

A Brief Guide on What You Can Do to Help The Amazon Rainforest and The Indigenous People Who Live There

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About this Guidebook

The Amazon Rainforest covers over 1.2 billion acres in parts of Brazil, Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana. To give some context as to what is happening in the Amazon Rainforest currently, acres of land are being set aflame to clear land for illegal cattle ranching, soy, and other uses. Since the rise to power of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, there has been about a 67% increase in deforestation.¹ This deforestation is causing many indigenous tribes to be forced out of their land. Indigenous peoples are marginalized and overlooked every day, and the burning of the Amazon Rainforest is destroying their land and their rights are being infringed on because of this.

Indigenous peoples may not have the ability to just go into court and defend themselves. The purpose of creating this guidebook is to help the indigenous peoples in the Amazon Rainforest. They need our help now more than ever, and our goal is to help protect the Amazon Rainforest and its peoples in any way we can. Included in this guidebook are five different organizations that provide aid to indigenous tribes directly. We have provided information about each organization and what they do. If you are looking to donate money, time, or just educate yourself and become an advocate for these people, this guidebook will provide you with helpful information. In addition to information about giving to organizations, we have provided a list of ways to help that don't involve money. There are ways to advocate for the indigenous peoples there. We have also included a list of what to look for in other organizations, because we know that there are many other great organizations out there that we didn't cover in this guidebook. ***Indigenous peoples all over the world need our help, and helping them to stay on their land is one way we can help protect the remaining natural places of this world.***

On April 26, 2019 there was a victory for the Waorani tribe against the Ecuadorian government in which the Supreme Court ruled that the government could not auction off their land without consent of the people.² Other tribes in Ecuador also have land up for auction and have to bring lawsuits to the Ecuadorian court to protect their land as well. This is also happening in Peru where the government has sectioned off 64 areas of indigenous peoples land to be auctioned to developers. The Tierra de Resistentes³ is a compiled report of the dangers that ethnic minorities and environmental activists face. It was found that they have high risk of

¹ Rainforest Action Network, and Rainforest Action Network. "Amazon Fires: How Can You Help? - The Understory." Rainforest Action Network, August 27, 2019. <https://www.ran.org/the-understory/amazon-fires-how-can-you-help/>.

² Reiderer, Rachel. "An Uncommon Victory for an Indigenous Tribe in the Amazon." *The New Yorker*, 15 May 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/an-uncommon-victory-for-an-indigenous-tribe-in-the-amazon>. Accessed 20 October 2019. (<https://colombiacheck.com/especiales/tierra-resistentes/es-co/>)

³ "Land of Resistants." Tierra de Resistentes. Accessed December 12, 2019. <https://colombiacheck.com/especiales/tierra-resistentes/en-gb/>.

violent attacks or murder by supporters or workers in the drilling, logging and mining industries. In 10 years and 7 countries there have been over 1,300 attacks and many murders.

The Amazon Rainforest is considered to be the lungs of our planet. These fires are contributing to the already severe worldwide climate crisis. The carbon stored by the rainforest is being released into the atmosphere, and there is less protection from the devastating effects of climate change. There is evidence that the government of Brazil is reducing protections for the original inhabitants of the Amazon, and for the Amazon itself. As a result the ability of indigenous peoples to remain on their land is in great danger.

Forms of Aid

In our review of different organizations that aid indigenous people we found that the provided forms of aid fit into three general categories.

- Advocacy and legal aid in fighting rights violations and environmental damages, or promotion of necessary legislation.
- Grants or funding for projects which provide monetary aid for different causes, such as transport of indigenous leaders to conferences, projects to improve communities, and sustainability improvements.
- Training which involves better farming practices, best land use practices, and how to best market products for profit.

Non-Monetary Ways to Help Indigenous Peoples

- Contact your UN representative and ask them to increase support for UNDRIP⁴
 - UNDRIP stands for United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is a document meant to protect the rights of all indigenous people that may not be addressed in other human rights documents or may have needed adjustments, as well as protect individual rights.
- Contribute or ask your government to contribute to the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples⁵
 - Government, non-government organizations, public and private groups, and everyday people can contribute. This fund helps indigenous representatives travel to meetings and assemblies involving the expansion and protection of their rights, their position in decision making processes and other relevant gatherings.
- Push your government to support ILO Convention No. 169⁶
 - Convention No. 169 is a treaty adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) which determines the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and the responsibility of the governments of the countries in which they live to uphold these rights. Currently 23 countries have ratified it. This list includes Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador, all of which have had government leaders infringe on the rights that their indigenous peoples have. The United States and Canada have notable not ratified this convention even though they are members of the ILO and have indigenous populations with a history of rights being violated.
- Learn about what is being done by the people of South America (COICA, MST, Union of Indigenous Nations, etc.)
- Raising awareness

⁴ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” *United Nations*, [URL](#), Accessed 8 Dec 2019.

