

Sulfur Mine at the Puracé Volcano slopes: A Look to the transformation process and Impact on the Indigenous Reserve of Puracé (Cauca, Colombia)

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The Sulfur mine "El Vinagre" is located on the slopes of Puracé, within the indigenous reserve of Puracé, 50 km from Popayan (Cauca Colombia). Sulfur exploitation has been carried out for over 76 years, time which has allowed the mine to be internalized in the worldview of its inhabitants. At the beginning its operation was carried out by private people and after a process of liquidation, was transferred to the indigenous council as principal shareholder (traditional non-profit authority) and owner of the mining license, operated by Empresa Minera Indígena (EMICAUCA), known for producing and selling unique 100% natural sulfur in America. The mine, besides being a symbol for the region, where several generations have learned from mining operations, changed cultural, social, and economic characteristics of the indigenous community tradition, contributed in one hand, to lose fear to the volcano and only when they saw it erupting, they recognized its power to produce damage (eruption of 1949, where 16 students die). On the other side, it enhanced the riches provided to them. As this area is a National Park, it favors a scenario where several institutions and authorities work together. The SGC-OVSPo, has advanced several investigations on geology, hazards and performs the monitoring of the volcanic activity since several decades ago. This process has allowed building a baseline of knowledge and behavior of the volcano. During all this time, they have strengthened bonds of trust with the indigenous council and mine workers. Several scenarios have been established through workshops, meetings, assemblies in order to socialize the hazard map (versions 1992 and 2015), as well as report changes in the activity of Puracé volcano and advance in the construction of a volcanic risk management plan, allowing to all authorities the articulation in the process of improving communication and reducing volcanic risk.