UNREDDY

A critical look at REDD+ and indigenous strategies for comprehensive forest protection

Climate Alliance

astm
ACTION SOLIDARITÉ TIERS MONDE

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Foreword

"From Overconsumption to Solidarity – enhancing citizens' competences with regard to Europe's responsibility for global sustainability" is a joint awareness-raising project of eight European and eight Southern civil society organisations, co-financed by EuropeAid. It aims to increase critical understanding and competence amongst European citizens with regard to Europe's responsibility for the social and ecological impact of its overconsumption. The project's objectives and issues derive from the problems that our Southern partners are facing caused by greenhouse gas emissions, the extraction of resources and forced deforestation or land-use change.

The link between climate protection and forests and the significance of indigenous peoples as important stakeholders of a global climate protection strategy was the idea behind Climate Alliance's founding more than 25 years ago. However, the relevance of forests to the climate has only gradually found its way into the international climate negotiations. The approaches proposed to date continue to pursue the primacy of the market, and thus support the very structures considered the causes of destructive economic activity.

The REDD+ climate protection instrument,[1] which became a topic of discussion latest at the 2007 climate conference in Bali, demonstrates this approach very clearly: protection of the forests as carbon sinks should be made financially attractive. Climate Alliance was very critical of this concept from the outset. The resolutions of various Climate Alliance members draw attention to the danger that the generation of market-based emissions certificates to offset the lack of reductions in CO_2 emissions in industrial countries will pass the actual causes of climate change by, and tie up resources that are then no longer available for the necessary transformation processes. The actual drivers of deforestation are thus not reached. Compensation instruments moreover harbour the danger that the impression will be given that we are able to "buy our way out" with certificates trading. For the concept of offsetting has meanwhile also entered our everyday lives: from holidays in the Seychelles to conferences, publications to cinema visits, these days we are able to render virtually any activity "climate neutral". Or at least this is what the providers of such offsetting models promise.

What's more, the REDD model is based on a severe (eco)logical fallacy: it purports to offset carbon dioxide from fossil carbon with carbon dioxide that plants absorb. This is simply wrong. If we extract oil, gas, coal or oil shale from the ground and burn this, we release ancient carbon into today's atmosphere – without the possibility of ever being able to return it to the source, the atmosphere of the carbon's time some 360 to 300 million years ago, as it is not possible to turn back time. Thus, we irreversibly fill our atmosphere with ever-new releases from times past. However, today's atmosphere can only absorb a limited amount of carbon dioxide (the carbon budget of our present-day climate). Of course, the plants living today do bind carbon dioxide from the atmosphere again, but they also return this again after their death, combustion or decay, whereby the carbon dioxide can remain in the upper layers of soil as humus or peat for a long time. This biological carbon cycle occurs in cycles of dozens of years, with the total carbon turnover between the biosphere and atmosphere essentially remaining the same. Models that ignore the difference between fossil and biological carbon ultimately only serve to further legitimise the continued use of fossil fuels. There is also the danger here of a major loophole opening up in the reduction obligations (INDCs) submitted by the states in the run-up to the climate conference in Paris. Over 90 countries foresee measures in the forest sector in their plans – and above all reforestation measures. The danger exists that the reduction plans foreseen will be watered down and not contribute to the formal aim set out in the Paris agreement to limit global warming to significantly below 2°C and, where possible, to below 1.5°C. The aim formulated in the agreement to achieve emission neutrality in the second half of the century will, in all likelihood, reinforce the role of

1 Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries

criticised instruments such as REDD+ as well as global emissions trading.

A whole host of studies meanwhile also confirm the ineffectiveness of approaches like REDD+: neither do they help solve the causes of deforestation nor do they yield long-term advantages for the populations living from and in the forests – as our indigenous partners in the Amazon rainforest have themselves experienced. The promises of immense sums of money that should be generated for forest protection through REDD+ have instead tended to lead to divisions – within families, communities and political organisations.

With the present brochure prepared within the scope of the EU project "From Overconsumption to Solidarity", we wish to take a critical look at development of the REDD+ instrument and to present the alternative approaches of indigenous peoples dwelling in Amazonia. While these alternatives also require financial support for their implementation, financing via the compensation market is not ruled out. Examples from Colombia and Peru where Climate Alliance member municipalities have committed to helping to protect the rainforest show that these approaches are not merely theoretical.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to successful publication of this brochure. ¶

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FROM OVERCONSUMPTION TO SOLIDARITY
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Hope for forest protection?

Climate Alliance and ASTM

Thanks to the traditional ways of life of indigenous peoples, the rainforests of Amazonia remain largely intact and therefore do not receive financial support according to the REDD+ criteria. This is the perverse logic of a market-based instrument that has dominated discussions within the international climate process for years now.

These discussions concern an imaginary scenario as, to date, there have only been pilot projects and the expectations are above all characterised by hope. The idea behind REDD+ is that it will generate billions in revenue, which will above all benefit those who have been responsible for destruction of the forests to date – so not the indigenous peoples and other forest-dwelling communities. However, the discussion is also fuelled by the hope that REDD+ will help prevent further forest destruction and thus constitute an effective contribution to climate protection. Though none of these assumptions have been met to date, a great many state and non-state stakeholders are still placing their hopes in this instrument of international climate diplomacy.

Even keen supporters of an international REDD+ market instrument admit that it cannot compete with the huge profits that lead to systematic destruction of the rainforests through the cultivation of oil palms and soya beans in addition to mining activities.

Yet after many years of pilot projects in which international institutions such as the World Bank, United Nations and other state stakeholders have attempted to set standards that should be included in an "official" REDD+ approach, the problems and weaknesses of this instrument are becoming apparent. Jutta Kill considers these difficulties in greater depth in her article.

The present publication not only considers the structural shortcomings of the approaches declared as REDD+ projects to date. Climate Alliance above all strives to outline the approaches that are being pursued by indigenous peoples, whose situation the discussions on REDD have hardly improved. Quite the contrary in fact: the prospect of quick profits has led innumerable dubious companies to conclude non-transparent contracts with indigenous communities, who have been taken in by these companies' promises in their quest for sources of income to safeguard their traditional ways of life.

At COICA's first regional conference, which was held in the Brazilian city of Manaus in 2011, the concept of an indigenous REDD was presented and discussed with the indigenous organisations from the Amazonian rainforest for the first time. Since this time, COICA, which primarily strives to safeguard indigenous rights, has attempted to win support for its projects.

In the first part of this brochure, we provide an overview of the relationship between forests and climate protection in addition to the role of indigenous peoples. We moreover outline development of the REDD+ instrument within the scope of the international climate process. The second part of this brochure comprises a compilation of critical contributions to the concept and implementation of the first pilot projects, along with details of their impact on the local population. The third – and for us most important – part of this brochure is devoted to alternative concepts and approaches developed by indigenous communities and organisations. These have been presented at international conferences, such as the COP21 in Paris, and discussed with representatives from state and non-state stakeholders. Indigenous women from Peru also have their say: they have prepared a declaration on climate change from their perspective.

We conclude with a contribution on the topic of forest protection in Germany and would thereby like to highlight the role of forests throughout Europe by using this German example – even though many different approaches to forest protection are used thoughout Europe. ¶

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Climate (change) and indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples are particularly affected by climate change. As mediators of traditional knowledge and protectors of the forest, they play a decisive role in the global climate:

the indigenous territories cover 240 million hectares in the entire Amazon region. Not only do they store large quantities of CO_2, they are also home to a wealth of flora and fauna. As a consequence, they also help regulate the water cycle far beyond the Amazon region.

The Amazon ecosystem

The climatic conditions in the Amazon ecosystem lead to exceptionally high biodiversity. There are alone over 45,000 species of plants. Five hundred species of trees and over 93,000 individual plants have been counted on a surface area of just 200 square kilometres.

In light of the close connection between humans and nature, particularly indigenous peoples emphasise the forests' diverse functions.

Forests are ...

- **protectors of the soil, water and air**
- **CO_2 sinks, climate regulators and adjusters**
- **learning spaces**
- **living spaces**
- **tourism and travel destinations**
- **leisure and recreational spaces**
- **suppliers of food**
- **sources of raw materials**
- **medicine cabinets**

REDD+

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable forest management, and forest carbon stock enhancement in developing countries.

At the 2007 climate conference in Bali, the decision was reached to include forested areas in the negotiation process under the acronym of REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). This mechanism has since been developed further and complemented with measures such as reforestation and sustainable forest management. These additional measures led to the designation "REDD+".

Forest destruction and degradation cause 16% to 20% of global CO_2 emissions. A study co-published by COICA in the run-up to the 2014 climate conference in Lima revealed that over 55% of the carbon dioxide contained in animals and plants could be found in indigenous territories and other protected areas.

Criticisms of the REDD+ instrument

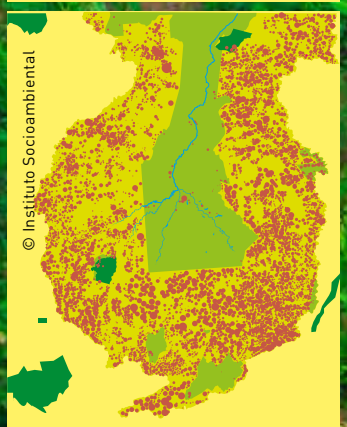
- Reduces the forest to its function as a carbon sink
- Links the life prospects of indigenous peoples to a CO_2 logic
- Increases the financial pressure on forests

There is a specific risk that REDD+ will become a further instrument for emissions trading and thus open a new loophole enabling reduction obligations to be shirked.

Deforestation in facts & pictures

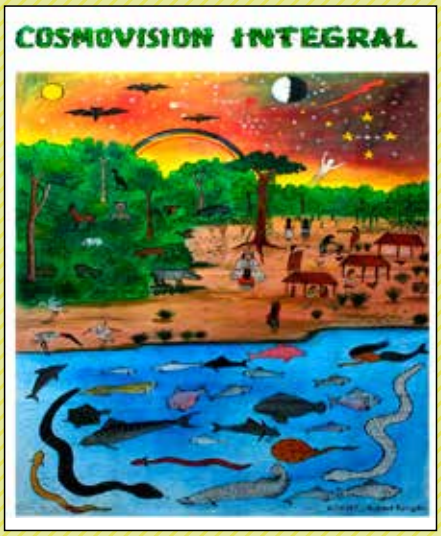
- Annual decline in primary forest (2000-2010): 42,000 km²
- Alone in Brazil (2002-2013): clearance of a total of 161,000 km²

A total of 225 football fields of rainforest are destroyed in Brazil just in the time it takes to play a 90-minute game of football.



The Paris agreement

The reductions in emissions from forest destruction and degradation in addition to forest protection have been included in the new climate agreement reached in Paris. The additional advantages of forest protection (non-carbon benefits) continue to be emphasised.



The indigenous cosmovision

The CO_2 emission rights are determined by country

Unused authorizations can be sold

Carbon credits are generated and sold

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REDD

The great disillusionment

Thomas Fatheuer


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Thomas Fatheuer studied social sciences and classical philology in Münster, Germany. Between 1992 and 2010, he lived and worked in Brazil. From 2000 to 2003, he worked for the German Development Service (DED) and later the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ/GIZ) in the field of tropical forest preservation, acting as a consultant to the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment. From 2003 to 2010, he was appointed the director of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Brazil. Since 2011, he has worked as a consultant and author in Berlin, and is a board member of the Kooperation Brasilien e.V. (KoBra) network.

The REDD process has gained momentum since the 2007 climate change conference in Bali. At the start, hopes and expectations were high. Reducing deforestation was to no longer be a burden, but rather a good business. This simple message electrified the forest sector, which took the prospect of billions of euros for international forest protection seriously.

