RAINFOREST FUND
PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

2014/2015
PROJECTS REPORT
As you will see from the following pages, the projects funded by the RAINFOREST FUND in 2014/2015 relate to the requests of Indigenous Peoples throughout the Americas, Africa and Asia to support their quest for equity and sustainability, their right to their ancestral land, autonomy and self-governance and their right to participate in decision-making processes of governance and policy at local, regional and international levels.

Indigenous peoples’ rights to their lands and natural resources should be recognized, protected and strengthened including the need to give them the right to ensure that they can exercise, without duress, their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article 29.

UNDRIP Articles 25 and 26 affirm the importance of recognizing indigenous peoples’ collective rights to their lands, territories and natural resources which constitute the basis of their economic livelihood and source of their spiritual, cultural & social identity.

Unfortunately, we see increasing violations of these rights with the incursion of extractive industries onto their lands with governments’ approvals. The attacks by extractives industries upon indigenous communities – many are physically violent – result in devastating effects on indigenous social unity, and their rights to use their natural resources.

Time has come for governments and international institutions to adopt an approach to development that includes Indigenous Peoples and their organizations, taking seriously the respect for indigenous culture and traditional practices.

What a better opportunity than the discussions on the sustainable development goals to finally recognize and implement fully the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

In Funding Cycle, 2016, Rainforest Fund will continue its support of indigenous communities in their demands for the respect of their rights and priorities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Franca Sciuto,
Executive Director/Chair of the Board
The Rainforest Fund is a charitable foundation dedicated to the support of indigenous peoples and traditional populations in their efforts to protect their environment and fulfill their rights.

We are convinced that accepted environmental and human rights principles embody the right of everyone to a secure, healthy and ecologically sound environment, and that environmental degradation leads to human rights violations such as the right to life, health and culture.

The Rainforest Fund bears in mind the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and carries out its mission by:

Funding programs and projects aimed at supporting indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the rainforests to assert their rights, to promote a sustainable development of their communities and to challenge governmental practices that have a damaging effect on their environment.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
BRG, Challenging & Transforming the Current Model of Development

This was the fourth and final year of this project, and was supported by generous donations from the Ormeley Dinner held in London in June 2013. The goal of this project was to challenge the current development paradigm within PNG that favors extractive industries and replace it with sustainable practices that are relevant to all PNGeans. Increasingly, foreign direct investments and external interests are affecting local policies and marginalizing indigenous peoples. This project has fought against this status quo to create a PNG that is representative of all its citizens.

One of the most significant impacts during 2014 comes from the Rethinking Oceania Conference, also referred to as the “Madang Dance,” which was facilitated by BRG and three other local NGOs. This conference promoted the 5 Goals and Directives Principles in the PNG constitution which includes the headings: integral human development; equality and participation; national sovereignty and self-reliance; natural resources and environment; Papua New Guinean Ways. The conference attracted 130 participants from 12 countries throughout the region and included landowners, artists, poets, writers, musicians, NGOs, students, academics and leaders from peoples’ movements.

BRG connected landowners who have been affected by extractive industries by producing local documentaries that feature community development projects and ways that communities have dealt with challenges to their lands and rights. As a result of showing these films, three groups mobilized and threw out a Special Mining Lease agreement, which landowners were about to sign. Another group extended potato gardens and is now selling potatoes in large quantities to markets and private businesses in Goroka. A third group chose to set up a water and sanitation project which is currently up and running. Another crucial connection was made between the Sacred Lands Crew from the US and the Bosmun people in Madang province. Sacred Lands Crew produced a film called, “Profit and Loss,” which shows the lives of these people as they face mining and logging threats. As a result, the Bosman people have strengthened their culture as well as revived their Bamboo Flute Ceremony, which had been dormant for 60 years.

A third highlight from this project focuses on the engagement with PNG youth. BRG conducted environmental trainings with youth during breaks from university who then brought their knowledge back to their communities and raised awareness.

Over the past four years, BRG has strengthened its internal processes and administration and has forged meaningful and strong connections within PNG civil society and public and private institutions at the regional and international levels.

