

Championing Climate Justice

A look at challenges facing European cities and indigenous peoples of Amazonia on the basis of exchanges between municipal representatives and indigenous ambassadors for sustainability

The Future We Want



Climate Alliance



Sustainable Partnership

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

The EU-funded project "The Future We Want - Local Authorities for Sustainable Development" provided the framework for indigenous delegates to act as ambassadors for sustainability during three European tours. In their search for answers to the question of how a good life can be guaranteed for all, the delegates travelled to seven countries across Europe and exchanged with politicians, citizens and representatives of local organisations and municipalities.

"This experience has prompted me, in my role as Environment Manager of the City of Luxembourg, to push even harder to make our society aware of its global responsibility while recognising that saving resources also helps improve quality of life."

Pierre Schmitt, Environment Manager of the City of Luxembourg



Rio Negro community hosting Climate Alliance Austria, Brasil

Indigenous Ambassadors for Sustainability

Teresita Antazu López



Teresita Antazu López belongs to the Yanéscha indigenous people of Peru. She was the first woman to be elected to the managing board of the national indigenous umbrella association AIDSESEP. Teresita campaigns tirelessly for the rights of indigenous women. In 2015, she was elected vice president of the indigenous organisation UNAY (Unión de Nacionalidades Ashaninkas y Yaneshas) in the central Peruvian Amazon rainforest. She has represented the interests of the indigenous people of the Peruvian Amazon region at countless international conferences, including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York (2004 and 2005) and the international climate conferences COP20 in Lima (2014) and COP21 in Paris (2015).

Jhenny Ivonne Muñoz Hilares

Jhenny Ivonne Muñoz Hilares of the Asháninka people is from Atahualpa beside the Rio Negro in the central Amazon region of Peru. In addition to her work as the first coordinator of the Office for sustainable development of indigenous villages in the Rio Negro district, a local councillor and civil society advocate on the local level, she has travelled to conferences and events in Europe as part of the partnership with Munich to represent the indigenous Asháninka community since 2005. Jhenny Muñoz is currently the president of the non-governmental organisation IMPERITA, which campaigns for improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable populations.



Eriberto Gualinga



The indigenous film-maker Eriberto Gualinga is the spokesperson for the Kichwa community of Sarayaku from the Ecuadorian Amazon region, which has successfully prevented oil exploitation in its territory for over 30 years. During several trips to Europe, he presented their proposal of "Kawsak Sacha" ("living forest") to protect the forests and indigenous peoples of Amazonia.

Carla de Jesus Dias

Carla de Jesus Dias is a biologist and anthropologist. She has worked at the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA), which is active throughout Brazil, since 2005. Carla has been involved in the cooperation between the umbrella association of the indigenous organisations in the Rio Negro region (FOIRN) and indigenous communities from the lower and central Rio Negro region for four years now. She is currently working on the strategic planning and implementation of a number of different projects in cooperation with indigenous organisations.




Maximiliano Correa Menezes

Maximiliano Correa Menezes from the Tukano indigenous people, who dwell in the north-west of the Brazilian Amazon basin, is a teacher and has been active in the indigenous movement for 30 years now. He is currently the coordinator of the umbrella association of indigenous organisations from the Brazilian Amazon region (COIAB). Maximiliano was previously one of the five directors on the board of the umbrella association of indigenous organisations in the Rio Negro region (FOIRN).



Travel Itineraries

Eriberto Gualinga 

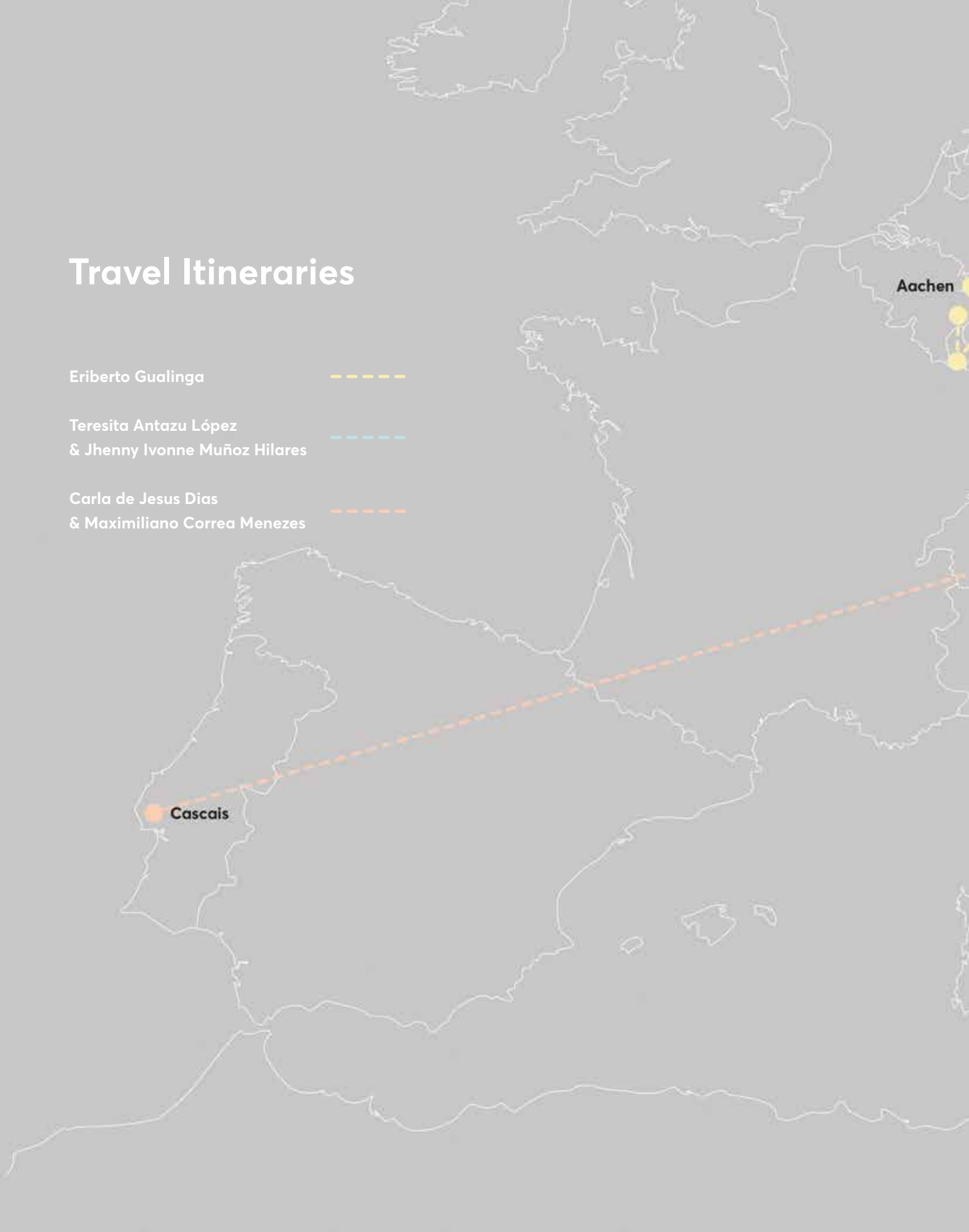
Teresita Antazu López
& Jhenny Ivonne Muñoz Hilaes 