The underlying idea was by all means plausible: if CO_2 emissions could be avoided by reducing deforestation, then this avoidance could in turn be quantified and expressed in euros or dollars. After all, CO_2 is also traded – or rather, the reduction in CO_2 can be converted into tradable certificates. This logic is based on a measurable reduction in CO_2. Doubts rapidly surfaced, however: couldn't such a mechanism favour exactly those who have benefited the most from deforestation to date? Couldn't it become something of a reward for the "bad boys"? And what about those, who have preserved the forest? In the wake of such questions, REDD became REDD+ and the concept of preserving forests was taken up into the concept.

Eight years after Bali, the situation is more than sobering: the anticipated cash flow has failed to materialise, and REDD certificates cannot be traded on the major emissions markets and instead remain limited to the relatively small voluntary carbon market. And yet, REDD has become a hot topic in the forest sector: the World Bank and United Nations have set up billion-euro programmes; Norway and Germany are also investing considerable sums in a bilateral cooperation. REDD readiness processes have been initiated in almost all countries of the world with forested regions. In the space of just a few years, the international corporation in the forest sector has experienced a formidable "REDDification". A whole REDD package has been prepared during the climate negotiations. However, the funds are lacking – for an approach initiated as a financing mechanism, not an entirely unimportant detail.

Over the years, the underlying REDD concept has undergone an important

transformation. It soon became clear that the funds expected from the sale of CO_2 certificates would not suffice to compete with the earnings from deforestation if the previously forested areas were to be used for commercial agriculture. REDD simply cannot compete with the cultivation of soya beans or oil palms. Advocates of REDD also no longer dispute this.

REDD therefore does not work as an economic incentive to encourage the key actors in deforestation to preserve forests. However, for groups making extensive use of natural resources, the prospective financial compensation can by all means prove attractive. Thus REDD has increasingly become even more of a mechanism for indigenous peoples and traditional communities – so for exactly those, who have not destroyed the forest on a large scale. That being said, indigenous peoples and traditional communities naturally also create fields in forested areas and farm the land. Hence scenarios for increasing deforestation can also be construed here and the REDD reduction mechanism consequently applied. This works all the better the larger the threat: the more deforestation is feared, the more it can be reduced. Exactly those people whose use of the forest has not destroyed it are being branded forest destroyers in the logic of REDD projects.

However, for the indigenous peoples and traditional communities, inclusion in the REDD logic has one further serious implication: support is now linked to a quantifiable and verifiable reduction in CO_2. In the language of international cooperation, this is known as being "results based". The starting point is not the rights of indigenous peoples, but rather the intended project outcomes. To achieve this, a complex project concept must be developed: a baseline determined, "business-as-usual" scenario conceived, the CO_2 measured. Such projects can only be developed and implemented by consulting firms or larger NGOs. The consequence: indigenous peoples are now becoming dependent on them.

In the early days of the REDD process, particularly indigenous groups (and the NGOs working with them) insisted that if there were no rights, there would be no REDD. This was based on the assumption that forest protection is only possible with the involvement of the people ("forest-depending people") and that legal protection (and particularly land rights) for indigenous peoples and local communities was an essential requirement. Official

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Indigenous rights

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 guarantees indigenous peoples legal protection and entitlement to a variety of basic rights. To date, the "Convention concerning Indigenous Tribal People in Independent Countries" is the only international law that safeguards indigenous rights in this way. Adopted in 1989, the Convention has so far been ratified by a total of 22 states.

Besides ILO 169, the right of indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making processes affecting them is also anchored in other international conventions, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and the national legislation of a few countries: the principle of free and prior informed consent (FPIC) grants indigenous communities the right to come to a self-determined consensus according to their principles and to give or withhold their consent to a proposed project.

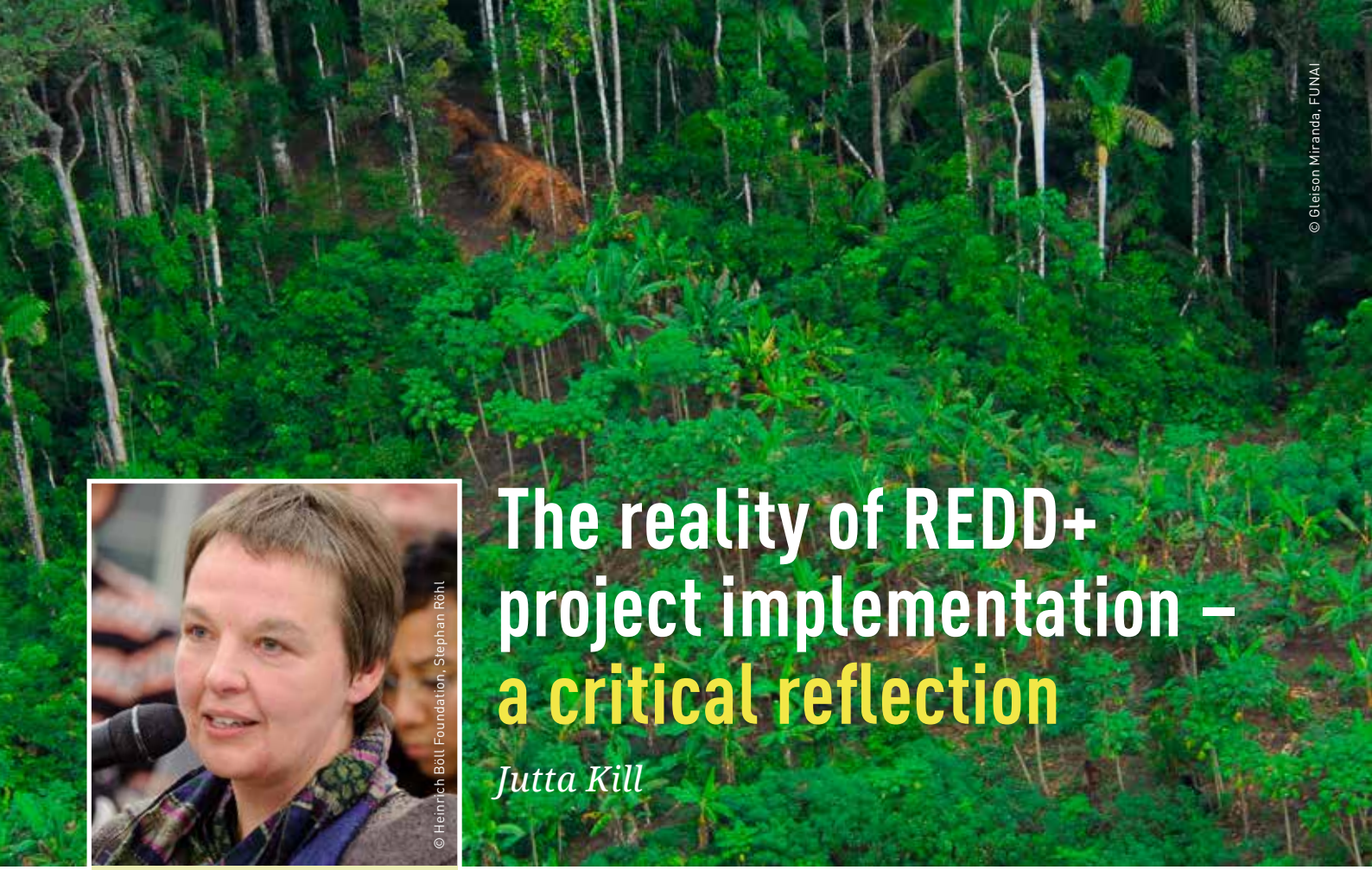
sources also repeatedly emphasised the importance of clarifying and safeguarding rights. Solving legal issues is anything but trivial and so the foreseeable soon happened: land rights went from being a condition to being a question that had to be considered and included in the development. The place to take rights into account are the safeguards, which constitute guidelines for implementation. The REDD safeguards state that international agreements and laws should respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Safeguards are not binding, however. Rather, the recommendation in one of the opening paragraphs is that they "should be promoted and supported". A weaker wording is barely possible; indeed, even "moderate" non-governmental organisations criticised the wording of the safeguards as too non-committal. Ultimately, this criticism is of no consequence. The REDD process continues.

Many non-governmental organisations accompanying the REDD process saw and see in the safeguards the guarantee that they are "getting REDD right". This is not in fact the case: the safeguards relate to the implementation of REDD, not to the guaranteeing of rights. The aim is not to guarantee rights, but rather to minimise risks during project implementation.

REDD links the life prospects of indigenous peoples to a CO_2 logic. This is fundamental and anything but trivial – as is seen in the implementation of REDD projects and approaches. In these life prospects, the rights of indigenous peoples become "non-carbon benefits". It is not the needs of the communities that structure a project. Rather, these must be adjusted in the CO_2 logic. **In terms of its logic, REDD is not a bottom-up approach. Indigenous peoples have a long history of battles and demands. It is not known that reducing CO_2 emissions was ever among these. REDD is perhaps the world's largest top-down tool in development cooperation.** This is no different when projects are allegedly implemented according to the principle of **free, prior and informed consent** (FPIC). For indigenous peoples are always confronted with an approach whose logic has already been set that they are at best able to modify.

The fact that indigenous peoples and local communities still participate has to do with the huge financial expectation that REDD brings with it – and the lack of alternatives. At any rate, REDD has already achieved one foreseeable outcome: it has divided many indigenous organisations. ¶



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The reality of REDD+ project implementation – a critical reflection

Jutta Kill

Between 2000 and 2012, Jutta Kill coordinated the climate campaign run by the non-governmental organisation, FERN, and published countless articles on the subject of emissions trading
In her work, she examines the field of tension between consumption in industrial countries and its impact on forest usage and protection in the global south. Kill takes a critical stance to the economic valuation of nature and the consequences for traditional forest peoples and smallhold farmers: she primarily considers voluntary certification schemes, emissions trading and the economic valuation of nature as instruments that facilitate ecologically unequal trade. She has documented the local impacts of countless projects offering tradable emission credits. Since 2010, market-based instruments for forest protection and trading with biodiversity credits from projects in Latin America and Africa have formed the focus of her research. Jutta Kill currently lives in Berlin.

Hundreds of millions of euros have been spent to pioneer the REDD+ concept ever since the proposal for "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" (REDD) was adopted at the 2007 UN climate meeting in Bali, Indonesia. The World Bank and governments in favour of linking forest protection with a carbon trading mechanism have organized meetings and funded programs to promote their version of REDD+. Consultants have prepared methodologies for REDD projects, carbon companies and conservation NGOs implement REDD pilot initiatives and model projects, and another set of consultants certifies those projects and the methodologies used in REDD+ project documents.

What can we learn from these nearly 10 years of experience with REDD+ project implementation and countless community workshops, booklets and handbooks that promote REDD+ initiatives? In early 2015, the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) published a report that provides insights into what happens when REDD+ projects and their proponents arrive in the forest. The 24 examples discussed in the publication **'REDD: A Collection of Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies'** are all known to have caused harm and given rise to grievances from communities in the project area. Many more examples exist where perceptions and experiences of forest peoples and forest-dependent communities contrast starkly with the stories of local communities rejoicing to participate in the REDD project that REDD proponents tell. However, documenting the realities of REDD+ projects is complicated by the fact that they are often located in remote, hard-to-reach places where access to and contact with those critical of the project is easy for project proponents to control.

Recurring patterns of conflicts and restrictions on traditional forest use make REDD+ a threat for forest peoples

Even the limited selection of experiences presented in the WRM publication shows a disturbing trend in REDD+: almost all REDD+ projects

and programmes featured blame deforestation on forest peoples practicing shifting cultivation and on small-scale peasant farming! But the assumption that "'slash-and-burn' agriculture is the main driver of deforestation" has been shown to be false many times.[1] Shifting cultivation plays a central role in the social fabric and is often enshrined in the legal or customary fabric of ascertaining forest usage rights. Those who put the blame for deforestation on small-scale agriculture regularly overlook these complexities. They also fail to focus on land grabbing for agricultural commodity plantations as a factor in driving shifting cultivators towards ever shorter rotation cycles where traditional shifting cultivation practises are altered and contribute to forest degradation.

