



Climate Alliance

**BRIDGES**

**TO**

CLIMATE ALLIANCE  
LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

**AMAZONIA**



# PILLARS OF FOREST WORK

Climate Alliance's work was founded on the recognition that fighting climate change requires a global perspective and local solutions. This is demonstrated in our long tradition of promoting climate action amongst European municipalities as well as the indigenous peoples of the Amazon River basin.

Representing over half of the remaining rainforest worldwide, the forests of Amazonia are critical in the fight against climate change. Indigenous peoples have been practicing sustainable forestry in the region for millennia. Equipped with an intimate knowledge of their environment and a direct connection to realities on the ground, they are, much like local governments the world over, best positioned to put climate action into practice within their territories. For European municipali-

ties, such action may come in the form of initiatives for renewable energies, energy efficiency or energy conservation. For indigenous communities, climate action typically revolves around safeguarding their forests and territorial rights.

Unfortunately, indigenous rights, although laid out in a number of internationally recognised agreements such as the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation, are not yet widely respected. Indigenous communities often find themselves in a constant struggle to protect their lands from the resource extraction that feeds our lifestyles as well as monocultures, mega-dams and offset schemes – supposed 'solutions' to climate change implemented without regard to indigenous livelihoods.

Like many other communities whose ways of life depend directly on some of the world's most fragile ecosystems, indigenous peoples are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis while having contributed little to it. In looking at the injustice faced by these peoples, the fact that climate change is just as much a social and economic problem as it is an environmental one becomes painfully clear.

Our current socio-economic system isn't providing any answers. It favours the production of ever more "stuff" and the accumulation of goods in some areas of the globe at the expense of natural resources, health and livelihoods in others. This destructive pattern cannot be sustained without devastating results.

If we are to truly tackle the climate challenge, we must reframe the issue as one of climate justice. This begs us to acknowledge our interconnectedness with people and places that may seem far away and obliges us to focus on equity and regeneration in place of injustice and depletion. It reinforces our common but differentiated responsibilities in fighting climate change as individuals, communities and nations. At its best, thinking in terms of climate justice engages us in coming up with real, locally-led solutions that actively contribute to a good life for all the world's peoples.

Since its founding in 1990, Climate Alliance and its member municipalities have stood for climate justice and for holistic, local solutions to this very global challenge.

## **TOWARDS CLIMATE JUSTICE**





## A STRONG ALLIANCE

Climate action is best when planned and implemented at the local level – be it in the municipalities of Europe or the indigenous territories of Amazonia.

Climate Alliance is a partnership between

European municipalities and the indigenous peoples of the Amazon River basin.

The importance of this partnership is reflected in our work with the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas

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for Climate Alliance

back row, left to right:

"There will be no Conga - not today and not ever."  
"Cajamarca is still ready to fight."  
"Justice for Digna and Máxima."  
"We are not selling the water - we are defending it."

front row, left to right:

"Thank you European brothers for supporting our fight!"  
"Cajamarca, in its fight for water, shows dignity and courage"

de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA), the umbrella organisation for the indigenous peoples of Amazonia. Climate Alliance provides direct institutional support for COICA. The organisation's position on the Climate Alliance Executive Board helps ensure that the interests of indigenous rainforest peoples are represented in our strategy.

COICA works on behalf of nine national indigenous organisations throughout the Amazon Basin, helping coordinate their political efforts and giving them a voice at both the regional and international levels. We at Climate Alliance support this work and the fight for legal recognition of indigenous territories as a critical step towards both just climate policy and rainforest protection.



Climate Alliance supports fair solutions to climate change, led by the communities in which they are being implemented. Building bridges between indigenous communities and European municipalities is an important part of this endeavour.

The range of activities covered by our work in the field of climate justice is broad. In addition to direct institutional aid for COICA, we provide political assistance, strengthening the involvement of indigenous peoples in key international processes. Climate Alliance also supports a variety of community-led projects in the Amazon River basin. Importantly, these projects are built on ideas coming directly from the people rather than on ideas imposed externally.

Climate Alliance encourages direct partnerships between indigenous communities and European municipalities. We work with local governments throughout Europe, raising awareness about the global challenges affecting indigenous peoples.