PROJECT TOTAL: $168,666
INDONESIA
PARADISEA, Protection of the forest in the Bird Head Region of West Papua

2014 was the first year of this project which aimed to prevent the high level of deforestation that has occurred throughout Indonesia from reaching the cultural and biological Bird Head Peninsula despite development plans that threaten the forests of New Guinea. As Indonesia continues to build as a nation and advance economically, policies seek to assimilate indigenous peoples through forced resettlement and forced religious conversion. The project’s mission was to establish green corridors between the nature reserves Cagar Alam Tambrauw, Utara, Salatan and Pegunungan Arfak, in West Papua province of Indonesia where the indigenous communities can secure their rights to manage the forest sustainably according to their needs, protect the forest from industrial exploitation as well as their rights and cultures.

Throughout the year, there were several conflicts, including tension between clans, the creation of a new administrative district within which influential persons were at odds, and a revised spatial plan of the province which threatened to fragment the forest lands targeted by the project.

Despite challenges, local communities selected cocoa and coffee as the most promising cash crops and began cultivating gardens. Results from this project activity are being seen with the growth of the cocoa trees and the bearing of fruit. Even further, the project attained support for some cash crop activities from the local government.

Community mapping training and the mapping itself began for use in lobbying. Paradisea, together with other NGOs, organized a large public dialogue in which government representatives, academics and community based organizations attended. This event expanded Paradisea’s network and provided them with significant political lobbying experience, which will be valuable in the future.

PROJECT TOTAL: $188,100
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
ENVIRONMENT, RESSOURCES NATURELLES ET DEVELOPMENT (ERND), Securing a Favorable Jurisprudence of the Indigenous Rights of the Batwa People through Legal and Administrative Guidance

Although most countries guarantee rights to land and to the natural resources by their constitutions, implementing these rights remains a challenge. In the DRC local communities, particularly the Batwa pygmy indigenous peoples, are seen as second class citizens and are deprived of their rights to their lands and natural resources.

This project aims to ensure that the Batwa Indigenous people receive just redress after being expelled from their lands by presenting a complaint to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. During 2014, several achievements were made including: accumulated evidence regarding the dispossession of lands within the Kalehe territory, which was analyzed by customary chiefs, victims, and local organizations; regained access to formerly dispossessed land, the AP Kalonge; developed, through participatory processes, a three-dimensional map of the hills and territories in question, showing old villages, resources and sacred sites for use in the case and advocacy efforts; published a document on the Congolese national laws and obligation to protect their rights of indigenous people, which was validated by organizations, universities, research centers, judicial operators, lawyers and legal defenders; trained nearly 200 chiefs on IP rights; trained 10 paralegals; and, filed an application for ERND to obtain consultative status to the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

Attaining a favorable judgment for the Batwa is a long and arduous process, but in 2014, the communities have come together with ERND to demand their rights and lands be legally recognized and protected. A significant aspect of the project was completed which includes the planning, development of the 3D map to use for advocacy and evidentiary purposes.

PROJECT TOTAL: $73,260
GABON
BRINFOREST, Community Legal Fieldworkers

This project’s mission was to improve capacities of forest communities, local indigenous peoples and civil society organizations in Gabon Republic to understand, analyse and use national laws to secure their rights to forest management, lands and resources, and realize their basic human rights and indigenous peoples’ rights.

Eleven communities developed legal strategies that aim to address their rights, ranging from benefit-sharing mechanisms to obtaining birth certificates, identity cards, financial reparations from crop destruction and recognition of their rights to lands and resources in protected areas. Seven communities developed “community action plans” as a tool for future progress by recapping community meetings, decisions, challenges and “mapping” future goals. These plans also presented recommendations to ensure continued respect for the rights addressed in the plan.

Community Associations promoted collective rights to land and natural resources. They were legally and organizationally trained with an integration of traditional governance and decision making practices. Two communities developed a strategy relating to local development and benefit-sharing mechanisms which they will use to negotiate with logging companies.