REDD misses the big picture of destruction

Most REDD+ projects seem to assume that they make a contribution to slowing climate change through reducing deforestation – yet very few convincingly demonstrate how they are addressing the major drivers of deforestation. In fact, those perpetuating the claim that shifting cultivation is a key driver of deforestation more often than not remain silent about how to tackle the real drivers of forest loss – and climate change. A recent CIFOR report on REDD+ activities in Laos describes a situation that appears to be valid beyond the specific examples in Laos: **"[T]he approaches taken in REDD so far have tended to view smallholder livelihoods in relative isolation from the larger drivers of deforestation and degradation in which they are enmeshed. [...] While most projects identified at least one of the "other" major drivers – industrial tree plantations, infrastructure development, timber extraction, mining and hydropower – as important to their particular landscape of intervention, shifting cultivation and non-industrial (i.e. small-scale) agricultural expansion are almost exclusively the drivers with which projects choose to engage"**[2] . Underlying causes of deforestation – extraction of oil, coal, mining, infrastructure, large-scale dams, industrial logging and international trade in agricultural commodities – routinely remain unaddressed in REDD+ initiatives.


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This then raises the question of what contribution REDD+ is actually making to climate protection if it is proving unable to tackle the major drivers causing forest loss! Even carbon market proponents such as a US group Forest Trends warn that REDD+ focussed on small-scale farming is missing the point. Their report in 2014 highlighted the extent of large-scale, often illegal deforestation as a key driver of deforestation: **"nearly half (49%) of all recent tropical deforestation is the result of illegal clearing for commercial agriculture. [...] Half of this illegal destruction was driven by overseas demand for agricultural commodities including palm oil, beef, soy, and wood products."** [3] **REDD+ will by definition of a market-base**d mechanism not address those 50% of the illegal deforestation.

But REDD+ will also fail to stop most legal but destructive deforestation that is linked to large-scale monocultures of soya and palm oil expanding ever further into forests. The profits from this large-scale destruction are orders of magnitude above the average of USD 5 per ton

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of CO_2 for REDD+ credits traded on the voluntary market and REDD+ 'performance payment' deals such as the German government's REDD Early Movers Programme or the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Carbon Fund.

The Central Kalimantan-based NGO Yayasan Petak Danum Kalimantan Tengah, Indonesia, and 11 other groups also succinctly made the point that the now cancelled Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership was missing the big picture of destruction: **"the KFCP project with a 120,000 ha [...] project area pales in comparison with the 15.1 million ha of the total area in central Kalimantan, at least 83 per cent of which will be converted or destroyed through either oil palm, monoculture pulp plantations or mining permits issued by the relevant authorities. [...] Emissions from such a huge area will drastically overwhelm the insignificant and small reduction from the KFCP site, assuming that KFCP will eventually lead to emission reduction, which is an unrealistically optimistic assertion."**[4] The same could be said about almost all REDD+ projects mentioned in the WRM publication.

REDD fuels conflict in and among communities

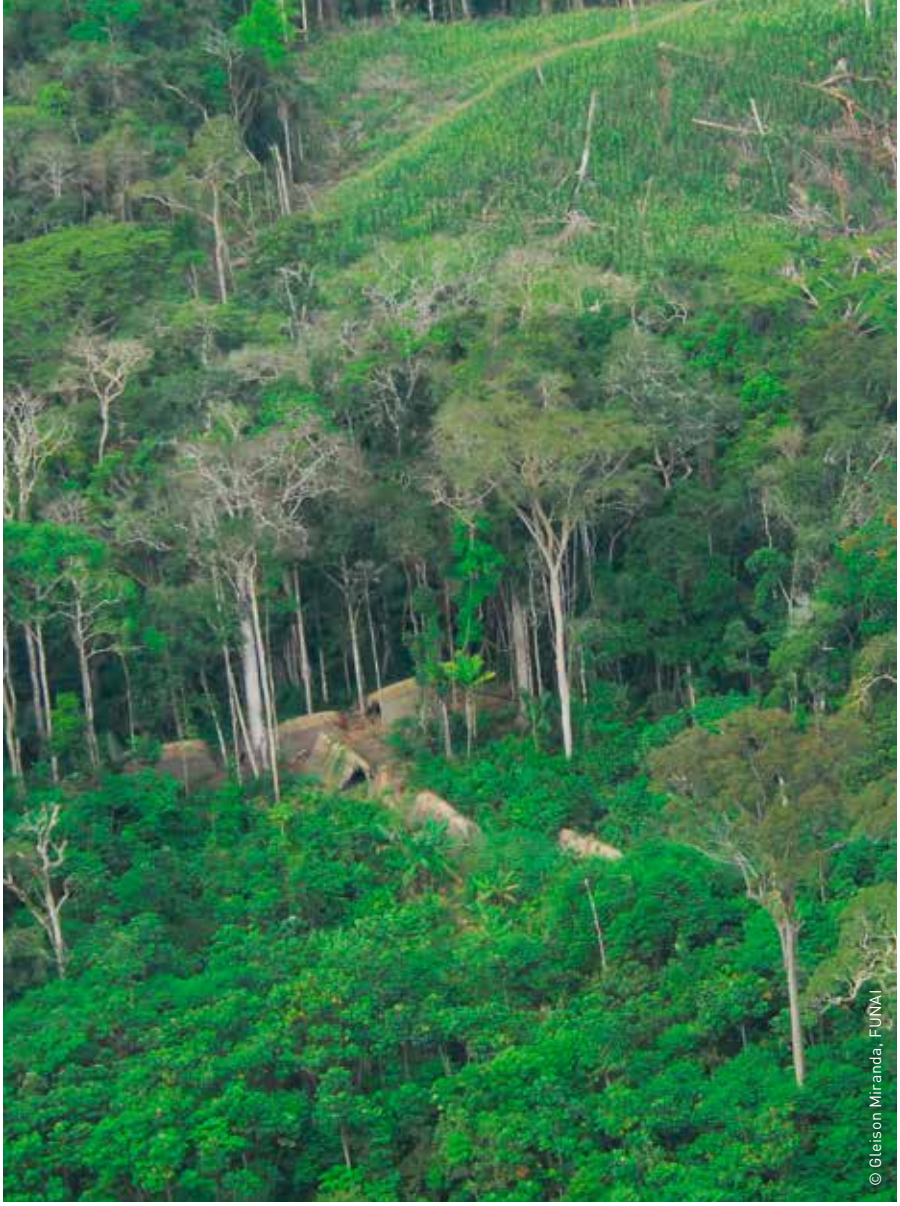
Another recurring feature of REDD+ initiatives is that when they arrive in communities, they risk fuelling conflicts over access to land and provoking violence against community members or generating conflict within communities over a project motivated by a cause from the outside: industrialised countries' unwillingness to live up to their historic responsibility to drastically

[1] Gokowski et al, 2005. The Forest Margins of Cameroon. In: Cherly Palm et al..Slash and Burn Agriculture, the Search for an Alternative. Columbia University Press.

[2] Dwyer MB and Ingalls M. 2015. REDD+ at the crossroads: Choices and tradeoffs for 2015-2020 in Laos. Working Paper 179. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

[3] Sam Lawson et al. (2014). Consumer Goods and Deforestation: An Analysis of the Extent and Nature of Illegality in Forest Conversion for Agriculture and Timber Plantations. A Forest Trends report. **http://www.forest-trends.org/documents/files/doc_4718.pdf**

[4] Yayasan Petak Danum Letter to the Australian Delegation to Central Kalimantan, February 2011, RE: Community Concerns with the KFCP. **http://www.redd-monitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/YPD-Letter-to-Australian-Delegation.pdf**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reduce and phase out fossil fuel use. Or consumers' unwillingness to accept that there is a large cost to the consumerist lifestyle that is paid by others and that cannot be remedied by certified 'green consumption'. Only in very few of the examples were communities informed that the carbon credits the REDD+ project on their territories would generate would be sold to polluters in industrialised countries. The buyers include some of the largest corporations whose business is built on fossil fuel extraction – and thus destruction of the territories of indigenous peoples elsewhere.

Experience with REDD+ projects also shows that in stark contrast to the talk of 'participative project implementation', communities are rarely involved in the conception of the forest carbon project to be implemented on their territories.

When they are eventually informed about the REDD+ project, the information provided to communities has often been biased or incomplete: many promises of benefits and employment are usually made by project proponents if the community agrees to the proposed REDD activity. What the villagers get in return for the promises, however, is mainly harassment, restrictions on the land use that provides their livelihood and blame for being responsible for deforestation and causing climate change.

Where communities did receive benefits or are offered jobs, these often increase inequalities within the community: benefits go primarily to local elites and restrictions applied mainly to marginalised community members. Another disturbing aspect of REDD+ projects is that surveillance and monitoring measures focus on community use of forests, not large-scale deforestation or biodiversity destruction. The use of little aeroplanes for surveillance of customary land use in the WWF and Air France project in Madagascar is just one example of the intrusion REDD projects can cause.

Many REDD+ project also rely on community members to patrol and report on violations of REDD project rules. The tasks of such 'environmental agents' or 'REDD monitors' include passing information to the REDD+ project owners about community members opening new forest gardens or engaging in other activities that are prohibited by REDD project rules. REDD proponents often count the employment of community members as patrols as a social benefit of their REDD activity. **"There is something [...] troubling about conservation policy that seeks to undermine local social cohesion by asking people to report other members of their community, or even their relatives, for environmental 'crimes' defined largely by outsiders,"** Ivan Scales writes about a similar practice that conservation organisations use in conservation projects in Madagascar [5].

REDD a risk to rights

REDD+ initiatives almost always fail to fully acknowledge the complexities, uncertainties and potential or existing conflicts over rights and access to forests in the chosen project locations. At best, the issue is condensed into a project objective to be addressed sometime during implementation of the REDD project.

Sometimes, REDD+ initiatives include securing land title or customary rights as one of the project objectives. But even where such rights might be recognised on paper, implementation of REDD projects – especially those that

generate carbon credits – is likely to lead to forest peoples effectively losing the control over their territories. Tradable REDD credits are a form of property title. Those who own the credit do not need to own the land nor the trees on the land. What they do own is the right to control and restrict traditional usage practises on the land; to monitor what is happening in the territory and to request access to the territory at any time they choose as long as they own the carbon credit.

This has been confirmed in research by CENSAT – Friends of the Earth Colombia. In 2013, they undertook research into the contracts of REDD projects that involved communities directly (often, communities are not involved but are only affected by the REDD project's activities) [6]. CENSAT found that many REDD contracts were full of "words written with the intention of not being understood, not being fulfilled". Often, the obligations that communities or families enter into are not clearly explained or are described in ambiguous terms that can easily be misinterpreted. Seeking legal advice on such technical documents is complicated by the fact that almost all REDD contracts contained strict confidentiality clauses. Many of the contracts and project documents are also written in English, with only a partial or no translation into local languages, which further restricts the possibility for communities to fully inform themselves about REDD projects presented to them.

REDD offsets: immoral and unjust

REDD projects, and carbon offsets in general, raise an ethical 'problem': the burden to reduce what are essentially sustenance emissions linked to a very low-carbon way of life falls to the poorest members of society who have very little scope with which to adapt. REDD offsets generated by those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis and are pushed to alter the land use that provides their sustenance allow the most affluent members of society, who have a historic responsibility for climate change, to pay their way out of the responsibility to change their lifestyle. When, for example, a company offers its clients the opportunity to offset their carbon emissions by financing a REDD+ project in a remote tropical forest area, it equates carbon emissions from leisure activities (air travel for holidays, the purchase of a computer, the FIFA World Cup, a Formula One motor racing event, etc.) with carbon emitted to meet basic needs and fundamental rights (feeding oneself using shifting cultivation and traditional forest gardens).