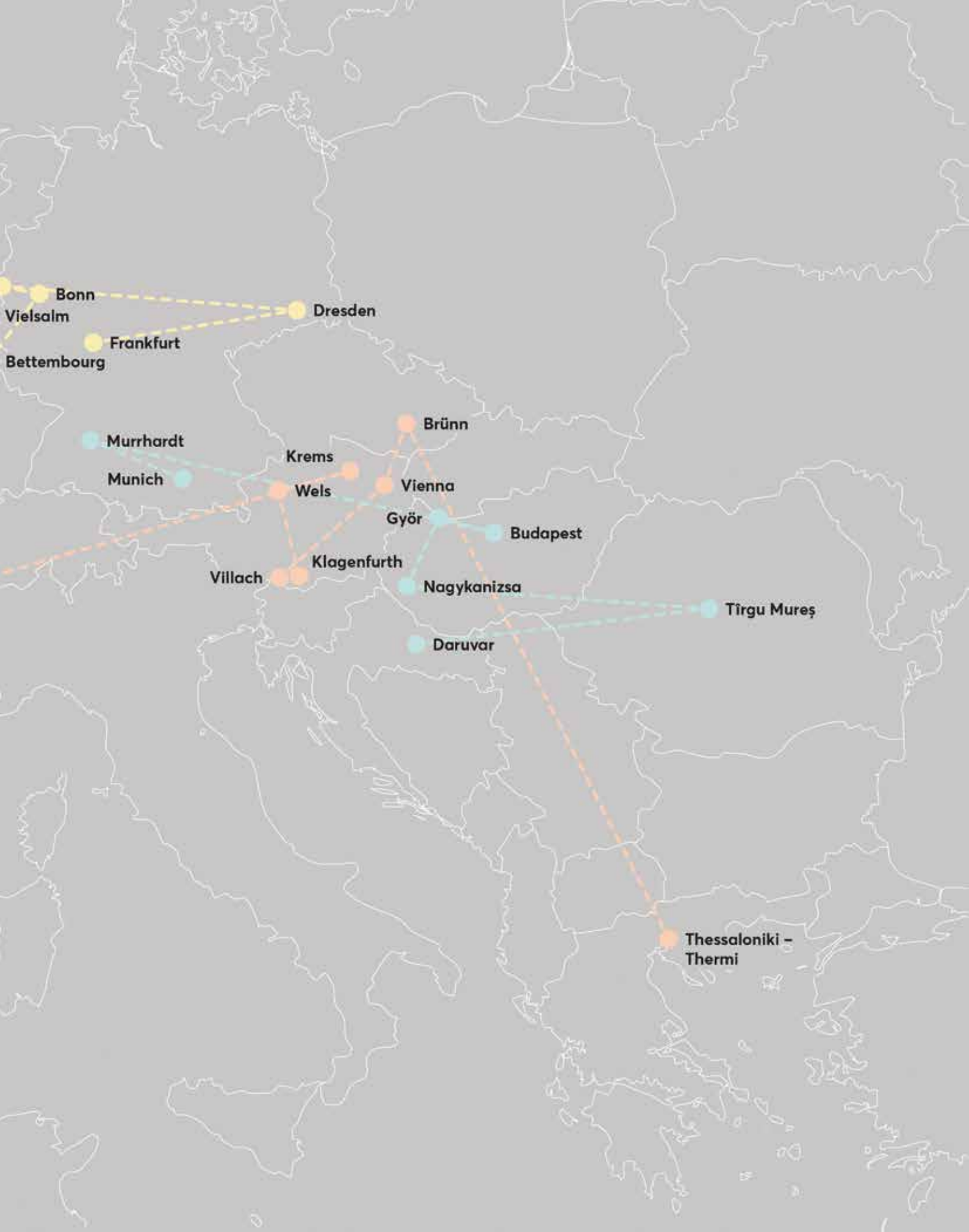
Carla de Jesus Dias
& Maximiliano Correa Menezes 

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Standing Up for the Living Forest



Meeting with OroVerde at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs, Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Bonn, Germany

Presentation of the film "The song of the flower" in a cinema in Vielsalm, Belgium

Eriberto Gualinga spent 2.5 weeks in Europe between 19 April and 7 May 2015. During his trip, he visited municipalities and partner organisations in Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium, and focused on the subject of forests and the sustainable use of resources.



Panel discussion at the International Annual Conference of Climate Alliance in Dresden, Germany



The "Living Forest" in Luxembourg



Climate Day in Luxembourg

Girl Power from Amazonia

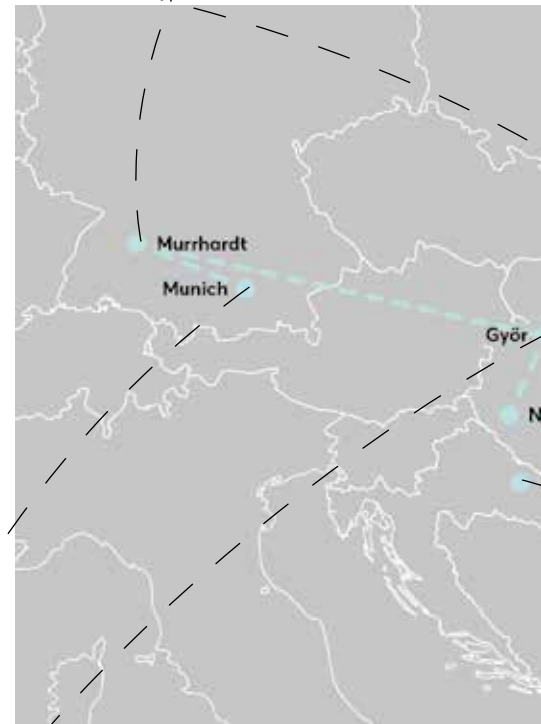
Visit of the
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Meeting with children in the municipality of Galesti, Romania

Jhenny Munoz and Teresita Antazu visited Europe from 27 September to 1 November 2015. Beside the usual educational programme in Munich, the two women also travelled to Hungary, Romania and Croatia as ambassadors for indigenous rights and rain- forest protection.