The project was successful in augmenting women’s roles within the community and the project – there were nine female paralegals and women from the community who felt more confident and capable of speaking up in forums where they made their voices heard.

“Loopholes exist in Gabonese legislation concerning indigenous forest peoples’ rights. That is why we support these communities to identify the main legal issues they want to address. We train them on their rights and build case studies to inform partners and decision-makers of what really happens in these communities”. - Grace Ollomo is a 28 year old lawyer and a CLFW

PROJECT TOTAL: $109,591
CONGO BASIN
BRAINFOREST & FORUM POUR LA GOUVERNANCE ET DES DROITS DE L’HOMME (FGDH), Reducing the negative impacts on forest communities due to the expansion of industrial palm oil plantations in the Congo Basin (Gabon and Republic of Congo)

Globally, the expansion of palm oil plantations, and with it the destruction of rainforests and indigenous peoples’ livelihoods, increases year by year, most dramatically in Asian rainforests but increasingly in the Congo Basin. Despite rhetorical steps taken towards achieving enhanced democracy by Gabon’s and Congo’s governments, they remain highly centralized, function based on patron-client relationships and rank 106 and 154 respectively out of 167 on Transparency International’s 2014 Corruption Index.

This project’s mission was to reduce the negative impacts on forest communities due to the expansion of industrial palm oil plantations in the Congo Basin.

Based on field investigations in 2014, a report containing key findings from inquiries into palm oil plantations will be published in 2015 and provide crucial insights to protect indigenous and forest peoples’ rights in the context of agro-industrial expansion. The Cameroonian NGO at the helm of these field investigations was Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and worked with two partners in Gabon and three partners in Congo to investigate the social and environmental impacts of the Atama Plantation in Congo and the Olam Plantation in Gabon.

CED and partner organizations in Congo and Gabon increased their knowledge of the legal tools available to challenge palm oil expansion and land grabbing more generally. Investigations in the field, based on detailed methodology and relevant indicators, produced useful information and data that can be used in advocacy strategies. The research process facilitated peer learning as the local organizations developed specific questions to be answered by the research and established an exhaustive list of variables to be observed and verified in the field. These three organizations, which gathered in Yaoudne, provided a platform to discuss palm oil expansion at a regional level, which triggered subsequent regional coordination efforts, specifically a regional workshop organized by the Environmental Investigation Agency in Douala.

PROJECT TOTAL: $107,398
PANAMA
Congreso general de Tierras Colectivas Embera y Wounaan (CGTCEW) and Congreso nacional del Pueblo Wounaan (CNPW), *Protection of Collective Lands in the Darien*

This project’s aim was to title four Embera and Wounaan collective lands, which correspond to more than one million acres of land, and to implement participatory land management plans in order to consolidate their rights and establish a solid base for sustainable development.

Throughout 2014, the project completed two maps which were under review, reflecting about 55,000 hectares of land, georeferenced four territories and established a mapping database. The communities participated in an exchange experience with forest management organizations in Guatemala.

At the end of October 2014, an open forum took place in the Parara Puru basin with the Mayor of the capital district in which the requests for collective land titles were presented and all government institutions were present. In November, border discussions were held with ANAM and a meeting the attorney general’s office to acquire an opinion on contested territories. During a meeting with ANATI at the end of November, the project participants demanded their collective titles. In December, meetings were held in order to determine the status of applications and to raise awareness of the process developing with the national government. To keep the certification process going strong, two regional conferences and three regional councils were held. Following a ruling with which the participating communities disagreed, a press conference was held where they vocalized their discontent and marched to the Supreme Court of Justice.

In order to ensure sustainability of the work, three youth were selected to learn how to use GPS equipment and were trained on community mapping techniques. A pilot management project based on forestry and sustainable agriculture is to be developed within three communities, and institutional strengthening in an ongoing process in which financial and communications processes are improved.