From project work to study tours and from direct cooperation with indigenous communities to informational campaigns, there are many possibilities for Climate Alliance members wanting to make a contribution to climate justice.

## **BRIDGING EUROPE AND AMAZONIA**

# SUPPORT ACROSS AMAZONIA



1. Partnership: Climate Alliance Vorarlberg - Chocó region
2. Project: RIA pilot project CMARI, Guainía region
3. Cooperation: Climate Alliance Austria - FOIRN
4. Cooperation: COICA (Headquarters in Quito, Ecuador)
5. Support: Frente de Defensa de la Amazonía
6. Support: Yasuní-ITT initiative
7. Support: Sapara women organisation Ashiñwaka
8. Support: Kichwa community of Sarayaku
9. Project: FORMABIAP - Solar lamps
10. Project: support Asháninka people Brazil
11. Project: Green - a project for Amazonia
12. Direct partnership: City of Munich - Asháninka people
13. Cooperation: Rostock - Amarakaeri, Harakmbut people

# INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

## INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Climate Alliance works with indigenous organisations to ensure that their voices are heard in international processes such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the context of climate policy especially, indigenous perspectives are just beginning to be acknowledged. We actively back the indigenous REDD+ scheme, commonly known as RIA. The programme is an approach to climate action based on the sustainable maintenance of indigenous rainforest territories in the Amazon basin. Whereas most REDD+ schemes focus purely on emissions and rely on carbon offsets, RIA places a focus on indigenous livelihoods and sustainable forest use.

RIA is already reaping benefits in six pilot areas. In Peru's protected Amaraeri region, the programme is supporting the Harakmbut people in demarcating borders to put a stop to the illegal logging and mining. The efforts are partially funded by Climate Alliance member city Rostock (Germany).

## FIGHTING IRRESPONSIBLE RESOURCE EXTRACTION

Over the years, we have advocated for various indigenous communities struggling to keep extractive industries at bay. Climate Alliance Luxembourg, for example, has joined forces with the Ecuadorian Amazon Defence Coalition in fighting against oil exploration by multinationals such as Chevron Texaco.





# DIRECT SUPPORT

## INDIGENOUS AID FUND

Attacks on indigenous settlements, illegal logging and oil drilling on indigenous territories – such events are unfortunately commonplace in the forests of Amazonia.

These abuses devastate the climate and the indigenous living in their wake.

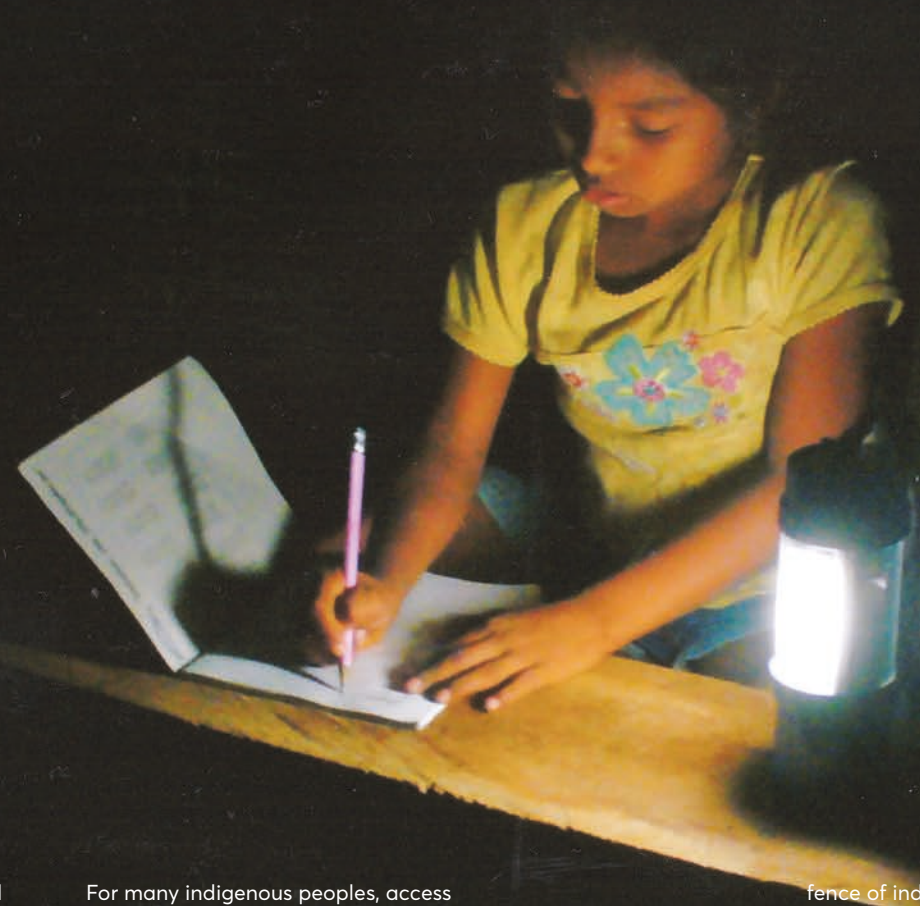
For many indigenous peoples, access to legal assistance that might help limit rights abuses and prosecute crimes is often out of reach.

