

Lower Basin

The Sixaola River Basin is not a fully closed thing, but is much more open than spoken of in terms of geopolitical references. For more than a basin, you give that limit the influence, but this basin goes far beyond that limit you can ever give it. No political line can divide this region, they certainly do on a map, but that is not how communities see themselves and function in their day to day. They see the ephemeral river border as a historic bridge of peaceful interactions and relations. You do however, have to cross an actual bridge to make your way to the basin's outlet at the Caribbean Sea.



THE SIXAOLA RIVER BRIDGE, SIXAOLA-GUABITO, COSTA RICA-PANAMA, THE SIXAOLA RIVER BASIN

The Sixaola River in addition to being a river that separates us, is a river that connects us to both sides. For many years we have had trouble crossing the river once before there was the bridge and when the bridge began, 100 years ago, the bridge is today and then a bridge type that has

been built as a temporary bridge that was made to hold for 2 or 3 years, and now comes another bridge to be made from the month of June 2016, any bridge will be something better of what we have.



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But the bridge has always been the union between the peoples, both in terms of Costa Rica and on the side of Panamá. And actually, indigenous communities have used the river even for transport, to change sides for trade, but not where bridge(s) are currently. The communities are located just above the river. They directly cross the bridge, as if there were no limit. They have used it this way historically. There are even communities who have moved sides based on where their river moves, we for example have Bríbrís on the side of Panamá that did not exist here prior, they do not originate from here, because they have changed sides. Many Ngöbes and Naso living Costa Rica, originated from the side of Panamá. This is why I feel it important to say that it is both a separation, as much as a union of all sides of the Sixaola River Basin.



THE SIXAOLA RIVER, COSTA RICA-PANAMA, THE SIXAOLA RIVER BASIN

On the other hand, there have been problems with the river over the years, there have been growing pains, you record floods that have affected both countries, on both sides and that has influenced a little this issue of the commission to develop binational because sometimes you have to take measures that are equally for both (all) sides. Starting with the issue of risk, which is the subject of flooding and continuing the theme of improving agriculture, to make it more sustainable, on both sides, because both sides influence the river. So, we have to work on something that is equal on both sides, because if no one were damaging the river and other not. But we have to treat both sides work in the same way. In the part of agriculture, health part also feels the same, if it affects one side a health issue, it's going to affect the other side. The Sixaola River Basin is our partnership, and our contract that we sign, is the rivers themselves. Maintaining the

health and well-being of our rivers, this is a direct reflection on our commitment to the residents of the Sixaola River Basin.

This text is an excerpt from “*Navigating Cultural Currents: The Sixaola River Basin Story*,” that can be found here:

http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/graduate_thesis_or_dissertations/w9505499c