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REDD is fatally flawed

The examples of REDD+ projects and programmes described in the WRM publication 'REDD: A collection of conflicts, contradictions and lies' and many other, less well documented REDD+ initiatives reveal some disturbing patterns that explain why – despite the rhetoric of forest peoples being the main beneficiaries of REDD+ – in reality, REDD+ fails to address the underlying causes of forest loss and climate change and has turned into a threat to forest peoples' way of life.

¶

[5] Ivan R. Scales (2014). Conservation and environmental management in Madagascar. Chapter 15. Routledge.

[6] CENSAT (2013). Contratos REDD: Despojo ilegítimo, por vías legales'. In: December 2013 issue No 79 of Biodiversidade: Leyes, políticas y **economía verde al servicio del despojo de los pueblos**. **http://www.wrm.org.uy/html/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Esp_Biodiversidad_12_2013.pdf**

REDD+ Indígena Amazónico (RIA / Indigenous REDD+)

Progress and challenges

Roberto Espinoza, AIDESEP

The climate catastrophe is no longer a future scenario: the effects of unchecked global warming are increasingly visible, whereby it has meanwhile been proven that climate change is caused by us humans. The present-day consumption-oriented social model is based on the principle of extractivism and thus on the destruction and exploitation of nature. However, current suggestions for solutions do not sufficiently address causes such as deforestation and the resulting emissions.

As such, the REDD+ concept affords dual significance: both with regards to the aim of REDD+ and to one of its tools. The aim of reducing the emissions from forest destruction and degradation caused by industrial agriculture, logging, mining for fossil resources, etc. is today decisive to the survival of humankind and our planet. However, when the tool to achieve this aim is the trading of emission credits (offsets), we arrive at the wrong solutions. The basic idea behind REDD+ of assigning the carbon dioxide stored in forests a monetary value does not lead to climate-friendly development. Instead, the necessary fundamental change by civilisation fails to materialise and indigenous peoples are deprived of control over their forests. For these tools place responsibility for the forests in the hands of investors. REDD+ thus becomes a threat: so-called "carbon cowboys" violate indigenous rights and environmental regulations.

Neo-extractivism

This term describes a post-neoliberal variant of the classic economic model based on the export of raw materials and over-exploitation. It is mostly used to refer to Latin America where governments use the earnings to finance development and social programmes – with all their negative environmental and social consequences.

The response of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon basin to this development is called the **REDD+ Indígena Amazónico**, or RIA for short. The indigenous REDD+ was developed in Peru in 2010 by AIDESEP as a creative alternative for the indigenous peoples of Amazonia, and has been supported by COICA throughout the entire Amazon region since 2011. We meet the global REDD+ process with this concept and transform potential threats into opportunities for indigenous peoples and their forests. RIA thus makes a concrete contribution to mitigating global warming.

Similar to the conventional REDD+, RIA pursues the aim of reducing the emissions from deforestation. It should not be reduced to the mere establishment of a profit-

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(*) Abbreviations: FIP, Forest Investment Programme – FCPF, Forest Carbon Partnership Facility – GCF, Green Climate Fund – GHG, Greenhouse Gases – INDC, Intended National Determined Contributions for the reduction of greenhouse gases – MRV, Monitoring, Reporting and Verification – RPP, plan de preparación de REDD – SIS, Safeguard Information Systems

based emissions trading market though. RIA refers to compliance with the rights outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Resolution 61/295 adopted by the General Assembly) in addition to the International Labour Organisation's Convention No. 169 on cultural adaptation. If national policy must be adjusted to the cosmovisions and rights of indigenous peoples with regard to education, health, forests, agriculture, etc., then the same also applies for REDD+.

RIA

The REDD+ Indígena Amazónico (RIA), which is also known as the indigenous REDD+, was proposed by COICA as a socially-acceptable alternative to the UN-REDD+ programmes. It contributes to climate protection based on the sustainable management of indigenous territories in the Amazon basin. RIA strives to gain legal recognition for indigenous territories to support the inhabitants of these regions in the protection of their forest living space.

One central component of RIA is the measurement, reporting and auditing of REDD+ activities by indigenous peoples. The territorial monitoring of climate changes is thus placed in their hands.

The eight central elements of RIA, which must be developed further, are:

1. The long-term national and local "development plan" (plan de vida plena, PVP)

REDD+ should not constitute the template for how the community should develop in the long term, but rather the development plan (**plan de vida**). This document determines and defines how benefits and remuneration should look within RIA. As such, the **plan de vida plena** goes beyond the mere aspects of CO_2 and climate, without disregarding the forests' carbon sink function. Self-determination of indigenous peoples forms the central basis according to which every process – including REDD+ – must be oriented.

2. Territorial security

The legalisation of indigenous territories with collective rights titles for the communities, which secure control over the surface soil, subsoil, forests and waters, counts among the key conditions for local REDD+ projects and national REDD+ policies (such as the FIP, FCPF, RPP, UN-REDD* programmes). This also counts among the "early safeguards" to include in the SIS* and can serve as an indicator for the (lack of) progress within REDD+ (Carbon Fund, Green Climate Fund).

AIDESEP

The Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana AIDESEP is the interethnic association for development of the Peruvian rainforest. Established in 1980, the association comprises a total of 65 regional and local organisations, and campaigns on the national level for the rights of more than 650,000 indigenous people and recognition of their territories. AIDESEP's primary concern is the situation of indigenous peoples dwelling in the Peruvian Amazon region. The association is working on alternative development models that take the indigenous cosmovision and ways of life into account.
Climate Alliance supports AIDESEP in addition to regional and local member organisations.
aidesep.org.pe
climatealliance.org

3. Holistic forest management

The climate protection, adaptation and resilience processes, which are today considered separately from one another, must be linked. Sustainable management based on the traditional indigenous concepts combines productive use with simultaneous protection. This type of forest protection is more effective and efficient than straightforward "museum-like" nature protection. An analysis of satellite images makes clear that exactly the areas traditionally used by indigenous communities remain extensive areas of intact forest. "Holistic" forest management involves the indigenous peoples and their respective culture in their natural surrounds – instead of separating them from these.

Curbing the uncontrolled extractivism, which is the real driver of deforestation, means climate protection. This would help counter the negative climatic effects (adaptation) and thus contribute to restoration and regeneration (resilience) of the forests. Within this, it becomes apparent that the three approaches of climate protection, adaptation and resilience

are linked. The political sphere continues to treat these separately despite the fact that combining the three approaches (e.g. in the INDCs*) could help achieve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

4. Ecosystem measurements of the "living forest"

Instead of complex measurement processes, simple methods are sufficient to guarantee preservation of the forests' up to 24 ecosystem functions. Thus, the consideration and evaluation of satellite images with regard to forest cover and sample lots is sufficient to estimate the carbon sequestration. Only emissions trading (offsetting) requires the separate measurement of CO_2 on the micro level to be able to measure the compensation values down to the smallest detail. This is immensely complicated, however, as individual measurements must be taken in the tree trunks, leaves, fruits, surface soil and subsoil. What's more, the different, contradictory methods used for this render even the trading of emissions certificates impossible (cf. Munden Project report).

Financing instruments for REDD+ programmes

The UN-REDD, Forest Investment Programme (FIP), and international Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) are just a few of the multilateral instruments providing financial support in the implementation of REDD+ projects.

The UN-REDD programme was initiated in 2008 to support states in the preparation and implementation of national REDD+ strategies. More than 53 partner countries have since been supported within the scope of this programme.

The FCPF and FIP are two World Bank funding programmes.

While the FIP was initiated in 2008 and meanwhile supports pilot projects in eight countries, a total of 37 countries have been supported by 13 funders thanks to the FCPF.

5. Compensation via public mechanisms

The REDD+ funds should be public and thus under public control – so neither private nor state controlled. They should be controlled by civil society with the involvement of indigenous peoples, as is already the case in Brazil and Peru. The indigenous communities should be remunerated for their historic contribution to well-managed forests. Within this, not only the carbon sink function but also other ecosystem functions such as light refraction, evaporation, etc. should be taken into account. The "carbon cowboys" emerging as a result of the prospect of emissions trading and the lack of state controls must be prevented. Hence national regulations regarding the accreditation, monitoring and sanctioning of bad practices among pioneering initiatives (such as the German REDD+ Early Movers initiative) are necessary.

6. Autonomous, indigenous, state-recognised monitoring (MRV*/ MRVI)

Monitoring and reporting in the indigenous territories is today known as MRVI, which stands for the measurement, reporting and verification work conducted by indigenous communities. Responsibility for the use of new early warning systems with regard to the "mega drivers" and degradation (e.g. through palm oil plantations, industrial agriculture, mega projects, exploitation of fossil fuels, mining, road construction, illegal logging and settlement) should be placed in the hands of the indigenous peoples. The information they obtain must be recognised and taken into account by the state.

7. Effective reduction of deforestation and greenhouse gases

RIA empowers indigenous communities in their historic battle for territorial and collective rights, which is why the concept guarantees the continued resistance against the threats presented by extractivism and so-called progress. The states bow to the interests of capital when it comes to the so-called "mega drivers", which is why the INDCs* are only formulated in such a vague and unconvincing manner. RIA stands for the effective net reduction in greenhouse gases and does not "exchange" them for impunity for extractive activities through emissions certificates from REDD+.

8. Integrated approaches to adapt to climate change with special consideration of indigenous women

It is very likely that the climate crisis will worsen and the formation of savannah and destruction of forests will continue. Adaptation by the indigenous peoples is unavoidable and urgently needed for their survival. RIA offers an integrated concept for climate protection and adaptation to climate change. As recognised in the INDCs*, both approaches complement one another. In contrast to the bureaucratic and ineffective state adjustment processes, within RIA, adaptation plans are among others contrasted with the fundamentals of water catchment areas, which have been developed by indigenous communities (with a decisive role played by indigenous women).


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RIA has progressed since 2010 and is attracting attention and meeting with recognition as an alternative counterproposal to REDD+ from the indigenous peoples of Amazonia. RIA has become a component of national plans for REDD+ in addition to the climate change fund in Peru. Progress is also being made in the implementation of RIA pilot projects on indigenous territories in Peru (e.g. Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri), Colombia (e.g. Resguardo Inírida) and Brazil (e.g. Território Igarapé Lourdes).

The Paris Agreement (COP21) is not sufficient to halt the planet's suicide. Within this framework, the contributions of the indigenous peoples and their territories with over 240 million hectares and the proposals for the INDC*, SIS* and climate fund based on RIA are of decisive importance. ¶

Alternative forest protection concepts in Colombia: the CMARI pilot project

OPIAC

The CMARI (**Cuenca Media y Alta del Río Inírida**) indigenous area is located in the province of Guainía in the east of Colombia. It was declared a protected area in 1989. Since 2012, it has been one of the pilot projects initiated by COICA (**Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica**), the umbrella organisation of indigenous organisations of the Amazon basin, **within the scope of the REDD+ Indígena Amazónico (RIA)**.

The area is almost the size of Belgium (27,625 km^2), which corresponds to 2.4% of the total surface area of Colombia. The protected area is home to more than 2,000 people belonging to the Puinave and Curripaco indigenous peoples. They live in 17 communities that lie along the Inírida River.