Since 1996, Climate Alliance members have supported a Legal Aid Fund in de-

fence of indigenous rights. The fund has contributed to the release of indigenous representatives accused of interference by extractive industries as well as indigenous communities seeking legal assistance in keeping Big Oil out of their territories.

## CAPTURING THE SUN'S RAYS

Most indigenous communities are forced to rely on diesel generators and oil lamps to light their homes. This dirty energy is not only relatively expensive, it produces smoke that impacts health. In Peru, Climate Alliance members are supporting local indigenous populations in turning to solar lamps instead. By helping finance the production and distribution of the lamps by locals, these members are improving living conditions, providing jobs and reinforcing environmental awareness in the area. Interested municipalities are welcome to join in!



# TEAMING UP FOR A BETTER WORLD

Partnerships are one way for local authorities to embrace the big picture and fight for climate justice.

One prominent example is that of Climate Alliance Austria, which has entered into a special partnership with FOIRN, the Federation of Indigenous Organisations of the Rio Negro River Basin in Brazil. Via this cooperation, Climate Alliance members in Austria have provided indigenous communities of the Rio Negro with political and financial support for the preservation of their rainforests since 1993.

For well over the last decade, Climate Alliance member Munich has cultivated active collaboration with the Asháninka people of Peru – Amazonia's largest indigenous group. Asháninka representatives regularly hold talks at various events and educational facilities in Munich on topics such as the effects of climate change on their ways of life and the challenges posed by extractive industries as well as sustainable projects that they are carrying out. In turn, the City of Munich supports the Asháninka with PR and lobby work, a variety of small sustainability projects as well as strong support for their rights to land and culture.

These examples feature just some of the important work Climate Alliance is doing via direct partnerships with indigenous peoples.



# SUPPORTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES



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## SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING

Experiencing other realities first hand and interacting with local communities supports intercultural exchange and understanding while strengthening connections. We thus organise opportunities for direct exchange between representatives of European municipalities and indigenous peoples, regularly bringing local politi-

cians and civil society representatives to South America as well as indigenous representatives to Europe. These tours provide opportunities for mutual learning, vividly underlining the challenges faced by both sides and motivating needed action.

## RAISING AWARENESS

Here on the ground, our campaign materials are a powerful way for local authorities to raise awareness amongst their residents, sensitising them to topics such as the consequences of overconsumption and resource extraction. Exhibitions, posters and informational materials available!

## EU PROJECTS

The Climate Alliance Secretariat is happy to provide support to members interested in applying for funding for their own climate justice projects. Motivated municipalities wanted!

# WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH CLIMATE ALLIANCE IN FOSTERING CLIMATE JUSTICE?



CONTACT:

**CLIMATEJUSTICE@CLIMATE  
ALLIANCE.ORG**

FOR MORE INFORMATION.



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Climate Alliance | European Secretariat

Galvanistr. 28

60486 Frankfurt am Main

Germany



**Climate Alliance**

T. +49 69 71 71 39 0

europa@climatealliance.org

climatejustice@climatealliance.org

climatealliance.org

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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 some 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 itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent every 5 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 member interests at the national, European and international levels.