⁵ “UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples.” OHCHR. Accessed December 12, 2019. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/ipeoples/ipeoplesfund/pages/ipeoplesfundindex.aspx>.

⁶ “ILO Convention No. 169.” *Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca*, [URL](#), Accessed 8 Dec 2019.

- Start conversations at your workplace or school
- Use social media as a platform to talk about what is going on, and how people can help
- Reduce your intake of meat
 - A study published in the American Chemical Society has found that in an average American diet, beef consumption creates 1,984 pounds of CO₂e annually.⁷
 - Replacing beef with plants would reduce that figure 96 percent, bringing it down to just 73 pounds of CO₂e.
 - Acres of land are being set aflame to clear land for illegal cattle ranching, soy, and other uses.
 - Maybe replace two meat based meals a week with plant based meals
 - Buy locally sourced meat, so you're not directly supporting the deforestation that results from the demand.

Donating to Organizations Providing Aid to Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon

Amazon Watch

520 3rd Street, Suite 108,

Okaland, CA 94607

1 (510) 281 9020

Website: <https://amazonwatch.org/>

(Indigenous and Environmental Advocacy and Training)

Their mission:

- prevent the destruction of the Amazon
 - challenging harmful mining
 - Deforestation
 - fuel extraction
 - Destruction of indigenous lands
- How?
 - partner with the indigenous people to challenge governments and corporations infringing on their rights
 - partner with the indigenous people to promote their knowledge and practices for sustainable stewardship practices
 - Support lawsuits against environmental destruction and accountability for it

Recent work:

- Research showed JPMorgan Chase and Black Rock are financing the continued expansion of fossil fuel companies into the Amazon

⁷ Eshel, Gidon, Alon Shepon, Elad Noor, and Ron Milo. "Environmentally Optimal, Nutritionally Aware Beef Replacement Plant-Based Diets." *Environmental Science & Technology* 50, no. 15 (2016): 8164–68. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.6b01006>.

- Spreading the word on the Ecuadorian government giving up indigenous territory to be auctioned to corporations
- Stop Belo Sun gold mine from being built in the Amazon, which would cover 620 square miles and harm three indigenous tribes (ongoing)
- Support the people of Santa Clara de Uchunya who are fighting deforestation by palm oil companies on their ancestral lands.

How you can help:

- Donate
- Support associated businesses
- Attend events

Donations:

- Any amount can be donated and they accept Paypal or credit card
- Donations can be set as monthly

Amazon Watch. Amazon Watch, 2019, <https://amazonwatch.org/>. Accessed 20 November 2019.

Rainforest Action Network

425 Bush Street, Suite 300

San Francisco, CA 94108

Main Office: 415-398-4404

Email: answers@ran.org

Website: <https://www.ran.org/>

(Indigenous and Environmental Advocacy)

Mission

- “Rainforest Action Network preserves forests, protects the climate, and upholds human rights by challenging corporate power and systemic injustice through frontline partnerships and strategic campaigns”

Vision

- “RAN works toward a world where the rights and dignity of all communities are respected and where healthy forests, a stable climate and wild biodiversity are protected and celebrated.”

Values

1. Fighting for People and Planet
2. Respect and Integrity
3. Indigenous and Frontline Partnerships
4. People Power
5. Racial Justice
6. Traditional and Indigenous Peoples
7. Social Justice
8. Wilderness and Biodiversity

9. Systemic Change

Projects or events that the organization has done recently

- Banking on Climate Change Workshop: Building a Finance Strategy to Fight Climate Change
- Banking on Climate Change: Real Campaigns and Real Solutions on Finance and Climate Change
- Rainforest Action Network invites you to REVEL: The Art of Activism!
- Rainforest Action Network invites you to REVEL in the Rainforest

How people can help (specifically through this organization)

- Make a one time or monthly monetary donation
- Money can go towards their Climate Action Fund or their Protect-An-Acre Program
- Set donations start at \$25, and there is an option to set your own amount
- Paypal or credit card are both accepted as payment options
- Give stock

Rainforest Action Network. Rainforest Action Network, <https://www.ran.org/>. Accessed 22 November 2019.

Rainforest Alliance

125 Broad Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10004 USA

Phone: +1 (212) 677-1900

Fax: +1 (212) 677-2187

Email: info@ra.org

Website: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>

(Indigenous and Environmental Advocacy)

- Their approach
 - “We are an alliance of farmers, forest communities, companies and consumers committed to creating a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. By bringing diverse allies together, we are making deep-rooted change on some of the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time. We’re implementing proven and scalable solutions on the ground while testing innovative ways to drive change.”
- Projects or events that the organization has done recently
 - Annual Gala
 - #Followthefrog
- How people can help (specifically through this organization)
 - Make a one time or monthly monetary donation
 - Money goes to help Rainforest Alliance work with local communities to conserve rainforests
 - Set donations start at \$25, and there is an option to set your own amount

- Paypal or credit card are both accepted as payment options
- Become a Canopy Associate
 - Donate \$1000 or above
 - Receive exclusive benefits, including updates on the impact of your contributions and opportunities to connect with other community members during special events.