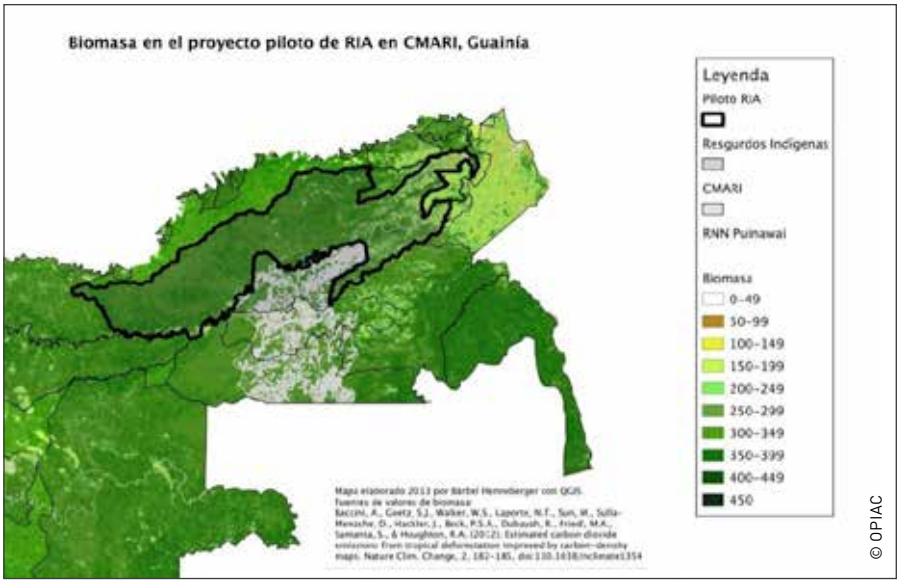
For generations, the around 400 families living in the CMARI protected area have preserved their living space, protected the area from deforestation, and thus made an important contribution to climate protection.

The rainforests' immense biodiversity is the region's natural asset and this also forms the basis of the peoples' livelihoods. Hunting and fishing, gathering and agriculture secure the food supply. Both the construction materials and also jewellery and medicinal plants originate from the rainforest. The ways of life of the Puinave and Curripaco peoples are based on the premise that the natural habitat offers everything they need to provide for their families. Their philosophy is preservation of the rainforest as living space: they only extract as much as is necessary to live and is reasonable for nature.

The people need national and international support to preserve this unique natural habitat with all its biodiversity and cultural wealth: the basic supply and control of indigenous territories must also be safeguarded with the support of state stakeholders.

Besides the intrusion of settlers from other parts of Colombia, the biggest threats to the protected area are primarily the illegal exploitation of resources and the strong presence of guerilla groups. However, the greatest danger lies in migration of the indigenous peoples themselves: many young people move to the nearby cities. This is due to the in part extremely precarious health conditions and educational offerings as well as the poor infrastructure and mobility. At the same time, the consequences of climate change are already tangible: lengthy periods of drought endanger their livelihoods.

The indigenous population has protected and preserved this area of high biodiversity. Their presence is essential; if the Puinave and Curripaco leave the protected area, the forests will disappear.



CMARI – a RIA pilot project

CMARI was initiated in 2012 as one of the six RIA pilot projects of the OPIAC (**Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana**) national organisation and COICA.

With a surface area of more than 2.7 million hectares, it is one of the largest carbon sinks in the world. Industrial logging is relatively limited in the protected area – as it is throughout the entire province of Guainía. As such, this area is in fact less attractive for REDD+

Guainía

Guainía is a department in the Amazon region of Colombia that is home to an estimated 36,000 people. It borders on Venezuela in the east and Brazil in the south. Over half the population lives in the capital of Iñírida. While agriculture dominates, gold and diamond mines can also be found in the border regions.

programmes. However, the biodiversity and intact rainforest are extremely important and worth protecting for the people dwelling in the forest as well as for the global climate. Exactly these factors speak for the RIA pilot project.

With over 100,000 hectares of forest, the strength and expertise of the local indigenous organisation, the land rights secured, and the (political) support of the local indigenous communities, CMARI fulfils the four criteria that are prerequisites for RIA projects. The OPIAC and ASOCRIGUA (**Asociación del Consejo Regional Indígena del Guainía**) have organised numerous workshops and meetings in the area. The pilot project is well received by the local population and has been met with widespread support from the local indigenous organisations on the international, national and local levels. This will undoubtedly contribute to the project's success.

CMARI serves as a model for all indigenous territories that are (still) virtually untouched by industrial logging and in which the natural balance remains largely in equilibrium. For these areas to continue to withstand the pressure from outside, supporting programmes in direct cooperation with the people living in the area and the according political measures are necessary.

In contrast to conventional REDD+ programmes, RIA focuses on the people – so the local indigenous communities who protect and preserve their forest habitat and thus their ways of life and culture. Support must be provided here.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OPIAC

Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana

Established in 1995, OPIAC is the national organisation of indigenous peoples in the Colombian Amazon region. It represents 56 indigenous groups comprising a total of around 76,000 people. Their aim: political support for indigenous organisations, protection and recognition of indigenous territories, self-determination for indigenous peoples, and recognition and respect for indigenous rights.

opiac.org.co

Conclusion

Political strategies for action and financial measures should not only be developed for areas affected by widespread deforestation and forest degradation. Far from market-based emissions trading mechanisms, the people who have for centuries protected and preserved their forests must be supported. It must be ensured that these areas remain in the hands of those who live there and manage these sustainably. At the same time, support for the indigenous population is necessary: their lives must be improved – above all to prevent the younger generations from leaving the region. Such a strategy can in turn help prevent deforestation and guarantee the binding of many million tons of carbon.

The major difference between RIA projects and initiatives within the scope of REDD+ strategies is that RIA does not only take effect when the deforestation and thus degradation of the forests is well advanced. Exactly this should be avoided – to protect indigenous peoples and contribute to protection of the global climate. ¶

Holger Matthäus was born in Warnemünde in 1964. He studied physics before going on to work for Rostock's municipal administration from 1989 on development of the environmental field, among others with responsibility for climate protection. He has been the Senator for Construction and the Environment in the Hanseatic city of Rostock since 2008. In 2015, he was appointed the Chairman of Climate Alliance's executive board.

How local forest protection serves global climate protection

"Protection of the natural resources in the Amarakaeri protected area": the partnership between the Hanseatic city of Rostock and the Harakmbut indigenous people of Peru

Holger Matthäus, Hanseatic City of Rostock

Over 400,000 hectares in Peru's tropical rainforest should be protected – the city of Rostock is campaigning for just this within the scope of its Climate Alliance membership.

In April 2014, the parliament of the Hanseatic city of Rostock agreed a climate master plan known as the **Masterplan 100% Klimaschutz**. Rostock thus committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 95% and energy consumption by 50% by 2050. This plan primarily focuses on the local level and pools the measures of local stakeholders. By linking their local climate protection activities with protection of the Amarakaeri protection area in Peru, the Hanseatic city also meets its global responsibility.

Known as the "Peruvian capital of biodiversity", **Madre de Dios** is located in the south-east of the country. Tropical rainforests, which are renowned for their biodiversity, cover almost the entire area. The **Amarakaeri** Communal Reserve (**Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri**, RCA) is one of seven protected areas in this region. It has been home to the **Harakmbut indigenous people** for centuries now. They are considered the guardians of the untouched natural ecosystem and preservers of the biodiversity. However, this diversity, resources such as wood, and the wealth of natural resources in the region also harbour dangers: in their search for precious raw materials, settlers and gold prospectors intrude into the area and destroy the living space for humans and nature. The unabating hunger for resources and financial greed endanger the rainforests – and thus also the global climate.

The absence of monitoring systems, insufficient involvement of indigenous communities in decisions regarding the use of resources, illegal mining, and lack of cooperation between the inhabitants and administrators of the protection area are the source of many conflicts and challenges for the Amarakaeri protected area.

To support the Harakmbut in their endeavours to protect their territories, the Hanseatic city of Rostock entered into a partnership with the indigenous people in 2014, and supports the project for the **protection of the natural resources in the Amarakaeri protected area**. The key aims of this project are demarcation of the boundaries of the protected area through the planting of trees with a certain type of flower, involvement of the indigenous groups living in the

Harakmbut

An estimated 5,000 Harakmbut indigenous people live in the Madre de Dios region of south-east Peru, close to the border with Brazil.

The word Harakmbut means 'people'. The Harakmbut live in countless small communities, some of which speak different languages. Some Harakmbut choose to live in the protected Amarakaeri Communal Reserve.


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area in decision-making processes, and set-up of a monitoring system.

This support by the Hanseatic city of Rostock enables the improved monitoring and analysis of illegal activities in the protection area. The cooperation between the local population and the administration of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve (**Servicio Nacional de Reservas Naturales Protegidas**, SERNANP) has been strengthened and preliminary measures also taken against the illegal activities. Both the local population and RCA employees in addition to representatives from SERNANP are involved in the monitoring, which aims to prevent the intrusion of illegal loggers and gold prospectors. A forest border aims to protect the areas most at risk. While the first trees have already been planted as part of the project, the boundary has been marked with information boards in other places.

Recognition of the land rights of indigenous people is essential for conservation of the rainforest and the preservation of biodiversity. Given that the rainforests are their living space, there is more to their preservation than just protection of the global climate. In the long term, support for the local Amazonian population is the most effective way to protect the rainforests.

Indigenous peoples as municipal rainforest custodians

Territories managed by indigenous communities have similar functions to municipalities. Their inhabitants are as responsible for "maintenance" of the forest as municipalities are for their area. At the same time, safeguarding and improving the living conditions also count among their tasks. This includes the education and health infrastructure as well as economic activities, for example. Development plans must also be prepared for the future, as natural resources should only be used in such a way that they are not destroyed and that future generations dwelling in this area can also live from them.

In its assumption of responsibility for future generations, the project can for example encourage mutual learning processes to help safeguard our existence and encourage the responsible use of the natural resources available to us.

The partnership between Climate Alliance member Rostock and the Harakmbut indigenous people constitutes active protection for the rainforest, and was also presented at a number of events held during the 2015 climate conference in Paris. ¶

Kawsak Sacha – the living forest

Proposal of the Kichwa people of Sarayaku, Ecuador considering climate change

Sarayaku community, Ecuador

Sarayaku

The Kichwa-speaking community of Sarayaku people dwells beside the Bobonaza River in the province of Pastaza in the Ecuadorian Amazon region. The estimated 1,200 members of this community of five villages have lived in this area covering 135,000 hectares for generations.
The name Sarayaku has existed for hundreds of years and means 'river of corn'.
95% of the Sarayaku area is composed of primary forest. Through conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources available in their area, the community pursues its vision and mission of reinforcing the concept of **Sumak** Kawsay (Buen Vivir, "Good Living") and the continued existence of **Kawsak Sacha** (the Living Forest). The community has opposed oil exploitation in its territory since the late 1980s.
sarayaku.org

Kawsak Sacha (The Living Forest) is a proposal for living together with the natural world that grows out of the millennial knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples who inhabit the Amazonian rainforest, and it is one that is also buttressed by recent scientific studies. Whereas the western world treats nature as an undemanding source of raw materials destined exclusively for human use, Kawsak Sacha recognizes that the forest is made up entirely of living selves and the communicative relations they have with each other. These selves, from the smallest plants to the supreme beings who protect the forest, are persons (**runa**) who inhabit the waterfalls, lagoons, swamps, mountains, and rivers, and who, in turn, compose the Living Forest as a whole. These persons live together in community (**llakta**) and carry out their lives in a manner that is similar to human beings. To summarize, in the Living Forest the economic system is an ecological web; the natural world is also a social world.

Kawsak Sacha, understood as sacred territory, is the primordial font of **Sumak Kawsay** (Buen Vivir, "Good Living"). Not only does it provide a home for all of its inhabitants, it also emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually revitalizes them. In this way it regenerates the Indigenous Peoples who live in community with these sylvan selves. That is, the Living Forest nourishes and augments life.