Meeting with Stephanie Jacobs, Health and Environment Manager in Munich, Germany



Swabian-Franconian Forest Nature Park
DE)



Visit and discussion in the Hungarian
Parliament in Budapest, Hungary

School visit in the city of Daruvar, Croatia



Cultural program in Kajárpéc,
Hungary



Energy from the Rio Negro

Lobby event at the Aristoteles University in Thessaloniki, Greece

Exchange with local politicians about Chalkidiki's gold mine, Greece

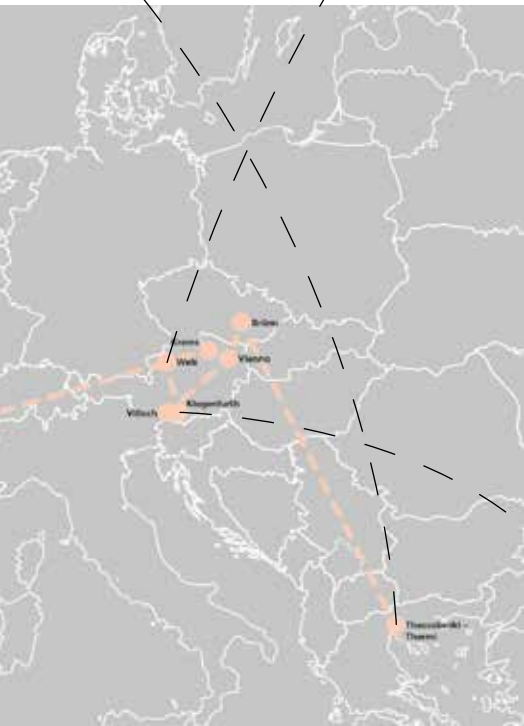


Symbolic tree planting in the Sintra-Cascais Nature Park, Portugal



Maximiliano de Menezes and Carla de Jesus Dias travelled to Portugal, Austria, the Czech Republic and Greece. From 4 to 19 October 2016, the trip delegates considered the aspects of land grabbing, mobility and renewable energies.





Exchange on possible applications for renewable energies in Salzburg, Austria

Reception in the Spiegelsaal in Klagenfurt, Austria



Exchange about reforestation in Cascais, Portugal

Common Challenges

Our current social and economic system does not have any answers to climate change. Indeed, it is in fact part of the problem, as it promotes the production and accumulation of goods in some regions of the world at the expense of the natural resources, health and living spaces of others.

Economic growth and the hunger for resources are not only having an impact in European countries though. The pressure on the forests and, with this, on the living environment of indigenous peoples is also growing in the Amazon region.

The delegation trips revealed parallels in the local effects of the global economic system in

different regions of the world. The challenges faced by indigenous peoples and developments in Europe are presented below, whereby a great many parallels can be discerned.

Both acknowledging the existence of common challenges and exchanging on forms of resistance, possible solutions and (technical) innovations inspired and motivated the participants in their search for alternatives.

Global solidarity and mutual support empower people to combat the effects of (neo-)extractivism and climate change, and to develop alternative concepts.

Deforestation

Palm Oil – A Trigger for Deforestation and Land Conflicts in Peru

Based on information provided by FECONAU and research of Climate Alliance

The search for alternatives to fossil fuels (e.g. renewable resources) has led palm oil to grow in significance in recent years. The EU is one of the largest importers of palm oil in the world, responsible for importing almost seven million tonnes alone in 2015.¹ Almost half of this is used as energy – for biofuel, electricity and heat generation, for example. The remainder is used by the food and chemical industries.² The area on which palm oil is cultivated has tripled globally since 1990 to more than 18 million hectares.³ This has led to a significant decline in forested areas in the cultivation regions. What's more, there has been a huge loss of biodiversity and large quantities of greenhouse gases have been released into the atmosphere.

The largest cultivation regions are in Indonesia and Malaysia where around 85% of all palm oil is grown and produced.⁴ However, the consequences of monocultures are also already proving devastating in Latin America. The areas where palm oil is cultivated have grown dramatically in Peru, for it is being touted as an alternative to the cultivation of coca – among others, by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Demand has been growing even faster since the blending quotas for diesel and petrol were introduced. Between 2000 and 2015, the cultivation area in Peru quadrupled in size from 15,000 hectares to 60,000 hectares.⁵ Contrary to the agreements reached, a large part of this expansion took place in areas of primary forest and indigenous territories. This leads to conflicts regarding the forests crucial to the livelihoods of many indigenous communities.

“The people of Santa Clara de Uchunya were granted an area of around 20,000 hectares, but only guaranteed the land titles to 200 hectares. The state retained the disposal rights to the remaining land and allocates concessions for palm oil plantations, for example. The indigenous population not only finds its rights but also its very existence threatened by such measures. Not least because the shifting cultivation that these sensitive soils require is no longer possible, fishing is considerably hampered due to the denial of access, and the ground and water are polluted by pesticides.”

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

For more impressions of the delegation trip from the mayor of Cologne, Andreas Wolter, please see page 40.

The cultivation area for palm oil has also grown considerably in the Ucayali region situated in the centre of Peru, on the border with Brazil. More than 700 inhabitants of the Shipibo-Conibo and Kakataibo peoples live in the Santa Clara de Uchunya community in the Amazon region. They resisted the destructive activities taking place within their territory from the outset. The Melka Group, a network of 25 companies in Peru, is believed to be largely responsible for the destruction.

In 2015, the indigenous peoples joined forces with the local indigenous organisation FECONAU to file a complaint against Plantaciones de Pucallpa S.A.C. (a company of the Melka Group) with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The allegation: clearing of more than 5,000 hectares of (predominantly primary) forest located within their territories. Both the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture and the RSPO recognised the reproaches against the palm oil company and ordered it to suspend its illegal agricultural activities. However, a few days before the RSPO passed its request on Plantaciones de Pucallpa S.A.C., the company withdrew its membership of the RSPO, sold its property and now claims that it is no longer active in the palm oil business. The extent to which legal action can be taken against the company is therefore unclear.

While legal recognition of these illegal activities is certainly an achievement, palm oil continues to be cultivated – and so the fight to combat it continues, too.

The people of Ucayali have called on the regional government to take responsibility for resolving the conflicts. Specifically, the indigenous people are urging them to:

- **prevent the intrusion of settlers and people who plant coca in the communities' territories**
- **guarantee the allocation of land rights to territories affected by the destructive consequences of the expansion of monocultures and palm oil plantations**
- **establish a health centre in the indigenous and rural communities**
- **promote the production and marketing of local products**
- **end the systematic defamation and slander of indigenous leaders as well as murder threats and harassment**



Timber Industry – A Driver for the Loss of Forest in Romania

Based on a text provided by Focus Eco Center

Romania is renowned for its untouched natural environment. Large areas of the country are covered by forests, which are still home to wild animals such as bears, wolves and lynx. This image has changed dramatically in recent years, as deforestation – a major problem in Romania – is causing significant environmental damage. Between 2013 and 2014, three hectares of forest disappeared every hour, according to a report by Greenpeace.⁶ The rate of deforestation is increasing every year due to legally and, to a large extent, illegally exploited timber.⁷ The intensive exploitation of these areas, which include virgin forests, nature reserves and national parks, causes a multitude of problems in the Carpathian Mountains. It is radically changing the forest ecosystem and destroying the natural habitats of animals, especially wolves and bears. This in turn reduces the forests' water retention capacity, leading to flooding and erosion.