**PROJECT TOTAL: $131,137**
About 70% of the Peruvian Amazon region has been given to oil concessions and the resulting conflicts between oil companies and indigenous peoples are numerous. Supporting independent indigenous monitoring is one of the most effective ways to achieve sustainable land management. This project was in its third year of funding with a goal of enhancing the organizational strengthening of the Quechua federation in order to allow a better monitoring of their territory.

In 2014, significant attention was focused on advocacy within Peru’s governmental institutions to ensure action is taken to remedy the environmental destruction within Quechua lands. For example, in September 2014, the team of technical representatives from the Quechua federations met with Ministry of Health Officials in order to build and agree on a plan for the toxicological and epidemiological study within the four regions of interest.

Furthermore, in order to assist with advocacy efforts, the monitoring team set up “camera traps” to collect information (in more than 2000 videos) showing that animals typically used for human consumption are feeding within oil contaminated areas. The team continued with gathering samples of animals hunted by the villagers in order to show the levels of contamination. These activities are supported by the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Training workshops were held in August and December of 2014, including topics, “Reflections on Power,” strengthening capacities relating to rights issues, and technical and financial skills building. These workshops aim to build the foundation of a strong indigenous organization – to understand their rights and the context within which the extractive industries and governments operate that threaten their livelihoods and environments.

**PROJECT TOTAL: 80,189**
PERU
EJECUTOR DEL CONTRATO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN (ECA RCA),
*Strengthening Capacity for the Protection and Management of the Amarakeri Communal Reserve*

The goals of this new project were similar to the FEDIQUEP project as it sought to strengthen traditional governance, assess environmental risks to the community’s reserve through a participatory diagnostic and implement a community monitoring program.

Objectives for this project included training community wardens in handling GPS and mapping to carry out vigilance plans; georeferencing and generating data for the development of cartographic materials; and interpreting the data obtained.

Throughout the year, participatory workshops were held to “socialize” the project; this was achieved by identifying ways to prevent conflicts within the reserve, communities vocalizing their expectations of the project, augmenting community governance and democratically electing GPS monitors. The development of Life Plans were supported in the Puerto Azul and Shipetiari communities, focusing on the history of communities, their territories and resources, mappings, and visions for the future. The training of 18 GPS monitors commenced, they identified cultural sites on the map and were given their uniforms and tools necessary for their work.

Conflicts within this reserve are rampant and in June 2015 Mongabay.com wrote an article about the increasing incursion of illegal miners, illustrating the timeliness of this work.

**PROJECT TOTAL: $81,900**
ECAM, Assisting the Tembe Community in the Development of an Indigenous Management and Vigilance Plan

ECAM has been working with indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon since 2002 with a specific focus on strengthening indigenous communities. We supported the Surui project, which resulted in the first successful indigenous led REDD project: the Surui are able to access between $35-70 million over the next three decades to invest in the protection and management of their traditional forests and their own livelihoods. This project has paved the way for other indigenous tribes throughout the world by showing that indigenous people can successfully engage with some of the most advanced environmental and land management technologies.

In this project, ECAM worked with the Tembe indigenous people of the state of Para to assist them in the development of their Life Plan within the context of the needs presented by the community. The Tembe tribe has been divided by a cattle farm that cuts through the middle of their lands, separating northern communities from the southern communities. As a result, the north and south have varying degrees of connection to the urban sphere and have progressed differently over the past several decades. It has been a challenge for the Tembe chiefs and communities to reach consensus, but they remain dedicated to finding common ground and ensuring that their mutual futures are secured.

Specifically, over the course of 2014, ECAM trained 26 Tembe as indigenous park guards, assisted in developing a vigilance plan, cultural map, ethnoenvironmental diagnostic survey and support an ethnozoning process.

PROJECT TOTAL: $118,908
Decades of unregulated oil production in the northeastern Ecuadorian Amazon led the contamination of ground and surface water throughout the region. Indigenous peoples rely upon water for bathing, drinking, cooking, swimming and many view it as life itself. Prolonged exposure to poisoned water sources has resulted in stomach cancers, skin lesions, miscarriages and premature deaths. Since 2008, we have been supporting mestizo and indigenous communities in building rainwater filtration tanks which ensure a sustainable supply of clean, fresh, potable water.