Kawsak Sacha is where we transmit our knowledge and ways of being (**yachay**). It is where our wise people (**yachak**) interrelate with the supreme beings of the forest in order to receive the guidance that leads them along the path of **Sumak Kawsay**. This continuous relation that we Indigenous People have with the beings of the forest is central, for and it depends on the continuity of the Living Forest, which, in turn permits a harmony of life among many kinds of beings, as well as the possibility that we all can continue to live in the future. In essence, the forest is neither simply a landscape for aesthetic appreciation nor a resource for exploitation. Rather, it is the most exalted expression of life itself. It is for this reason that continued coexistence with the Living Forest can lead to **Sumak Kawsay**. This encourages us to propose that maintaining this lively space, based on a continuous relation with its beings, can provide a global ethical orientation as we search for better ways to face the worldwide ecological crisis in which we live today. In this manner **Sumak Kawsay** can become a planetary reality.

Proposal: declaration of Kawsak Sacha (the Living Forest)

1) Our Concrete Proposal consists in attaining national and international recognition for **Kawsak Sacha**


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(the Living Forest), as a new legal category of protected area that would be considered Sacred Territory and Biological and Cultural Patrimony of the Kichwa People in Ecuador. Our goal is to preserve the territory of Indigenous Peoples, and especially the material and spiritual relations that we establish in the Living Forest with the other beings that inhabit it. This implies that these areas have to be declared zones that are free of oil, mineral, and lumber extraction.

2) The Living Forest proposes a way of achieving **Sumak Kawsay** by means of the application and execution of Life Plans (Plan de Vida) that are sustained by the three foundational pillars of the **Sumak Kawsay** Plan: Fertile Land (**Sumak Allpa**); Living in Community (**Runaguna Kawsay**); and Forest Wisdom (**Sacha Runa Yachay**). As a space for the development of Sumak Kawsay, the Living Forest proposes another way to think about wealth. That is, by protecting the forest's sacred places **Kawsak Sacha** ensures a healthy territory free of contamination as well as abundant productive land that can help preserve food sovereignty. In this way **Kawsak Sacha** aims to serve as a viable economic model.

3) Understood as Territory, the Living Forest, thanks to forty years of communal effort, is now demarcated by a border of flowering and fruiting trees visible from the air. We call this vital cordon a Frontier of Life or Trail of Flowers (**Jatun Kawsak Sisa** Ñampi). By means of the flower's ephemeral beauty, the Frontier of Life conveys the fragility of life and the fertility of the Living Forest that it both surrounds and protects. In keeping with the central pillar of **Kawsak Sacha** – that the forest is composed entirely of communicative relations among the various selves that make it up – this Frontier of Life aims to communicate to outsiders the delimitation and existence of the area categorized as **Kawsak Sacha**. Any outsider can thus appreciate the beauty of the Living Forest and the living presence of Mother Earth (**Pachamama**) thanks to a multi-colored cloak of flowers. At the same time it creates the possibility of beginning to dialogue with the beings that make up the Living Forest. In this way the Frontier of Life creates a permanent forum for communication among beings. This can help the entire world recuperate the original understanding of Mother Earth as a shared home. Furthermore, since it produces flowers and fruits that feed the beings of the forest, the Frontier of Life fosters the life of the forest. Finally, its regular maintenance by community members seeks to teach our youth the basic principles of **Kawsak Sacha**. In sum, the Frontier of Life is a symbol of life that manifests **Kawsak Sacha's** principles at the same time that it serves as a tool for its protection. The message it delivers is aimed at the entire world with the goal of reaching the hearts and minds of human beings everywhere, encouraging us all to reflect on the close relation between Human Rights and the Rights of Nature.

Kawsak Sacha is a robust proposal capable of defending the Rights of Nature as it is enshrined in the Ecuadorian Constitution, which, in addition, also legally recognizes the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems as a foundation for **Sumak Kawsay**. Regarding the Rights of Nature, our proposal emphasizes that in order to extend rights to Nature, one must first recognize its entities as persons (and not mere objects). As persons, the beings of the forest relate to one another as well as to the Indigenous People that share their land. So, based on our continuous life together with the beings of the forest, **Kawsak Sacha** emerges as an authentic way of guaranteeing the Rights of Nature in those spaces that have not yet been decimated.

Conclusions

We urge the world community to make an effort to achieve a real metamorphosis (**tiam**). We need to shift from a modernizing model of development – a model that treats nature as material resource – to the alternative of **Kawsak Sacha**, which recognizes that forming community with the many kinds of selves with whom we share our world is a better way to orient our economic and political activities.

Kawsak Sacha proposes an indissoluble link between human beings and the visible and invisible beings of the forest. It is for this reason that the Rights of Nature are so closely related to our Human Rights as Indigenous People, guardians of the Living Forest. Nevertheless, this link is ignored by the State and whichever government happens to be in power. Worse yet, in its desire to civilize, develop and modernize, the State ends up violating the very rights of this conjuncture of human and nonhuman life, in which we, Indigenous People, take part. It seems hypocritical to us that the very governments that put forth solemn discourses criticizing imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism, are promoting, in the supposed name of democracy, large-scale neo-colonialist extractive projects on our lands, thus threatening Mother Earth.

We make manifest that the gradual disappearance of this ensemble of life that **Kawsak Sacha** seeks to sustain is nothing more and nothing less than "ecocide" – that is, it is the systematic extermination of an ensemble of living interrelated selves. And this crime against Humanity and Nature, has, until now, gone unpunished.

With the hope of putting a brake on this violence, our proposal is an urgent call to the world community to respect the Rights of Nature and of the Indigenous Peoples, who, here and now in the twenty-first century, with strength and vigor, affirm our responsibility to continue defending the Living Forest for the good of our Mother Earth, and for our present and future generations.

To conclude, we summarize our **Kawsak Sacha** proposal: the entire world is peopled by beings that sustain our planet thanks to their way of living in continuous interrelation and dialogue. This vision is neither a quaint belief nor a simple conservationist ideal. It is instead a call to the people of the world to learn once again to feel this reality in their very being. This metamorphosis will only be possible once we learn to listen to and dialogue with these other beings, which are part of a cosmic conversation that goes well beyond the dialogue of the deaf until now carried out exclusively among us humans. Entering into this broader conversation with all living beings can be the foundation for a more sustainable economic life, one that is more respectful of Mother Earth. And it would be the basis for conceptualizing, building, and disseminating a genuine **Sumak Kawsay** in our world – a world that today is threatened by an ecological crisis of planetary proportions. ¶

Kawsaymanda kanwa – the "canoe of life" from the Amazon to the Seine

The canoe is the work of men and women from the Sarayaku community (minga) and was made using traditional skills. Carved from a pinchi tree felled by the wind, it represents the hummingbird fish (kindi challwa) that **forms** part of Kawsak Sacha (the Living Forest). With the canoe of life that made its way from the Amazon River to the River Seine in Paris, the message of the indigenous Kichwa people was carried beyond its borders to the COP21 and out into the entire world. People are called upon to pursue the concept of Sumak Kawsay (Buen Vivir, „Good Living"). The canoe symbolises the concept of the "living forest" that the Kichwa people propose to the world community as ethical guidelines and an instrument to overcome the challenges of climate change. kawsaksacha.com

Perspectives of indigenous women

In May 2015, indigenous representatives from the Peruvian Amazon region signed a declaration in which they outlined their strategies for climate change action.

Teresita Antazu López and Jhenny Muñoz Hilares from Peru in interview with Thomas Brose, Climate Allaince

Jhenny Muñoz is from Atahualpa, a village situated beside the Rio Negro in the central Peruvian Amazon region. She obtained a diploma in administration and IT from the T. Rivera Tape Institute and a degree in public administration from the Universidad Peruana Los Andes. From 1999 to 2001, Jhenny worked at the nursery school in the village of Rio Bertha. From 2003 and 2007, she was the first coordinator of the office for the sustainable development of indigenous villages in the Rio Negro district. She then went on to spend two years helping to coordinate grass-roots projects with NGOs. Besides countless positions of responsibility, for example as a town councillor, as well as civil society involvement on the local level, Jhenny has attended congresses and events in Europe since 2005 as a delegate representing the Asháninka people within the scope of the city partnership with Munich.

Teresita Antazu is from the province of Oxapampa in the central Peruvian Amazon region. Between 1983 and 1986, Teresita worked for the Federation of Native Yánesha Communities (Federación de Comunidades Nativas Yánesha, FECONAYA) in the field of "women", and was active as a town councillor and coordinator of the women's committee in the Yarina indigenous community in the years that followed. In 1994, she founded the indigenous organisation UNAY (Unión de Nacionalidades Asháninka y Yánesha) and was elected the representative of indigenous women three years later. She was subsequently a member of AIDESEP's board, held the office of "cornesha", which is the highest leadership role within the Yánesha community, and acted as president of UNAY. Teresita campaigns for the rights of indigenous peoples – and, above all, of indigenous women – within countless local and national organisations. She has attended a great many international congresses.

What is your opinion of REDD+?

Teresita: At the start, hopes were high that REDD would also yield economic benefits for the indigenous peoples. This hope was fomented by the countless advisors, who informed us of REDD. The further the discussion advanced, the more the concerns regarding the instrument grew. Only the advantages were discussed; there was little mention of the problems. Some Asháninkas began to select a few areas for the REDD approach. When they were then told that they would no longer be able to pursue their traditional activities such as hunting and farming in these areas, the approval and interest waned. They said: "If we are no longer able to plant anything and only receive alms in return, then we do not wish to be involved." There were subsequently also discussions on the indigenous REDD (RIA), which is more oriented to our reality. RIA brought greater clarity to the discussion. There were still countless unanswered questions prior to this. Many of our indigenous representatives are often also not sufficiently informed and pass on confusing information. Within RIA, the focus is on legalisation of our territories. The most important point for us is that our territories are legally protected, and there is still a great deal to do here. Many areas have already achieved preliminary recognition but are now awaiting legal recognition. We also call for a number of the areas to be surveyed again, as a great many errors were made, which has led to unrest within the communities.

Asháninka

With an estimated population of 80,000, the Asháninka are the largest indigenous group in the Peruvian rainforest. They live in small settlements or individual estates, mostly close to a river. Wherever possible, the village communities are self-sufficient.

The Asháninka have no privately owned land. If they succeed in securing official land titles, the land becomes the property of the village as a whole and is shared by the entire community.

Due to the growing threat to and destruction of their livelihood, the Asháninka are fighting for survival. The city of Munich has entered into a partnership with the Asháninka within the scope of its Climate Alliance membership. The focus is on education and information campaigns, backing Asháninka projects, and providing political support.

We have also held a number of workshops specifically for women. For they are mostly the ones responsible for working the fields and must take care of the daily chores whilst the men often seek work outside of the community or are involved in the organisations. The women are more familiar with the local situation and must find pragmatic solutions for changes. Another problem is that land titles within a community are mostly issued to the husbands. We call for it to become possible for women to also be registered as the owner. For if a man leaves his wife, they are often left to fend for themselves and their children, and do not even have a right to the land on which they live.

What connection do you see between the land rights and your life in the rainforest?

Teresita: The forest is our only asset. It allows us to be independent. We are able to grow food on our chakras (small forest gardens); the forest is home to the animals and plants we use as medicine. In the cities, we need money for everything. My grandparents taught me that the earth is our mother. The sun, the rain, the animals are all living creatures belonging to one big family. The trees are happy, as we use them to make furniture, which is very useful to us. The forest is also our pharmacy and our supermarket. However, there are already areas that no longer afford this wealth. We must also always remain connected with our community. It is very difficult for city dwellers to understand our relationship with nature. They laugh at us. Only those who live this relationship can truly understand it. I have taught my grandson the importance of nature and used the example of how a tree grows its roots on a hillside so that we are able to use them as steps to safely access the slope. Now, every time that he goes down the slope, he

apologises to the tree for treading on its roots but explains at the same time that he simply must walk there.