In the past years, a major Austrian timber company, Holzindustrie Schweighofer, has played a key role in wood exploitation and processing in Romania. Several NGOs have accused the company of purchasing and processing illegal timber in Romania. An investigation by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) revealed that Schweighofer was willing to buy illegal timber. What's more, they filmed unmarked timber being dumped at the company's depots in apparent violation of Romanian law.⁸ Due to its ille-

gal and destructive activities in Romania, Schweighofer's Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification was suspended in 2017.

Wood exploitation in Romania is the subject of many protests by civil society organisations fighting illegal logging and overexploitation. After several years of pressure, the Romanian Ministry of the Environment, Water and Forests (MMAP) set up a instrument called "Forest Radar"⁹, which aims to monitor timber transports from the moment the trees are felled in the forest until the timber crosses the country's borders or is delivered to a timber factory. Moreover, by setting up a hotline, it offers citizens the opportunity to identify vehicles transporting wood in order to check the timber's destination and whether it has been authorised. Since 2014, all timber trucks have been required to use this IT system.

However, obtaining reliable information is still challenging. In 2016, investigators from EIA tracked logging trucks delivering timber to Schweighofer's sawmills and discovered that in many cases, GPS coordinates of officially registered loading sites appeared to be fake.¹⁰ The fight against illegal logging and overexploitation of Romania's forests continues.



Forest clearing in Romania

Landgrabbing Due to Mining

Gold Rush in Amazonia – Indigenous Success in Rio Negro

Based on a text provided by Climate Alliance Austria and FOIRN

The largest blackwater river basin in the world, the Rio Negro region, is located in the north-west Amazon region of Brazil. Its drainage area encompasses over 700 tributaries, extends across national borders and is home to 23 indigenous peoples. More than 56% of the land is already recognised as indigenous territory.

Despite this, the area was and remains under threat from exploitation and the overuse of natural resources. Included in national development and infrastructure programmes, the indigenous area has been under pressure since the 1970s.

Using the official argument of economic and military development of the area, the military regime built the BR-174 national road between Manaus and Boa Vista in the northern Amazon state of Roraima, as well as the BR-210 "Perimetral Norte" along the border with Venezuela. Development of the infrastructure was accompanied by the intrusion of gold diggers and companies

in search of natural resources. Beside the devastating environmental damage (among others, due to the use of mercury) the intruders also brought suffering to the indigenous communities dwelling there.

Instead of allowing themselves to be divided by external forces, indigenous communities resolved to work together to defend their rights. Thus, the umbrella association of indigenous organisations in the Rio Negro region (Federação das Organizações Indígenas do Rio Negro, FOIRN) was formed in April 1987. FOIRN has campaigned for indigenous rights and their cultural heritage ever since to great success. Mining companies and gold diggers have been forced to withdraw from the area and, in 1997, one of the largest state-recognised indigenous protected areas in Amazonia began to form, which today covers 122,000 km². Demarcation of the indigenous territories is the result of the successful organisation and ensures the political participation of the indigenous people living there.

Despite this, there were still repeated incursions by smaller groups of gold diggers along the lower and middle sections of the Rio Negro in 2007. Thanks to their effective networking with civil society organisations, the local media and the church, FOIRN was able to swiftly put a halt to these. The responsible authorities dispersed the gold digger camps and seized their equipment, machines and boats.

The situation remains challenging however: the Brazilian constitution only guarantees the indigenous peoples' use of the surface land within the protected areas. Everything underground can be used by the state for projects deemed of "national interest". A total of 386 mining companies have applied to the responsible department to conduct research and mining activities in indigenous territories along the Rio Negro. Although no permits have yet been issued, this remains a constant threat.

In 2017, indigenous peoples continue to campaign for their rights



Climate Alliance Austria, guests in the Rio Negro, Brazil

and the demarcation of their territories, rallying under the call for “Demarcação Já!” [“Demarcation now!”]. More than 25 Brazilian artists have taken the growing pressure caused by the unstable political situation in Brazil as an opportunity to raise awareness for the significance of indigenous peoples and their territories: “Pelo direito à terra, pelo direito à vida! #DemarcaçãoJá” [“For the right to land, for the right to life! #DemarcationNow”).

Gold Rush in Greece – Resistance to the Chalkidiki Mine

Based on a text provided by ANATOLIKI S.A.

Reminiscent of gold mining operations in the Amazon basin, the Chalkidiki gold mine in northern Greece has sparked intense controversy. In both cases, local populations have found themselves fighting multinational companies with little regard for the surrounding environment and its people.

“Meeting with representatives from indigenous organisations of the Amazon basin and exchanging opinions resulted in conclusions of high political significance: some Greek municipalities and regions face problems similar to those of indigenous communities, with human exploitation of the environment leading to disastrous degradation. The exchange of experience provided the opportunity to discuss ways and means to avoid such activities and their consequences.”

Kyriakos Panayiotopoulos, Chairman of Aristotle Municipal Council; Professor Emeritus, School of Agriculture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The Chalkidiki mine is located on public land, leased for a pittance by Aristotle municipality over a period of 50 years to Hellas Gold S.A., a subsidiary of the Canadian multinational El Dorado Corporation. With foreign investments in land and resources for the realisation of mega-projects on the rise, projects like Chalkidiki are becoming increasingly common in Greece. The debt crisis and subsequent EU austerity policy has resulted in a growing trend towards privatisation, with an array of public property and public companies being sold to international entities.

The land now operated by Hellas Gold lies in a mountainous region and spans some 26,400 hectares. Over 90% of the area is covered by forest, which is being devastated by mining activities: some 258 hectares have already been cleared and further expansion of the mine will put the remaining forest in peril.