Continuing in 2014 was the support for Frente de Defensa de la Amazonia and ClearWater in responding to the water crisis in the Lago Agrio region of the Amazon Rainforest. By engaging indigenous communities to lead the construction, technical maintenance and sustainability of their rainwater filtration tanks, along with the financial reporting and health education, these projects continued to fulfill not only the communities’ water rights, but also continued to empower them to claim their broader human rights.

540 rainwater filtration systems were built between the two organizations during this project.

**Frente Project Total: $407,675**
**ClearWater Project Total: $424,000**
This project began when six indigenous children (Jesmarly, Miuler, Roy, Edil, Liz, and Walnito) were given point and shoot digital cameras, instructed on the basics, and left to document their environments the way they see and experience them. After one year, the photos were developed and shown in NYC and Washington, DC. Rainforest Fund began supporting the children when they came to NYC and voiced their desire to study in the city (Iquitos) and become bridges for their rainforest communities. In the first phase of their studies, the Niños lived together in a house with a woman, Carola, from their village who looked after them. They studied hard, faced challenges and made decisions for themselves and their futures. Some of the Niños's paths remained similar to when they started, but some of them changed as they learned more about themselves and their dreams.

The years between 2011 and 2014 have been full of growth, opportunity, development and maturation for each “Niños.” In 2014, Jesmarly continued to study accounting and has received scholarships for tuition based on her merit; Miuler decided to join the National Police in Lima and was supported by his family who lives there; Roy continued to study business administration in Iquitos and has also received scholarships for his good grades; Liz continued studying to be an executive secretary; and Edil decided to return to the village.

As the Niños follow their own hearts, their choices have led them in somewhat different directions from each other and even from their own initial thoughts about their futures. The support we have provided them has helped to prepare them for the inevitable responsibilities that they face today and will continue to face in the future: this project was not only about supporting them in their wishes to study, but it was about forging independent, autonomous individuals who are responsible and informed citizens.

After a restructuring of housing, meals, and school costs, there was no request for continual financial support from the Fund in 2014.
BOLIVIA
COMUNIDAD VIVA, Assisting in Cheque Oitedie’s Participation in International Markets

The Ayoreo indigenous peoples from Bolivia and Paraguay have experienced a tumultuous past with the incursion of missionaries into their territories which forced them out of their traditional lands and lifestyles. Rainforest Fund has supported Comunidad Viva, an organization working with the Ayoreo communities in Bolivia, in projects related to community development, clean water access and most recently, for the development of a women’s artisan cooperative, Cheque Oitedie.

In 2014, the project focused on increasing the growth of the Garabata plant which is used to make handicrafts. The fiber from the garabata plant is extracted through an intricate and laborious process, soaked, dyed and weaved. Cheque Oitedie is led by the indigenous women artisans who make cooperative decisions, overcome challenges and determine the future of their organization. The work involves making the handicrafts (bags, tablecloths, bracelets, etc.) as well as managing finances, training younger generations, ensuring the garabata’s productivity and establishing new markets overseas.

Cheque Oiteddie has participated in an international artisan fair in New Mexico, USA, which provided a market for the women to sell their goods and establish relationships that allow them to support their communities and maintain their identities despite the strong influence of the modern way of life. In April 2014, Comunidad Viva participated for the sixth year in the International Folk Art Market and did supremely well in selling their products.

During the 21 hours that the show allows public access, the cooperative generated a total income of $14,241.00 (equivalent to the sale of 200 products).

Project Total: $73,700
WEST PAPUA

PARADISEA, *Protection of the forest in the Bird Head region of West Papua through sustainable management of the forest by the local communities and the government*

This is a proposal for Year 2 of the “Protection of the forest in the Bird Head region of West Papua through sustainable management of the forest by the local communities and the government.” The project continues to portray a grassroots approach, maintaining that the indigenous people are the central focus and leadership of the project; however, Paradisea does play an active role.