Every time that he goes down the slope, he apologises to the tree for treading on its roots.

Jhenny: One of the problems that we have in Satipo is the increased migration of smallholder farmers from the Andes region. They often receive their individual land titles faster than our indigenous brothers. Because they are not familiar with the local conditions, they clear large swathes of land. In contrast, we do not claim land titles individually but rather as a community. The authorities take their time to issue these titles though.

T: The individual land titles pose a huge risk to our communities, as they allow individuals to sell their areas while communal titles cannot be sold. So there is a government strategy behind the issue of individual land titles.

Do you have a special view on climate change as women?

T: Yes, the women have a special view on climate change, as they are involved in the procurement of food in everyday life. Take the phenomenon of fish migration, for example, which has shaped our dietary habits for centuries. In June/July, the fish migrate up the rivers to smaller tributaries and lakes. In October/November, they then migrate back down again to lay their eggs. This is the time in which we normally have an abundance of fish and roe. This year, however, the migration did not take place and the women therefore sought alternatives for the future, such as breeding fish in the lakes themselves. We now also plant other plants, which are more resistant to heat. People notice this, too, as the number of skin burns has increased – something we did not experience in the past. We are also in the process of exchanging our more resistant seeds with the women from other regions for plants that are resistant to wetter soils.

J: We have the problem that families are convinced by government advisors or NGOs to participate in projects that are rapidly discontinued when the advisors are no longer there. We must take a more targeted approach and offer projects that families are also able to continue for themselves. Adjustment to the changing conditions must also entail using regional plants. Almost everything brought in from the outside is unsustainable.

Do you have any recommendations for us?

J: It has become clear to me during my travels how important it is to work with children. They must be familiarised with the different realities – ours and theirs – for only in this way will they also develop an awareness for this. This is important so that they can also make a contribution to saving the planet. They must play their part, reduce emissions and change their ways of life. Consumption is too high and there are too many unnecessary products. Networking between the individual groups is also important.

T: There must be a change in unsustainable lifestyles. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced. We must develop a new awareness that the forests are a part of our life. Without them we and you cannot survive. Children are more receptive to such messages. Teenagers are already far less receptive. We must take the views of the indigenous peoples far more into account in our work. My suggestion for a future trip would be to invite those who work in our protection areas to exchange with the protection areas in Europe. We must foster the exchange of experiences. ¶

Climate Alliance partnership with the people of the Rio Negro region

Johann Kandler, Climate Alliance Austria

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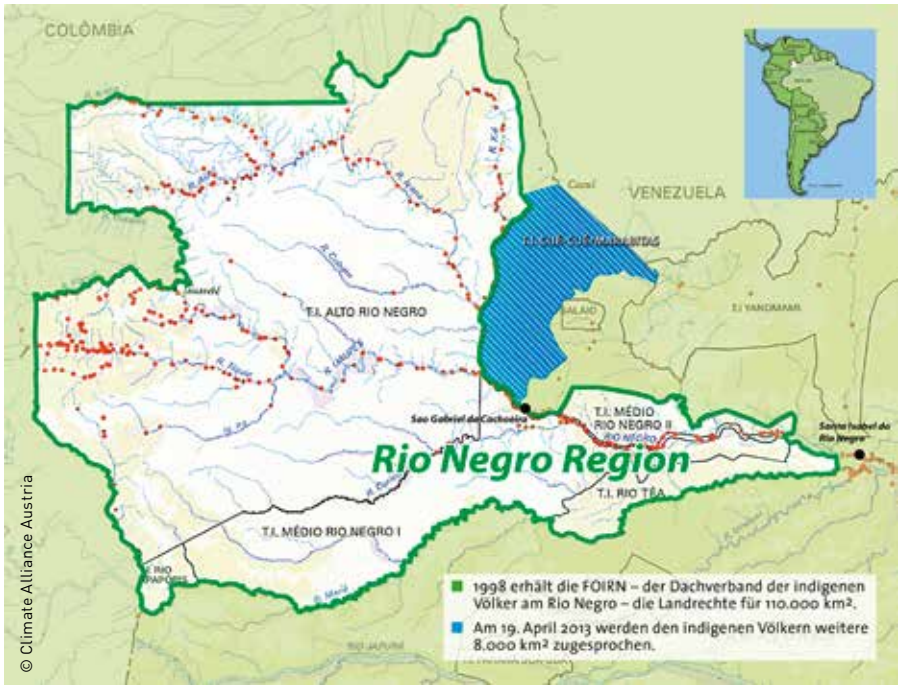
Johann Kandler, Coordinator for the Climate Alliance partnership with FOIRN, climate justice
Johann Kandler studied oenology and pomiculture at the HBLA in Klosterneuerburg before going on to spend 20 years working in development cooperation, advising and organising smallhold farmers and peoples of the rainforest in Brazil.
He has worked for Climate Alliance Austria since 1993. Among his areas of responsibility count public relations work for the partnership with indigenous peoples and rainforest communities, presentations on indigenous partners dwelling beside the Rio Negro, and development policy issues – particularly those relating to climate change.

The indigenous peoples of Amazonia have long fought for recognition of their rights, particularly in areas in which they have been living and working since time immemorial. For them, these areas above all mean preservation of their living space as a basic requirement for their survival as peoples with their own cultures and ways of life.

Climate change has led to recognition of the global significance of rainforests, and indigenous examples have shown themselves to be both extremely effective and also affordable in the endeavours to preserve these.

One successful example of sustainable preservation of the rainforests is the Brazilian union of local organisations of indigenous communities and groups dwelling in the Rio Negro river basin known as FOIRN (Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro). The indigenous organisation has been supported politically and financially by Climate Alliance Austria member municipalities and states since 1993 and by the Austrian Development Cooperation since the end of 2012. Besides this reliable, long-term support, the cooperation with the Austrian NGO HORIZONT3000 and the Brazilian organisation ISA (**Instituto Socioambiental**) for the implementation of a regional development programme adapted to the local environment, society and culture is also important.

A partnership with the Colombian region of Chocó was also established with the west Austrian state of Vorarlberg in parallel to this, which has been supported by all member municipalities and the federal state since 1991.



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Indigenous people are the best guardians of the rainforest

FOIRN represents 23 indigenous peoples comprising a total of around 40,000 people who live in 750 villages and a number of small towns along the Rio Negro to the north-west of the Brazilian metropolis of Manaus. Since 1996, the organisation has achieved state recognition of 122,000 km² as indigenous territory, which equates to an area approximately one and a half times the size of Austria. This is the most efficient form of rainforest protection – as comparative studies have shown. For while the traditional population preserves 99.9% of the rainforest in indigenous areas, in other protected areas, forests are destroyed to varying degrees – among others by loggers, gold prospectors, etc.

Traditional agriculture recognised as cultural heritage in 2010

Other studies have shown that indigenous uses enhance biodiversity. The ecosystems' adaptability to climate change is also improved, not to mention the economic potential. In 2010, traditional agriculture beside the Rio Negro was recognised by the Brazilian government as an intangible cultural heritage. Mindful forest clearance, field recovery periods lasting several years, the composition of mixed cultures with the most varied of plants, the use of over one hundred types of manioc, and other techniques ensure food supplies despite the nutrient-poor soils.

The "cosmological calendar" of the Tukano people of the Rio Tiquié, a tributary of the Rio Negro, illustrates the good adjustment to the ecological conditions. At the centre are the astronomical constellations, which determine the rainy and dry periods at the celestial equator, and thus foresee fluctuations in the river levels. These in turn determine the fish migration and the lives of forest animals, as represented in the third and fourth circles. The fifth circle shows the seasonal processes in the plant world and the accompanying activities in the fields and forests. The associated rituals and blessings conducted by the shamans to ensure equilibrium with the "invisible guardian spirits" and to prevent diseases are ordered in the sixth circle. Finally, the moon phases are also depicted.

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We live in two very different worlds. And yet the partnership we have built benefits both sides!

Almerinda Ramos de Lima, President of FOIRN

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Tailored education systems and marketing are key to sustainability

The relationship between indigenous peoples and their natural surrounds is based on centuries of observations that have given rise to a culture of holistic sustainability. The indigenous organisations from the Rio Negro region have completed a variety of activities in recent years to preserve and develop this further. These include:

- developing an indigenous education system,
- using local methods to farm fish,

FOIRN Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro

The umbrella association FOIRN is the union of local organisations of indigenous communities and groups in the Brazilian area of the Rio Negro river basin. It was founded in 1987 with the aim of working together to campaign for the recognition of indigenous territories by the Brazilian government and to represent the around 90 indigenous member organisations. FOIRN is organised into coordination groups, each of which is responsible for activities in one of the five regions. Around 50,000 indigenous people belonging to 23 groups live in the Rio Negro river basin. Climate Alliance Austria first joined forces with FOIRN back in the 1990s to campaign together for land rights and resource protection, democracy promotion and human rights, food security, resource management, and political co-determination.
klimabuendnis.at > Archive > FOIRN

- marketing traditional handicraft products made from local materials,
- producing "pimenta baniwa" (chilli), honey, etc.

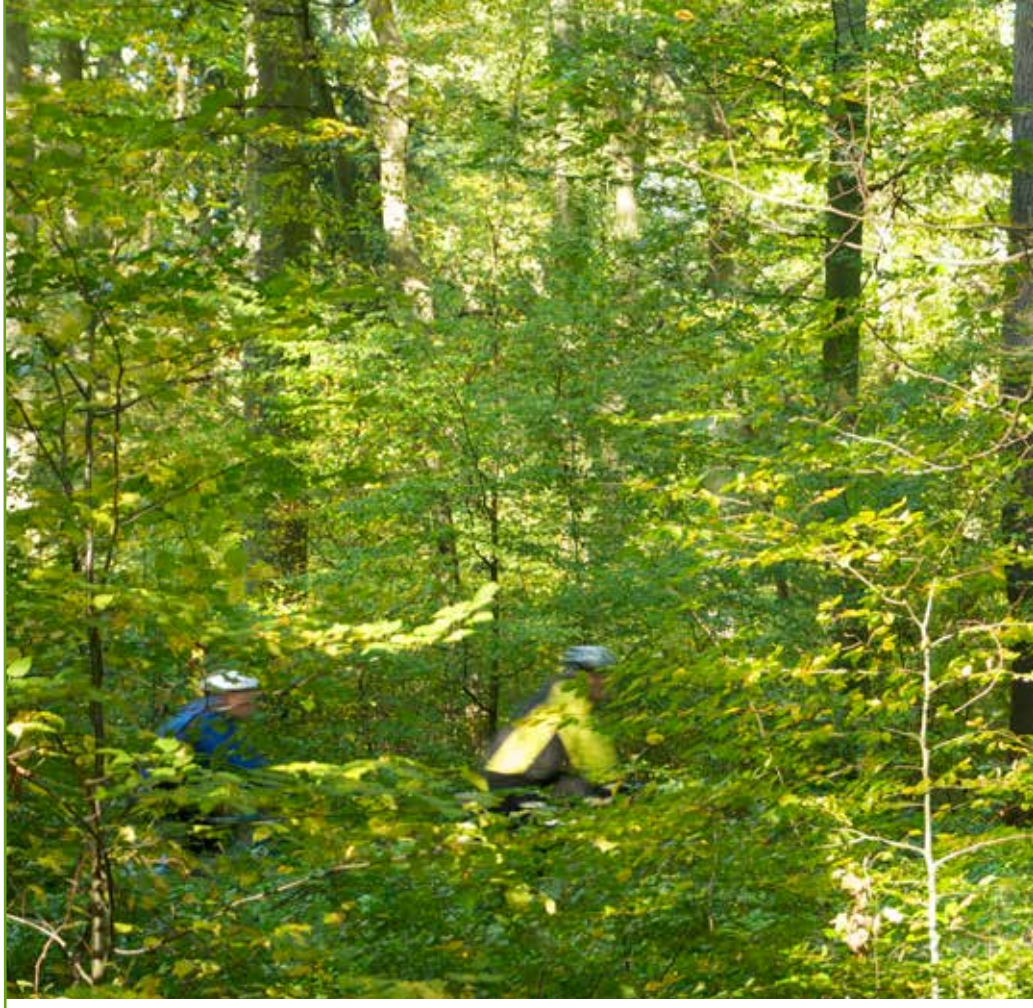
The experiences have been systematically passed on to the government as an "indigenous programme for sustainable regional development" so that they can be incorporated into public policies. However, despite positive reviews, very little has actually been implemented, which is why FOIRN continues to fight for the preservation of its living space.