At the Chalkidiki site, Hellas Gold plans to excavate 146 million tonnes of rock over a period of 30 years. Only a small percentage of this excavated rock can be used: in the case of Chalkidiki, one tonne of rock will yield less than one gram of gold. In total, just 2% of the excavated material can be used for the minerals it contains, such as copper and silver. The remaining 980 kilograms per tonne of excavated rock will become toxic waste known as tailings – waste rock combined with water and the chemicals used by Hellas Gold to extract valuable minerals. Hellas Gold plans to store these tailings in two large dams. However, according to the environmental impact assessment conducted in 2010, it is uncertain how the fragmented soil under the dams’ foundations will respond to possible earthquakes. Further unanswered questions arising from the assessment include how the massive quantities of untreated residues can safely be transferred to the dams in the first place or how toxic substances used to separate minerals will be treated after their use.¹¹

The waste produced during mining operations will not be limited to tailings though. More than two tonnes of dust containing asbestos and dangerous heavy metal sulphides will be generated for every hour of mining activities. The highly toxic dust will have a detrimental effect on biodiversity, water resources, the landscape, local people and mine workers. In addition to environmental and health concerns, the mining activities will have manifold socioeconomic impacts, too.¹²



Civil society protest against the Chalkidiki mine, Greece

As is often seen with mining projects in the Amazon region, Chalkidiki has divided the local community. The prospect of jobs being created, made even more attractive by the Greek crisis, convinced many that the mine may benefit the community. However, resistance is growing and clearly visible.

Despite Hellas Gold's announcement that it would restore the natural environment, hundreds of people in surrounding villages turned out to protest with banners and black flags. More than 400 people have been prosecuted by the police as a result of their struggle to defend their environment.

Energy Generation

With their local climate protection activities, Climate Alliance member municipalities contribute to a common transition, laying the foundations for the transformation of society. Climate Alliance members commit to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions by ten per cent every five years.

To achieve their goals, many municipalities and their citizens initiate projects for local energy generation. This sustainable solution combines energy saving and efficiency with the declared common goal of using 100% renewable energy in the future.

The development of a decentralised energy supply has its challenges: not only must technical and economic problems be resolved; resistance from the population must be overcome, too. This requires social trans-

formation and controversial debates. Many Climate Alliance members have been addressing these challenges for years now, bringing about a sustainable energy revolution step by step.

It is, however, important not to lose sight of sustainability aspects when it comes to renewable energy sources! Large dam projects destroy the environment and displace the people living there. Renewable energy sources must be subject to sustainability criteria and indigenous rights accordingly. Rather than major construction projects, decentralised and local solutions should be encouraged.

Renewable energy sources can be used to sustainably cover the current and future global energy demands. They are virtually inexhaustible and at the same time prevent large quantities of greenhouse gases from being released into the atmosphere.

Local energy infrastructures allow municipalities to use energy sources that are freely available such as the sun, water, wind and geothermal heat for themselves. The more systems are built, the more municipalities become autonomous and independent of fossil fuels or imported energy. At the same time, these small, decentralised projects help to create jobs locally.



Solar panel in the Kichwa community of Sarayaku, Ecuador

Fossil Free in the Rainforest – Sarayaku’s Example

Based on information provided by the community of Sarayaku

The Kichwa community of Sarayaku is located in the eastern province of Pastaza in the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest. Around 1,500 people live on approx. 135,000 hectares in seven settlements along the Bobonaza River. The Sarayaku people have lived in this area, which can only be reached by air or water, for generations now.

Because the Sarayaku community lies at the very heart of the rainforest, there is no access to the public power supply. Ten years ago, the community therefore began producing its own electricity using solar power. Today, a photovoltaic plant of around 250 m² supplies power to the administrative office and communal facilities at the centre of the village. Some families use decentralised solar modules in their homes. Solar energy power is part of their vision for an autonomous and sustainable way of life, which is reflected in their concepts of the “living forest” (Spanish: “Selva Viviente”) and a “good life” (Kichwa: “Sumak Kawsay”; Spanish: “Buen Vivir”).

Beside technical issues such as corrosion of the power lines

and contacts due to the high air humidity (up to 90%!), one of the biggest challenges for the Sarayaku community is the national government, which includes oil exploitation in its national development concept for the entire Amazon region.

The people of Sarayaku have unanimously and resolutely resisted oil exploitation in their territory since the 1980s when the first crude oil test drillings were conducted. One of their biggest successes was the battle against the Argentine oil company Compañía General de Combustibles (CGC). In 2002 and 2003, CGC conducted seismic surveys in the area, leaving 1.5 tonnes of highly explosive, harmful material behind in the ground. However, due to continued resistance from the local population, the multinational company could successfully be driven out and oil exploitation halted. The Sarayaku community subsequently filed a complaint with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights against the Ecuadorian state, which had granted the ancestral land of the Sarayaku in concession to CGC without safeguarding their right to “free, prior and informed

consent” (FPIC) . After more than ten years, Sarayaku finally won the legal battle in 2012. The court ruled that the state of Ecuador violated the rights of the Kichwa community and reaffirmed the Sarayaku’s right to self-determined development.

The Ecuadorian constitution includes the principle of “Sumak Kawsay” (“a good life”) as a political aim and recognises nature as a legal entity and the right of indigenous peoples – also through ratification of ILO Convention No. 169. Incursions into indigenous territories still occur nonetheless. The Ecuadorian state continues to support resource depletion and grants oil licences without taking the indigenous rights recognized in its own constitution seriously.



Felix Santi, President of the Sarayaku community, presents its project for renewable energies

For more information on the indigenous concept of the “living forest” and a “good life”, please see page 30.

A Sustainable Energy Future for Europe – Municipalities as Role Models

Similar to many other Climate Alliance members, the municipality of Tulln and the city of The Hague are innovative role models for other cities, municipalities and regions in Europe. They are driving local transformation and address global challenges.

The largest municipal photovoltaic installation in Austria

The municipality of Tulln has built the largest municipal photovoltaic installation in Austria to date as part of its mission to become energy autonomous. The municipality generates around 36% of the energy it needs to meet its energy requirements – this is already enough to power the street lights. In addition, nine public charging stations for electric vehicles are now in operation. Climate Alliance awarded the municipality a Climate Star for its outstanding commitment.

Sustainability in The Hague

The city of The Hague in the Netherlands has set itself the goal of being CO₂-neutral by 2040. By 2020, it aims to have reduced its CO₂ emissions by 30%, to use 20% more sustainable energy, and to save 20% of energy (compared to 1990).

To achieve these goals, the city is working with different local partners and impresses with the scale of citizen participation: projects are not merely supported from the time of implementation but rather from the planning stage. Climate Alliance conferred The Hague a Climate Star for its endeavours.

A number of different projects have been implemented in recent years. Neighbourhood gardens have been set up, photovoltaic systems installed as part of neighbourhood initiatives¹³ and a solar-powered go-kart, the "Solar Skelter", will soon be made available as a means of community transport.¹⁴ As part of the "Love your House" programme, funding is also being made available to motivate private home owners to make sustainable improvements to their homes. There are numerous pop-up stores sharing positive examples and offering guidance on how people can future-proof their homes.



The photovoltaic system on the roof of the indoor swimming pool in Tulln, Austria can supply more than 30 households with energy.