Establishing indigenous managed corridors within the rainforests of West Papua has been a challenge, particularly within the Mubrani-Kbar corridor, given the current political situation in which the zoning of the region has been revised, compromising indigenous claim to their territory. Mapping has been stalled as a result; however, work with the cash crops continues and cocoa planting as a source of income has proceeded as planned in Mubrani-Kebar corridor.

An exposure trip was carried out so that participants in the cocoa program could learn and gain skills from their fellow citizens who have experience with the crop. Seven participants in the Mubrani-Kebar corridor succeeded in harvesting and selling their harvest in March.

Mapping has occurred in the Senopi-Miyah corridor, and the leader of the Tambrauw district, where the corridor is located, was present and gave his support, which increases the likelihood of formal recognition when the maps are complete. Next, the project will train clan representatives who were selected to do the mapping and will be instructed on the use of GPS and related technologies. The corridor measures around 30,000 hectares, and the lands of the 13 clans from the Miyah tribe that will be mapped constitutes around 75% of the corridor.

**Project Total: $177,535**
The project has two main objectives; one focuses on advocacy while the second focuses on the assurance of a successful petition to the Working Group of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. The situation for the Batwa people is dire as they have been stripped of their rights to land and therefore, their rights to culture, food security and self-determination. So far, the case that has been submitted twice to the courts has been denied judgment on the basis that the judge does not have jurisdiction to rule as it is a question of constitutionality.

During March, 2015, Batwa representatives and ERND team participated in the International Festival of Indigenous Peoples – organized in Kinshasa by RFN partner DGPA. The Batwa representatives presented themselves on panels and shared their stories, experiences and their demands for justice in having their lands returned to them. The Minister of the Environment, speaking on behalf of the DRC Presidency, expressed support to all efforts aimed at securing indigenous peoples’ land and resource rights, including the adoption of a specific law on indigenous peoples’ rights. Also at the Festival, Batwa people who did not have the occasion to participate in the panel discussions were able to ask questions of the panelists and make comments. Others at the Festival presented the 3D map showing their traditional lands and the importance of the map.

A quote from a Batwa woman made at an expert meeting: “We want to have access to education and health services. The government cannot tell us that this is only possible if we abandon our lands. We became poor when the government expelled us from our lands. We have nothing left today. We don’t have access to our forest anymore. Our people are losing their culture. We only ask for one thing, one single thing: we want our lands back.”

Project Total: $68,000
INDONESIA

YCMM, *Strengthen the participation of the Mentawai people in the design and implementation of public policies and in the management of their natural resources in a fair and sustainable way*

YCMM is an indigenous organization, originally started by Mentawai students in 1996 who wanted to express their dissatisfaction with the discrimination and violence that their people had experienced for over a century and to gain respect, recognition and influence.

This is the first year that Rainforest Fund has supported this organization, and the following is the project’s mission in 2015: “An alternative model for managing natural resources in a traditional and sustainable way has been formulated and implemented in pilot areas of the Mentawai islands in order for indigenous peoples to 1.) Be more independent economically with an increased income from traditional agriculture, and 2.) Influence public policies relating to natural resource management to bring an alternative to monoculture and industrial agriculture schemes.”

Six project objectives include: implementing alternative natural resource management models; increasing production and crop variety as a result of the new resource management model; gaining formal recognition of the rights of indigenous people within Indonesian law; developing good relations and dialogues with local government and actors; launching publications to increase civic engagement; improving YCMM’s administrative capacity.

In the first semester, YCMM and the indigenous communities have submitted to the regional parliament the regulation to give formal recognition to the indigenous people of the Mentawai their status and rights. YCMM has convinced the regional office of the Forestry Ministry to cooperate on the local mapping process (also, there have been no new licenses granted on the indigenous lands, but they face threats from palm oil companies). A new jungle school has opened in a very remote area, giving the children access to education focusing on mainstream Indonesian curriculums as well as the indigenous Mentawai culture and language.

