de-Souza, D., Silva-Orozco, J.S., Klarenbeek, M. & Zavala-Taday, S. (2025b). Travelling Rivers, Mapping Movements. Counter-Mapping and Translocal River Defense Networks. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1–33. doi:10.1080/03066150.2025.2562592.

Bollier, David and Silke Helfrich. (2015) *Patterns of Commoning*. Amherst and Florence, Massachusetts: Off the Common Books.

Cantor, A., Kay, K., & Knudson, C. (2020). Legal geographies and political ecologies of water allocation in Maui, Hawai'i. *Geoforum*, 110, 168–179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.02.014>

Castro, F. De, B. Hogenboom, and M. Baud. (2016). *Environmental Governance in Latin America*. London: Palgrave.

Chen, C., MacLeod, J., & Neimanis, A. (2013). Introduction: Toward a hydrological turn? In C. Chen, J. MacLeod, & A. Neimanis (Eds.), *Thinking with water* (pp. 3–22). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Concejo de Estado, 28 de marzo del 2014. Sentencia del río Bogotá. Expediente núm. AP-25000-23-27-000-2001-90479-01. Available: www.cundinamarca.gov.co/wcm/connect/ff4cd0bb-e314-4bfa-b764-2c23d8e57be0/SENTENCIA+RIO+BOGOTA+CONSEJO+DE+ESTADO.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

Cuerpo Colegiado de Guardianes del Atrato (2025). <https://www.guardianesatrato.com/>

Cuevas Parra, C., Giraldo-Martínez, L., & Rey-Hernández, C. (2024). Coro de ríos que cantan. *Signatura*, 4(1).

Cuevas Parra, C., Arbeláez Trujillo, A. & Hoogesteger, J., (2026) Permeable river-worlds: Emergent caring politics along the Dílar and Monachil rivers in southern Spain. *Journal of Political Ecology* 33(1): 7108. <https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.7108>

Cuevas Parra, C., Giraldo-Martínez, L., & Rey-Hernández, C. (Forthcoming 2026). Chorus of singing rivers: Sound-based methods in political ecology research.

Damonte, G., & García, M. (2015). *La investigación acción participativa: Referente inspirador de investigación y docencia sobre el agua en América Latina*. Ediciones Tarea.

Davies, R., & Dart, J. (2005). *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) technique: A guide to its use*. <https://mande.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MSCGuide.pdf>

de Souza, D. T., Hommes, L., Wals, A., Hoogesteger, J., Boelens, R., Duarte-Abadía, B., Hidalgo-Bastidas, J. P., & Joy, K. J. (2025a). River co-learning arenas: Principles and practices for transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation and multi-scalar (inter)action. *Local Environment*, 30(1), 58–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2024.2428215>

de Souza, D. T., van Teijlingen, K., Boelens, R., & Ruales, G. (2025b). Seeing rivers otherwise: Critical cartography as a form of critical pedagogy. *Geoforum*, 158, 104–167.

de Jong, L., Veldwisch, G. J., Melsen, L. A., & Boelens, R. (2024). Making rivers, producing futures: The rise of an eco-modern river imaginary in Dutch climate change adaptation. *Water*, 16(4), 598. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w16040598>

Evans, G. (2017). Hydrocitizenship: Concepts and insights from the Lee Valley, UK. In *Rivers and society*. Routledge.

Fals Borda, O. (1987). The application of participatory action-research in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 2(4), 329–347. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026858098700200401>

Fowkes, M., & Fowkes, R. (2015). *River ecologies: Contemporary art and environmental humanities on the Danube*. Translocal Institute.

Gearey, M., Church, A., & Ravenscroft, N. (2019). From the hydrosocial to the hydrocitizen: Water, place and subjectivity within emergent urban wetlands. *Environment and Planning: Nature and Space*, 2(2), 409–428.

Giraldo-Martínez, L., Boelens, B. & Duarte-Abadía, B. (2025). River mapping and the politics of eco-scalar fixes. Reconnecting upstream–downstream networks through critical cartographies of Colombia's Bogotá River. *Geoforum*, 165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2025.104379>

Giraldo-Martínez, L., Acero, L., Gómez, S. & Bocanegra, G. (2026) *Río polifónico: una lectura performática del río Bogotá*. *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas* 21 (2): 96-121. <https://doi.org/10.11144/javeriana.mavae21-2.rprb>

Gómez-Barris, M. (2017). *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1220n3w>

- Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Cthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Harris, L. M. (2021). Towards enriched narrative political ecologies. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 5(2), 835–860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211010677>
- Henry, M. S. (2022). *Hydronarratives: Water, environmental justice, and a just transition* (1st ed.). University of Nebraska Press.
- Hessler, S. (2020). Tidalectic Curating. *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, 9(2), 248–270. https://doi.org/10.1386/jcs_00023_1
- Hivos. (2015). *Theory of change thinking in practice: A stepwise approach*. <https://www.hivos.org/document/theory-change-thinking-practice/>
- Hommes, L., Vos, J. & Boelens, R. (2023). The need to acknowledge, study and engage with new water justice movements. *PLOS Water*, 2(5).
- Houston, D., & Vasudevan, P. (2018). Storytelling environmental justice: Cultural studies approaches. In R. Holifield, J. Chakraborty, & G. Walker (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of environmental justice* (pp. 241–251). Taylor & Francis.
- Ingram, M., Ingram, H., & Sultana, R. (2014). What’s the story? Creating and sustaining environmental networks. *Environmental Politics*, 23(6), 984–1002.
- Kinkaid, E. (2019). “Rights of nature” in translation: Assemblage geographies, boundary objects, and translocal social movements. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 44(3), 555–570. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12303>
- Klaver, I. J. (2019). Reclaiming rivers from homogenization: Meandering and riverspheres. In *From biocultural homogenization to biocultural conservation* (pp. 49–69). Cham: Springer.
- Krause, F., & Strang, V. (2016). Thinking relationships through water. *Society & Natural Resources*, 29(6), 633–638. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2016.1151714>
- Latour, B. (2004). *Politics of nature: How to bring the sciences into democracy*. Harvard University Press.
- Lemos, S. (2024). *Meandering: Art, ecology, and metaphysics*. Sternberg Press.
- Linton, J., & Budds, J. (2014). The hydrosocial cycle: Defining and mobilizing a relational-dialectical approach to water. *Geoforum*, 57, 170–180.
- Loopmans, M., & Hoogesteger, J. (2024). Hydrosolidarity: A socio-political reading of a moral concept. *Water Alternatives*, 17(3), 688–711.
- Ludwig, D., & El-Hani, C. (2025). *Transformative transdisciplinarity*.
- Macfarlane, R. (2025). *Is a river alive?* W.W. Norton & Company.

Marambio, C. (2024). The Art of Submersion: What Peatlands Taught Me About Con/Fusion. <https://artlab.hyundai.com/editorial/the-art-of-submersion-what-peatlands-taught-me-about-con-fusion>

McEwen, L., Gorell Barnes, L., Phillips, K., & Biggs, I. (2020). Reweaving urban water-community relations: Creative, participatory river “daylighting” and local hydrocitizenship. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 45(4), 779–801.

Neimanis, A. (2016). *Bodies of water: Posthuman feminist phenomenology*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Oslender, U. (2002). “The logic of the river”: A spatial approach to ethnic-territorial mobilization in the Colombian Pacific Region. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 7(2), 86–117. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlca.2002.7.2.86>

Oslender, U. (2021). Decolonizing cartography and ontological conflict: Counter-mapping in Colombia and “cartographies otherwise.” *Political Geography*, 89, 102444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102444>

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2012). ‘Nothing comes without its world’: Thinking with care. *The Sociological Review*, 60(2), 197–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02070.x>

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017). *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ríos to Rivers. (2025). <https://www.riostorivers.org/>

Roca-Servat, D. and Arias-Henao, J.D. (2021). Decolonizing hegemonic approaches of water: Exploring Latin American proposals for communality and community. *Revista Ambiente y Sociedad*, 24.

Rodríguez, N., Camacho, L.A. & Rodríguez, J. (2013). Evaluación del riesgo de desabastecimiento de agua potable por mala calidad del agua del Río Bogotá en Tibitoc. International WATER Conference organized by Cinara, Universidad del Valle.

Rodríguez Gallo, L. (2019). La construcción del paisaje agrícola prehispánico en los Andes colombianos: El caso de la Sabana de Bogotá. *SPAL Revista de Prehistoria y Arqueología*, 28(1), 193–215.

Rudas Burgos, G. (2025). Energy and aesthetics of landscape in Latin America: On the art of Carolina Caycedo and Jeison Sierra. *Environmental Humanities*, 17(1), 235–253.

Santos, T. & Camacho, L.A. (2010). Modelación dinámica de la calidad del agua con efluentes de curtiembres - Caso de estudio Cuenca Alta del Río Bogotá (Colombia). In: XXIV Congreso Latinoamericano de Hidráulica.

Suhardiman, D., and C. Middleton. 2020. “The Salween River as a Transboundary Commons: Fragmented Collective Action, Hybrid Governance and Power.” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 61 (2): 301–314.

Swyngedouw, E. (2015). *Liquid power: Contested hydro-modernities in 20th century Spain*. MIT Press.

Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care*. Routledge.

Ulloa, A. & Romero-Toledo, H. (2018). *Agua y disputas territoriales en Chile y Colombia*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Truman, S. E. (2021). *Feminist Speculations and the Practice of Research-Creation: Writing Pedagogies and Intertextual Affects*. London, New York: Routledge.

Un Río Cauca, Muchos Mundos (2018). <https://www.unriocauca.com/>

Un Río sin Viaducto. (2025). <https://unriosinviaducto.org/>

Underhill, J. (2025). Fluvial networks of creative resistance. *Open Rivers Journal*, 28. <https://openrivers.lib.umn.edu/article/fluvial-networks/>

Vos, J. (2024). River defence and restoration movements: A literature review. *Water Alternatives*, 17(2), 239–265.

Wantzen, K. M., et al. (2016). River culture: An eco-social approach to mitigate the biological and cultural diversity crisis in riverscapes. *Ecohydrology & Hydrobiology*, 16(1), 7–18.

Yates, J. S., Harris, L. M., & Wilson, N. J. (2017). Multiple ontologies of water: Politics, conflict and implications for governance. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(5), 797–815.