Another View of Things – Alternative Indigenous Concepts

The world is looking for solutions to address global challenges such as climate change and the over-use of natural resources. These are mostly developed from a Western-dominated and supposedly objective, scientific perspective. Alternative solutions and concepts from the Global South are often not taken seriously or

simply forgotten. One aim of the delegation trips was to open our minds to the approaches of our indigenous partners and to learn from them.

Can we incorporate elements of these concepts into our everyday reality?

The following statements aim to offer insights into the alternative suggestions made by the indigenous peoples of Amazonia.

Kawsak Sacha – The “Living Forest

Based on information provided by the community of Sarayaku

“For us, Kawsak Sacha, the “living forest”, is a place where we gain our physical and spiritual power, strength and our health. When we come into contact with this world of souls, we enter a world of wisdom and the sublime cosmivision of systematic learning.”

Indigenous community of Sarayaku, Ecuador

The Western world often treats nature as nothing more than a source of raw materials. The rainforest is seen as a giant carbon sink, for instance, which absorbs 5–20 tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere per hectare every year. There is far more to the forest ecosystem as a “living forest” though!

The indigenous peoples of Amazonia nurture a way of life that is shaped by the coexistence with nature. This is reflected in the way that they use natural resources as well as their relationship with the environment, which has little to do with a romanticised understanding of nature.

One concept of this way of life is the “living forest”, which is known as Kawsak Sacha in Kichwa. It has its origins in the centuries-old knowledge of the Kichwa indigenous people of Sarayaku in Ecuador. Based on a holistic approach, the forest is considered in its entirety as a living organism. It is made up of living selves and their communicative relations. These



selves – from the smallest plants to the supreme beings who protect the forest – are considered persons (runa). Living in communities (llakta), they lead a similar life to humans. Kawsak Sacha thus does not only perceive the rainforest as a source of raw materials, but rather emphasises its significance to the culture and identity of the Kichwa. For the Sarayaku community, the “living forest” represents the basis of all emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual aspects of life.

“Feel with the heart and soul, listen to nature, interpret what you see and feel. Only in this way can you understand what we mean with a ‘life in harmony’, Sumak Kawsay.”

– Indigenous community of Sarayaku, Ecuador

With Kawsak Sacha, Sarayaku appeals to the international community to reflect on the severe global environmental and economic crisis and to seek alternatives. The concept is a concrete proposal to defend the rights of nature and has already been recognised in the Ecuadorian constitution. It makes clear the need to acknowledge nature and all its parts as living beings entitled to their own rights. Sarayaku calls for formal introduction of the concept of the “living forest” based on self-governance as a new legal category of protected area. Indigenous territories would thus be protected – among others, from extractive industries.

At the climate change conference in Paris in 2015 (COP21), members of the Sarayaku community presented the concept of the “living forest” and drew attention to the importance of the rights of nature with their “living canoe”. 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 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 across borders and out into the entire world.

REDD Indígena Amazónico (RIA) – An Indigenous Alternative

Based on information provided by COICA and AIDSESP

“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.”

Roberto Espinoza, AIDSESP

The connection between climate protection and forests, and the importance of indigenous peoples to a holistic climate protection strategy were the basis for the establishment of Climate Alliance back in 1990. Now, more than 25 years later, forests play an even greater role in global climate negotiations, as deforestation and forest degradation are the second largest cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, only in the energy sector are the figures even higher.

In this context, the REDD+ instrument, which draws the focus to emissions caused by deforestation, was developed in the wake of the 2007 climate conference in Bali. With the aim of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the purpose of REDD+ is to make protecting the forests as carbon sinks financially attractive. However, the instrument with which these goals should be achieved is itself somewhat dubious. The trade in emission credits does not solve the underlying problem, namely that of a consumption-based social model reliant on extractivism. This kind of compensation instrument risks giving the impression that we can “buy our way out” through certificate trading, without having to make any fundamental changes.

This scepticism is echoed by the indigenous peoples who dwell in the forests. They are highly critical of the instrument. Non-transparent contracts with international corporations, the loss of control over their own land and increas-

REDD+ refers to “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries”. It has been discussed by the international community as a climate protection instrument since 2007.

ing pressure on their living space are just a few of their arguments against REDD+ programmes.

In response to this criticism and their dissatisfaction with the approach, the indigenous peoples presented a concrete counter-proposal to the international community in 2010. REDD+ Indígena Amazónico (RIA), also known as Indigenous REDD+, proposes an alternative to the conventional instrument. While the indigenous organisations agree with the fundamental aim of the REDD+ programme, the crucial difference lies in the method of achieving it. RIA focuses on the legal recognition of indigenous territories in order to help those living there to protect their living environment. This recognition could help to achieve the goal of reducing emissions from deforestation as the rate of deforestation in indigenous territories is extremely low and more than 55% of the carbon stored in animals and plants can be found in indigenous territories and other protected areas of the Amazon region. In addition, RIA calls for compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Resolution 61/295 of the UN General Assembly) and the implementation of ILO Convention No. 169. These resolutions also contribute directly to the protection of the rainforest through legal recognition of indigenous territories – and thus enable effective climate protection.

“This concept allows us to respond to the global REDD+ process and transform potential threats into opportunities for indigenous peoples and their forests. RIA thus makes a tangible contribution to mitigating global warming.”

Edwin Vásquez, COICA

RIA's key proposals include the establishment of long-term national and local development plans, territorial security and holistic forest management. In addition, indigenous organisations are calling for public access to REDD+ funding so that it can be controlled by civil society organisations with the participation of indigenous peoples. According to RIA, monitoring, reporting and auditing should also be carried out autonomously by indigenous communities, whereby this form of monitoring would have to be recognised by the state.

As a genuine alternative to market-based mechanisms, RIA offers an integrated approach to climate protection and adaptation to climate change.

RIA has evolved since 2010 and is attracting attention and gaining recognition as an alternative counterproposal to REDD+ from the indigenous peoples of Am-

azonia. RIA has become part of national plans for REDD+ as well as the climate investment fund in Peru. Likewise, RIA pilot projects are underway in indigenous territories in Peru (e.g. Reserva Comunal Amarakaeri), Columbia (e.g. Resguardo Inírida) and Brazil (e.g. Território Igarapé Lourdes).

Interested in learning more?

In 2015, Climate Alliance published a brochure entitled “UNREDDY – a critical look at REDD and indigenous strategies for comprehensive forest protection”.

climatealliance.org/downloads



Climate Change Adaptation Strategies – Conceived by Indigenous Women

Based on an interview with Teresita Antazu Lopez, FECONAYA and Jhenny Muñoz Hilares

“Women have a special view on climate change, as they are involved in the procurement of food in everyday life

Teresita Antazu Lopez, Federation of Native Yánesha Communities, FECONAYA

In indigenous communities, women generally know more about local conditions than their male counterparts, who are more likely to be seeking work outside the local community. As a consequence, women are often more able to determine pragmatic solutions to practical problems. For example, climate change impacted fish migration that had previously shaped their dietary habits, so they created an alternative by breeding fish themselves.