**Project Total: $166,312**
CONGO BASIN
Association de Lutte contre le SIDA et le Paludisme de la Cuvette Ouest (ALSPCO), Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l’Homme (OCDH), Comptoir Juridique Junior and FGDH (Forum pour la Gouvernance et les Droits de l’Homme, Community rights and conservation in the Congo Basin

This is a first year project for the Rainforest Fund and includes the mission: “To promote local and indigenous peoples’ rights in the context of conservation projects in the Congo Basin.”

The project seeks to identify indicators and establish a methodology for monitoring the violations of indigenous peoples’ human rights within the context of conservation projects. Working at the local, regional and national level, this project will ensure that indigenous peoples understand their rights, that local organizations are capable of monitoring the specific indicators and are effective in bringing violations to the attention of the government and justice systems through an online reporting system.

On the ground specifically are park management teams trained on local indigenous rights to adopt relevant protocols in performing their duties. Ultimately, the goal in this project is to ensure that serious cases of human rights violations shall be taken to the national courts.

Project Total: $241,508
Panama
CGTCEW and CNPW, Protecting Indigenous Lands in Panama

The mission remains the same as previous years, which is to protect some of the largest remaining stretches of tropical forest in Eastern Panama by titling Embera and Wounaan collective lands and to implement participatory land management plans to consolidate rights and establish a solid base for sustainable development; also, the project will provide support and training to help build and maintain effective leadership and institutions.

This year’s objectives include: supporting the titling process for Embera and Wounaan collective lands in the Darien rainforest; building the bases for community-led sustainable management of collective lands; and, improving capacities of local structures and institutions.

Project Total: $135,291
PERU

FEDIQUEP, *Strengthening the Quechua People of the Pastaza River in the Defense and Vigilance of their Territory*

The project mission is to “strengthen the organization and environmental monitoring of the Quechua of the Pastaza River for the defense and vigilance of their territories.”

In order to achieve this objective, the project’s activities include the Quechua community: negotiating with the government and oil companies to meet minimum requirements for bidding on the Lot 1AB over the next 25 years; monitoring their territory on a daily basis to track oil company malpractice and contamination sites; becoming the benchmark for information and complaints of oil impacts on their territories; strengthening the FEDIQUEP organization by improving operations and expanding the skills and knowledge of the staff; and, participating actively in the process of unity, urging common agendas and strengthening intercultural dialogue spaces.

**Project Total: $68,000**
PERU

ECA, *Strengthening Capacity for the Protection and Management of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve*

The mission is “To promote community-based protection and management of the Amarakaeri Reserve by implementing a community environmental monitoring program and strengthening internal governance mechanisms.”

This year’s objectives include: guaranteeing the participation of indigenous communities and their representative organizations in decision-making with respect to the participation of the Reserve and for the development of the communities; implementing a territorial community monitoring program; improving the financial sustainability of the community monitoring system.

Community workshops include both strengthening the ECA institution while also enhancing the skills of local community members. SERANP, which is the national parks system, trained the project participants in GPS and GIS technology.

**Project Total: $80,910**
ECAM, *Strengthening the Tembe community of Para state in the Brazilian Amazon by improving their institutional capacity and implementing their Vigilance Plan*

The mission this year is to work with the Tembe to strengthen their associations and implement their vigilance plan together with trained Tembe Park Guards, building on the work already done in 2014 where park guards were identified and leaders from the communities came together and began the process for collective action. ECAM continues its grassroots approach by ensuring indigenous leadership, community motivations and does so through their successful FPIC efforts.

In 2015, an additional element to land management was included in the project called Rainforest Connection (RFCx). This technology has made the identification of illegal incursions into indigenous territory easier by fastening devices to the tree canopy which detect the sounds of trucks, chainsaws, machinery, etc. and then stores and transfers those sounds in real time for instant tracking. While the relations are tenuous between indigenous people and loggers, the kinds of illegal activities that occur do not transpire overnight or within extremely short periods of time. In this way, it is possible for the Tembe to have time to coordinate a safe, effective response by determining the correct course of action whether independently or with the assistance of outside support.