Rainforest Alliance. Rainforest Alliance, 2019, <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>. Accessed 24 November 2019.

International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs

Prinsessegade 29 B, 3rd floor

DK 1422, Copenhagen

Denmark

(+45) 53 73 28 30

Website: <https://www.iwgia.org/en/>

(Indigenous Advocacy)

Mission:

- Advocate locally promote the rights of indigenous people
- Create a world where indigenous people's rights are safe
- Indigenous people's societies can develop the way they want
- Indigenous people are able to have a say in decisions that affect their ways of life and land.

What they have done:

- instrumental in the formation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- Supported the work for indigenous people in Africa have their rights recognized by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
- supported the creation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Donations:

- three different donation types:
 1. DIBS, PayPal, and credit cards like MasterCard and Visa. Specific values are possible, but payments are in euro
 2. There is a monthly donation option ranging from 10 to 30 euro and other (11 - 33\$ *).
 3. There is also a member option which is 30 euro a year
 - Interact with other members in the IWGIA forum
 - run to be a board member
 - Vote

- Attend their biennial members meeting
- share their publications to help raise awareness

*The values listed are based on November 2019 exchange rate and will change in value overtime.

IWGIA, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, <https://www.iwgia.org/en/>. Accessed 24 November 2019.

Cultural Survival

2067 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02140

(617) 441-5400

Website: <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/>

(Indigenous and Environmental Advocacy, and grants or funding for projects)

Mission

- “Cultural Survival advocates for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supports Indigenous communities’ self-determination, cultures and political resilience since 1972.”

Vision

- “Cultural Survival envisions a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance.”

Projects or events that the organization has done recently

- Cultural Survival Stood with the Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia on November 20, 2019

How people can help (specifically through this organization)

- Make a monthly or one time monetary donation
 - Set donations start at \$25, and there is an option to set your own amount
 - Paypal or credit card are both accepted as payment options
- Donate stock or other securities
- Make Cultural Survival the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, 401(k) or IRA
- Intern or volunteer for Cultural Survival

Cultural Survival. Cultural Survival, 2018, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/>. Accessed 23 November 2019.

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile is a method by which a consumer using the Amazon company system can donate money to the organizations incorporated in the US that provide aid to the indigenous people who live in the actual Amazon there. Only 0.5% of the purchase cost goes to the charity. This means that from a 30 dollar purchase only 15 cents goes to the organization you choose. We encourage people to use Amazon Smile to contribute to the eligible organizations in this guide when

making purchases, in addition to donating money directly to the organizations listed above. It is also recommended that customers of Amazon write to the company's headquarters to urge the company to donate to the people of the Amazon, noting that the company has enjoyed the use of the name and that it would be appreciated if the company used some of its vast resources to help preserve the natural resource with which it identifies. Those who use the Amazon system, who recognize the importance to the world of protecting the Amazon, can communicate their perspective to the company by writing to: Amazon.com Inc., 410 Terry Ave North, Seattle, Washington 98109. It is also easy to call corporate headquarters at (206) 266-1000, or to send a fax to (206) 266-7010. Although we were not able to find on Amazon's website a way to email corporate headquarters, customers can also submit their comments through customer service, asking that they be relayed to corporate headquarters, and can share their opinion by posting comments that other customers can read. See: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/community-help/official-comment-guidelines>.

In our search for groups that work with the indigenous tribes of the Amazon Rainforest we found New World Foundation, which works with indigenous tribes of the United States. We have included some basic information on this group as we feel that it is important to help all indigenous groups, particularly in our own part of the world. Indigenous peoples in the Northern Americas face similar problems of environmental and ancestral land destruction, and helping them to protect their homes is one way we of North America can protect the land to which we all belong.

New World Foundation

New World Foundation
680 West End Avenue,
#1C New York, NY 10025
+1 (212) 249 1023

New World Foundation overall goal is a "democratic future for the United States". The organization works for this goal by fighting against voter suppression, economic inequality, anti-union bills, poor public education, and environmental abuses and dysregulation. Their work is especially important to low income communities as well as indigenous populations.

Tips for what to look for in other organizations

This is not an exhaustive guide to organizations that can accept donations to aid the peoples of the Amazon rainforest, and we hope this guidebook will encourage readers to undertake their own research. In doing so, it is important when looking at different organizations to check the validity of the organization.

- Look to see if the organization has been reviewed or awarded by websites such as:
 - Guidestar
 - Charity Watch
 - Charity Navigator
 - Great NonProfits
- Check to see if the organization posts regular news updates on their website
- Check to see if they have partnerships with other organizations
- When looking to see if the organization directly works with indigenous people you can:
 - check their news, about us, or our work pages which typically contain information on recent work

Please share any comments or relevant information by writing to: rreibste@bu.edu, with “Indigenous Peoples” in the subject line. Thank you for your efforts!