Women are also more affected by extreme climate events than men in indigenous communities. One vivid example are intense rains, which increase the water turbidity and force women to go further from their homes to obtain water. This leaves them with less time for their other chores, such as taking care of the children, breeding animals, growing food on their chakras (small forest gardens) and collecting firewood.

In the event of cold weather (as another example of an extreme climate event), it is the women who must take care of the children if they fall ill. In addition to their usual duties, they must then also gather the necessary medicinal plants. Since women are deemed responsible for healing their children, they are also given the blame in case of a slow recovery.

The AIDSESP's Adaptation to Climate Change Plan for the Microcuenca del Cumbaza located in the

Northern Peruvian Amazon rainforest takes into account the women's knowledge and their central position as mediators between the community core and the natural environment.

The new river basin management plan aims at the sustainable use of natural resources, improvement of the living conditions of the people living in this hydrographic basin and the empowerment of women. It is based on rural indigenous women's holistic vision of the community's various needs and promotes gender equality in the implementation of its measures.

Teresita Antazu Lopez and Jhenny Muñoz Hilares are delegates from the Asháninka and Yánesha people. They are exceptions to the traditional role of women, as both hold positions of power in community organisations.

Jhenny Muñoz Hilares emphasised that in order to be successful, any sustainable development project aimed at indigenous peoples must be based on in-depth knowledge of the reality of the indigenous world, from their own perspective.

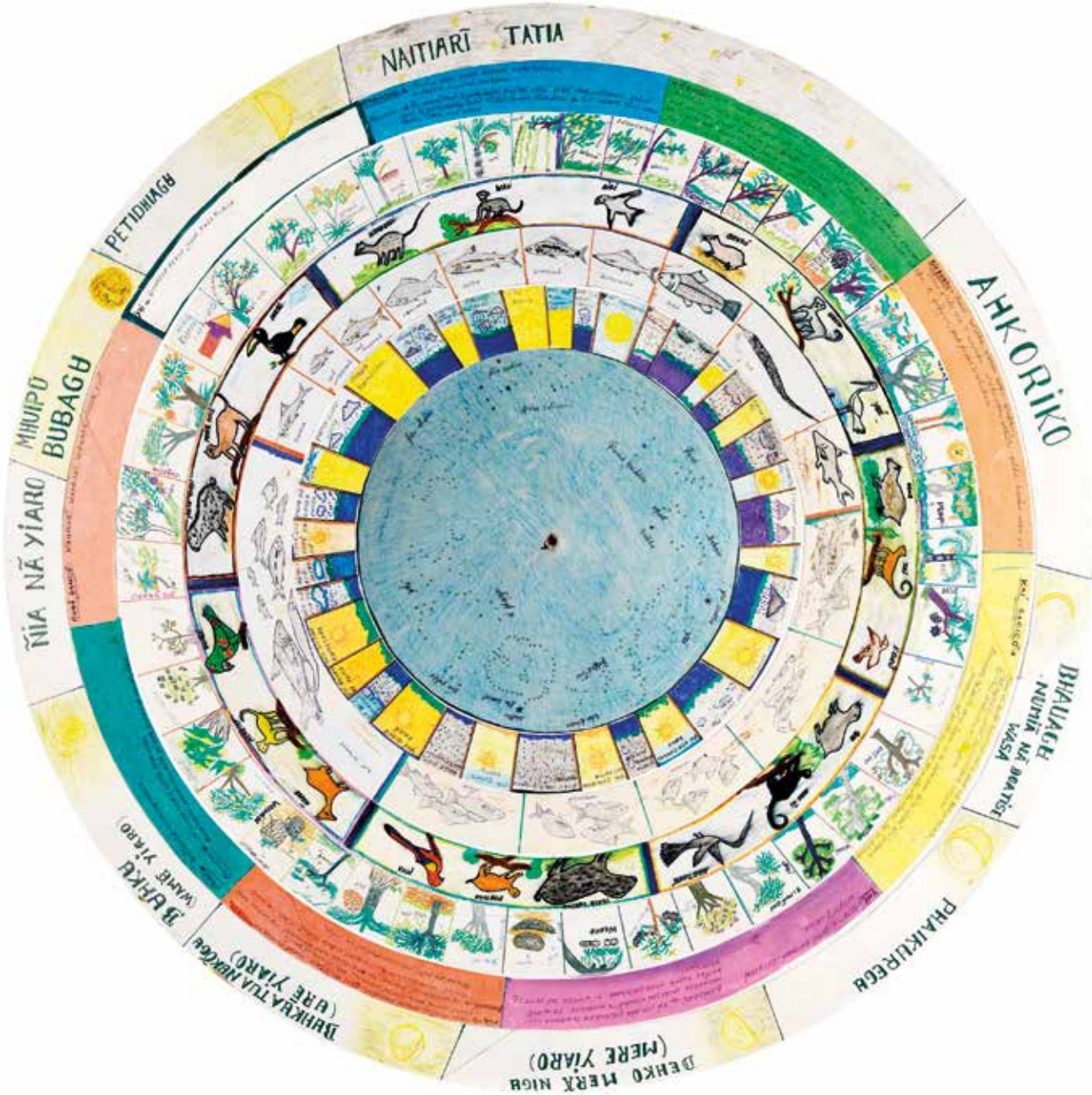


This was the approach adopted by the AIDSESP for its Adaptation to Climate Change Plan that was conceived by indigenous women through workshops and surveys. This methodology respects Jheny's conviction that adaptation to climate change should be based on local techniques and approaches. Taking a female perspective leads to "a more targeted approach and offers projects that families are able to continue

themselves". Jheny also wishes for the challenges of indigenous communities to be recognised and seen in a realistic manner "and not in the romantic way depicted by NGOs or some (inter-) national organisations".

Teresita Antazu Lopez calls for "the idea of putting a price on [indigenous] territories" to be excluded from tropical forests conservation schemes. She asks

for "extractive activities in the Amazon to constitute a crime against humanity", and demands "respect for our territories and ways of life", taking into account that indigenous peoples "do not seek 'development' but rather a good life for all".



The calendar of the Tucano people

The Tucano Calendar – Tangible Indigenous Knowledge

Based on a text provided by Climate Alliance Austria

“The calendar plans preparation of the fields in the dry summer months: each family then creates new space in the forest for fields. The men cut down the trees and burn them. The ash then serves as a fertiliser for the new plantations. However, the rainfall in February 2012 made it impossible to burn the felled trees, so no new fields could be prepared.”