The project remains on track according to its goals – the associations are increasing their skills in accounting and project management; although, certain challenges remain regarding the governance structure and the role that the associations play between the communities and the government. Two of the four vigilance expeditions have already been conducted, supplemented with the use of the RFCx technology (increased tracking via telephone and internet connections). Finally, the Tembe have been working on their diagnostic survey and their future plans, which have been approved for final publication. A recent study shows that the Tembe area is well suited for a carbon REDD project within the Surui development model, with a focus on supporting the Tembe in maintaining control over their territory.

**PROJECT TOTAL: $107,500**
ECAM, *Strengthening of the Wai Wai people of the Trombetas Indigenous lands within the context of the National Policy for Environmental Management on Indigenous Territories (PNGATI)*

ECAM has been working with the Wai Wai indigenous community for 5 years developing maps, basic tools for land management and assisting them in creating partnerships. Many challenges face the Wai Wai community including extractive industries, tense relationships with other indigenous communities in surrounding areas and a lack of engagement from the young generations. The community’s land includes pristine rainforest and the main goal is to equip the Wai Wai to protect this area. The Project’s objective is to strengthen the Wai Wai indigenous community in the face of increasing pressures on their traditional lands through creation of territorial management plan together with the strengthening of the Wai Wai association APIM.

The first of two vigilance expeditions have been held – there was no sighting of illegal activities and the second expedition is planned for August. The Wai Wai have participated in meetings to review diagnostic surveys in preparation for the development of a land management plan. All the Wai Wai villages were represented and the main leadership validated the results of the work agreeing to work towards the full territorial management plan in July. One of the interesting findings of this workshop is that the biomonitoring confirmed that the Wai Wai villages are closely following the ethnozoning (hunting zones) established in 2009. This confirmation is a crucial validation of the effectiveness of such community governance mechanisms.

**Project Total: $93,000**
In 2015, the Water Project continues with the indigenous populations through the collaboration with ClearWater. In the first half of the semester, 125 water tanks were installed within six communities of the Cofan, Secoya and Waorani nationalities. April 2015 marked the culmination of water tank installations within the Secoya nationality – all Secoya communities in Ecuador now have access to clean, safe drinking water – a major success for all involved. By the end of 2015, another 168 tanks will be installed throughout the communities, totaling 293 built this year.

An incredible achievement has been the development of the indigenous alliance, CEIBO, which received the information for their bank account in September 2015. CEIBO is an organization that grew out of the movement for clean water amongst the four nationalities working together over the past several years. The formation of the alliance began in August 2014 when members of the Secoya, Siona, Cofan and Waorani indigenous nationalities came together to address common interests and threats within their ancestral territories. They formed the Ceibo Alliance, operating with and from within indigenous communities to design and implement projects that meet the communities’ needs and collective vision for their futures. The Water Project remains Ceibo’s top priority and is intent on seeing all families equipped with access to clean water.

Project Total: $353,050
BOLIVIA
COMUNIDAD VIVA, Assisting in Cheque Oitedie’s Participation in International Markets

Rainforest Fund provided support to Cheque Oitedie for their participation in the NYNOW artisan incubator program in New York City in August. Similar to the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, the NYNOW program displayed the women’s work and received orders from new customers to sell in their stores and online. One of the cooperative’s goals is to diversify their customer base to ensure a steady flow of business.

Whether presented with an opportunity or faced with a challenge, the women involved in Cheque Oitedie, from the administration to the artisans, prove to be thoughtful and make considered decisions for the benefit of the women, the community and the security of the Ayoreo people ahead of anything else.

Project Total: $6,000
THANK YOU

for your support and commitment to the fight for indigenous peoples’ rights. Whatever success we achieve, it is in large measure due to the success of the indigenous people who are at the forefront of the struggle to protect their land, environment and lives.

Who We Are

Sting, Co-Founder
Trudie Styler, Co-Founder
Franca Sciuto, Co-Founder and Chair of the Board
Athos Gontijo, Financial Director
Li Lu, Treasurer
John-Paul Davidson, Board Member
Madeleine Lesser, Program and Development Officer

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