Assessment of the partnership between Austria and the Rio Negro region

The continuous support from Austria helps to reinforce FOIRN as an independent advocate and aids in the long-term planning. Initially, the focus was on securing land rights and preserving culture as basic requirements for the survival of indigenous peoples. In recent years, though, new threats have emerged due to mining interests, fishing tourism and commercial fishing in addition to the advance of the monetary economy and consumer goods. At the same time, the state invests too little in education, health and infrastructure, which exacerbates migration from the region.

The positive outcomes in Austria must also be taken into account in assessment of the partnership beyond the protected areas of rainforest and the successes in the Rio Negro region. The focus on indigenous cultures and the personal encounters with partners have furthered the understanding of global contexts and development policy commitment. ¶

More information: klimabuendnis.at



Together with the municipalities in Europe, indigenous peoples are strategically important stakeholders, who are already contributing to climate protection today. Whether in indigenous territories or urban settings, all stakeholders pursue a holistic approach that must take all areas of life into account when it comes to climate protection and to preserving and strengthening the region.

Simply reducing CO_2 emissions will no longer be enough to halt global climate change and prevent the associated impact on humans and their ecosystems.

In Germany, the forests growing in the areas surrounding towns and cities regularly assume a number of different functions. It is possible to roughly differentiate between usage, protection, recreational and educational functions. Multifunctionality is typical of German forest management, whereby all forest functions are sustainably preserved on all areas, albeit with different focuses. In rural areas, for example, the focus is more on the production of raw materials, though the function as a holiday recreation area is also borne in mind. In urban settings, the forests primarily serve as recreational areas, but also represent important nature reserves and local climate regulators. The multifunctional model utilises existing synergies, such as maintenance of a network of trails for timber transportation and recreational traffic. In contrast, federal states with a large surface area and low population density often segregate the forest functions. Parkland areas purely for recreational purposes lie alongside wood plantations and untouched nature protection areas.

Compromises are of course also necessary where the functions cannot

Forest protection in times of climate change in the urban environment

Are the forests being overexploited in the name of climate protection?

Uwe Schölmerich

© Uwe Schölmerich

be combined without conflict. Conflicts frequently exist – between intensive regeneration and nature protection and the wish for old and deadwood and firewood, for example. The raw material function also should not be neglected in forests located close to urban areas, particularly in light of the global perspective. Germany is already a net importer of wood and wood products today. Every cubic metre of wood not obtained here must instead be felled abroad – often under dubious conditions.

The aims of forest management have changed numerous times over the past 200 years. Beginning with a function primarily focused on wood for fuel and construction, this was complemented at the turn of the penultimate century with a recreational function, which has continued to grow in importance to the present day with the increase in leisure time. Since the 1970s, nature protection has played an ever more important role – as is also reflected in the desire to decommission around 5% of our forests.

	Germany	North Rhine-Westphalia	Rhine-Sieg-Erft Regional Forest Office
Forested area (ha)	11.1 million	910,000	60,000
Proportion of forested area (%)	31%	27%	23%
Public forests (%)	56%	36%	57%
Private forests (%)	44%	64%	43%
Forest per inhabitant (m^2)	1,200	500	250
Timber stocks (total m^3)	3.4 billion	271 million	13 million
Timber stocks (m^3/ha)	320	311	217
Deciduous/coniferous forests (%)	40/60%	57/43%	61/39%
Employees (forest and wood cluster)	1,200,000	180,000	

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Uwe Schölmerich, Manager of the Rhine-Sieg-Erft Regional Forest Office in Eitorf/Bonn

Uwe Schölmerich was born in Marburg in 1955. After completing his Abitur school-leaving examinations, he studied at the Faculty of Forest Sciences at the University of Freiburg. In 1980, he began preparatory training at the national forestry service of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. After passing the state examination, he was employed as a forestry commissioner by the Rhineland Chamber of Agriculture in 1982. A number of different roles in the Rhineland region followed before he was appointed the manager of Ville forest office in Brühl in 1987. In the wake of the first structural reform in 1995, he assumed responsibility for the Bonn-Kottenforst-Ville forest office, which later merged with the area that lies to the east of the Rhine during the second reform in 2007 to form the Rhine-Sieg-Erft Forest Office. Based in Eitorf, there is a second office in Bonn-Röttgen.

The forest functions can be fulfilled particularly well in areas of so-called "permanent forest". These forests are characterised by refraining from clearcutting, tailored technology, selective usage, mixing, stability and structural diversity.

Forest legislation and the certification of forest management as part of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) or the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which has meanwhile been introduced, means that German forests are not overused or destroyed. Quite the contrary in fact: every 10 years, an inventory is conducted that has revealed a growth in forested areas, timber volumes, deadwood volumes, ages and proximity to nature for 30 years now. The last inventory was completed in 2012. However, there has been a decline in the areas of spruce in favour of deciduous trees, such as beech and oak trees. This development worries the sawmill industry.

Attempts to boost the role of forests in the supply of renewable energies could change this situation however. Due to the existing forest and growth conditions, a further clear increase in the direct thermal use of forest timber is no longer possible.

A glance back in history presents a corresponding example. Systematic overuse led to the widespread destruction of German forests at the end of the eighteenth century. Prior to the discovery of coal, the forests were the sole source of energy, which also had to provide timber for construction purposes and leaf litter for stables as well as serve as grazing pastures. Leaching of the soil, ongoing destruction of the natural regeneration, and usage that far exceeded growth led to widespread devastation. The development phase initiated in the mid-nineteenth century – interrupted by two world wars – subsequently led to the restoration of productive forests. However, coniferous monocultures of the same age were planted, which have gradually been converted to mixed deciduous-coniferous forests over the past few decades. The storms in recent years, such as Kyrill in 2007, to which primarily spruce and pine

forests of the same age fell victim, also contributed to a rethink with regard to monocultures.

Forests are of vast important to the local and global climate. In the regional context, forests help mitigate temperature extremes, improve air humidity, and ensure the permanent cleansing of dust and gases. The urban climate – of Bonn, for example – is rendered far more pleasant for humans by the surrounding forests. On the global scale, forests can help reduce the greenhouse gas of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through carbon sequestration. Every cubic metre of wood contains approx. 0.25 tons of carbon, which in turn corresponds with approx. 0.9 tons of bound carbon. One might think that unused forests would be the most suitable for carbon sequestration. The storage capabilities of forests have hit biological limits, however, as growth and decay maintain the balance above the maximum wood volume that a forest can accumulate. Younger, unused forests initially have high storage potential; in contrast, older forests are approaching this state of equilibrium. It therefore makes sense to conserve wood from sustainable usage for as long as possible in the form of products, for example construction timber, furniture and flooring, and to determine the carbon that is bound. It is moreover helpful to replace fossil fuels such as oil, coal and gas as well as energy-intensive materials such as aluminium with wood.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, a study has investigated the impact of forest and wood management on the state's carbon budget. According to the report, approx. 6% of the annual CO_2 emissions in NRW are compensated by the storage capabilities of the forests (5 million tons/year) and the substitution of energy and materials (13 million tons/year). This is of course only a small contribution alongside the considerably more important CO_2 avoidance strategy.

The positive impact on the climate can be further enhanced through the cascaded use of wood. This essentially means that wood is used several times, for example in the furniture-chipboard-fibreboard-energetic usage chain.

Regional forest office Rhein-Sieg-Erft

The regional forest office is responsible for a total of 62,000 hectares of land, of which 23,000 hectares are state-owned forest – making it the largest in the Federal Republic of Germany. Forest Manager Uwe Schölmerich is also the Regional Chairman for North Rhine-Westphalia's forest management working group. He has been a lecturer on silviculture and forest management at the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Bonn since 1994.

The forests' productivity is very important to climate protection. The faster trees grow, the more carbon can be bound.

Implementation of the concept of comprehensive sustainability forms the core of forest protection in the urban environment. This includes protection of the soils, a controlled game population that enables natural regeneration of the forests, considerate usage techniques, a portion of unused forests (such as the wilderness development areas in North Rhine-Westphalia) and sufficient amounts of old and dead wood. The forests' stability can be further increased by mixing the species of trees, planting trees on the same area at different times, and the existing natural regeneration. Even if a storm then fells a portion of the older trees, the forest ecosystem can rapidly regenerate thanks to the existing regeneration – the forest affords greater flexibility and stability. The more stable and flexible a forest ecosystem is, the more reliably it can have an impact on climate protection.

For urban dwellers, the forests are today the area closest to our original nature and can thus have a balancing effect on the psyche. Neither fields, settlements, roads nor parks can replace the emotional impact of forests. Hence forest management must also satisfy human expectations through the most natural forest design possible and the preservation of cultural resources within forests. ¶

© Silke Lunnebach, Climate Alliance

The link between climate protection and forests and the significance of indigenous peoples as important stakeholders of a global climate protection strategy was the idea behind Climate Alliance's founding more than 25 years ago.

The relevance of forests to the climate has only gradually found its way into the international climate negotiations. The approaches proposed to date continue to pursue the primacy of the market, and thus support the very structures considered the causes of destructive economic activity.

With the present brochure prepared within the scope of the EU project "From Overconsumption to Solidarity", we wish to take a critical look at development of the REDD+ instrument and to present the alternative approaches of indigenous peoples dwelling in Amazonia.

Climate Alliance

European municipalities in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples – the world's largest city network taking local action on global climate change.

For more than 25 years, Climate Alliance member municipalities have been acting in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples for the benefit of the global climate. With over 1,700 members spread across 26 European countries, Climate Alliance is the world's largest city network dedicated to climate action and the only one to set tangible targets: each member city, town and district has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by ten percent every five years. Recognising the impact our lifestyles can have on the world's most vulnerable people and places, Climate Alliance pairs local action with global responsibility. The network fosters cooperation with indigenous peoples, runs awareness raising campaigns and develops tools for climate action planning. It provides ample opportunity for participation and exchange while representing members' interests at the national, European and international levels.

Climate Alliance Luxembourg / ASTM

Motivated by founding of the international Climate Alliance association, five Luxembourg communities and the non-profit organisations Mouvement Ecologique and Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM) established Klima-Bündnis Lëtzebuerg in 1995. The two NGOs are responsible for the administration as well as for the environmental and north-south educational and lobby work. Today – in 2015 – there are a total of 37 member communities, which are home to two out of three Luxembourg citizens.

ASTM has supported the NGOs of farmers and indigenous peoples on the three continents of the southern hemisphere for 40 years now, among others in Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Togo, India and the Philippines. They contribute their experience in the fields of tropical agriculture and forest management to the educational work in the member communities in Luxembourg.

Klima-Bündnis Lëtzebuerg is financed by the member contributions from the communities, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Department of the Environment, and EuropeAid projects.

Climate Alliance

Klima-Bündnis Lëtzebuerg

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