This is an account of the serious consequences of climate change from Almerinda Ramos de Lima of the indigenous Tariano people and the first female head of FOIRN.

The Tucano people in Brazil live beside the Rio Tiquié and other tributaries of the Rio Negro – alongside which the city of Manaus is also located. Over the centuries, they have developed technologies and sustainable methods adapted to the scarce resources. The calendar of the Tucano people is a representation of traditional astronomical, environmental and socioeconomic knowledge of cosmic connections. This knowledge was handed down verbally from generation to generation, but has increasingly been forgotten.

The introduction of the indigenous education system in Brazil in the 1990s foresaw the integration of the teaching of collected and recorded indigenous knowledge in schools, among others. Young students and teachers at the indigenous Yupuri Tucano school observed and documented environmental phenomena and everyday activities in their villages over a period of two years in collaboration with experienced women and men, comparing them with many years of experience. It became clear that climate

change was also altering the relationships between different natural phenomena in the seasonal cycles. The developments observed affect aspects such as the ways of life, religious, spiritual and agricultural practices as well as the food supply of the Tucano people.

A dynamic calendar was developed based on traditional knowledge and observations. The circles are movable and can be rotated independently of one another. This enables adaptation to change. The most important constellations are recorded on a disc at the calendar’s centre. The six subsequent circles record (from the inside to the outside) the annual cycles of rainy and dry seasons, animals, wild and crop plants, religious and spiritual activities and the moon. These are associated with the respective constellation that can be seen at dusk.

The calendar has different functions. For one, it helps to pass traditional knowledge on to young people in the region. At the same time, it also serves as a tool to implement and monitor the environmental concepts developed by the indigenous communities. Adapting agricultural methods safeguards the food supply and thus the subsistence of the Tucano people.

Another way to create economic alternatives is to develop strategies for providing local products with quality seals and marketing these.

Lessons Learnt – Delegation Tours Insights

Making the Invisible Visible – Mayor of Cologne's impressions

"The indigenous peoples of the rainforests in the Amazon Basin do not need to change their ways of life in their territories to protect the climate. They need our support to protect their territories."

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

The delegation trip in which the mayor of Cologne participated in March 2017 was dominated by direct contact with indigenous political representatives as well as wide-ranging impressions and personal insights. Accompanied by Thomas Brose (Climate Alliance's Executive Director), Andreas Wolter, who was also a Climate Alliance ambassador at the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh in 2016, spent twelve days travelling through Ecuador and Peru.

Andreas Wolter began his trip by attending a conference of the umbrella association of the indigenous organisations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) in Quito. In addition to issues such as safeguarding indigenous land titles, the importance of strengthening organisational structures and ratification of ILO Convention No. 169, implementation of the Paris Agreement was also a focal topic.

"The indigenous peoples and cities of the world are the key players in climate protection, as defined in the Paris Agreement. [...] Both are faced with the challenge of developing approaches and measures adapted locally to the effects of climate change in order to achieve effective climate protection."

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

Following political meetings in the Ecuadorian capital, the trip continued on to the Amazon region of Peru. Andreas Wolter gained insights into local living conditions during a visit to the Shipibo-Conibo communities of Yarinacocha and Santa Clara near the town of Pucallpa

Personal discussions between the mayor and representatives from the Yarinacocha and Santa Clara communities highlighted common challenges in addition to the effects of palm oil plantations: both indigenous peoples and European municipalities must address the effects of climate change and respond to these changes accordingly.



Andreas Wolter, Mayor of the City of Cologne and Thomas Brose, Executive Director of Climate Alliance, visiting the indigenous community of Santa Clara de Uchuya, Peru

“The approaches and measures for effective climate protection that we must make available in Europe are completely different to those of the rainforest people. The measures require a paradigm shift in values and culture. All areas of life are affected – from production through energy consumption to mobility and diet. In Europe, we need new and different role models – not Formula One winners, but rather considerate cyclists.”

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

Insights into the impact of European ways of life and the associated challenges in the fight against climate change gained during the trip highlighted the relevance of local partnerships with indigenous communities.

“As part of the climate protection activities in Europe, direct, ‘smart’ support for indigenous communities in education, communication, strengthening traditional trade and economic structures and supporting simple local services is a highly efficient measure. The goal is to help ensure people’s continued existence. They guarantee the survival of the rainforest.”

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

It is precisely this idea that is to now be set out in concrete terms in July 2017: as part of its membership in Climate Alliance and inspired by visits to the communities of Yarinacocha and Santa Clara in Peru, the city of Cologne has agreed a formal climate partnership with the indigenous community association FECONAU (Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Ucayali and its Tributaries) in Peru. To help strengthen indigenous organisational structures, Cologne will host the Indigenous Caucus in November 2017. During this meeting for indigenous representatives from all continents, they will work together on their positions for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn (COP23).

“A climate partnership between an indigenous community and the city of Cologne supports the indigenous organisations in their struggle for recognition, against discrimination, land grabbing and deforestation. Allowing us to bring local problems to the international stage and highlight the link to climate protection.”

Andreas Wolter, Mayor of Cologne

Cooperation can build bridges and local solutions can be found together by exchanging perspectives, for: “The indigenous peoples rightly claim that, ‘We are part of the solution in the fight against climate change. Rainforests will not be destroyed in areas where we live and that are ‘managed’ by us.”

Facing Challenges Together – Solidarity between indigenous communities and municipalities

The consequences of an economic system geared towards growth and profit can be felt everywhere – albeit to varying degrees – be it in illegal deforestation of huge areas of forest for the European timber industry in Romania or the unlawful expansion of palm oil plantations in areas of primary forest in Peru. The outcomes, such as deforestation, overuse of resources, violation of (human) rights and land conflicts, will be felt by all of us sooner or later. People around the world are fighting back against these unjust structures – in the rainforests of Ecuador, the mountains of Greece and rural Romania. They all know that nature is the basis for our survival.

“[...] one significant aspect was our visit to the Hungarian Parliament where we discussed our ways of life, how we defend our territories and how we are addressing climate change. For me, it was important to learn that the people there were also concerned about environmental pollution and climate change.”

Teresita López, representative of the Yánesha in Peru and participant in the second delegation trip.

Despite all of the differences between Europe and the Amazon region, it was primarily the similarities that left a lasting impression on the delegates. In addition to feeling responsible for the global climate, common challenges at the local government level were also identified. It emerged that, in many respects, indigenous communities work just like municipalities: both are responsible for planning their areas and are confronted with challenges such as the rural exodus and provision of public services. As the local level, they are also best in a position to implement practical climate protection activities in their territories. These similarities helped to dispel prejudice, encourage solidarity and foster mutual appreciation.

“The first contact with indigenous representatives was a substantial step towards the immediate acquaintance of a community that we usually approach through the documentary film lens. Having in mind the significance of the Amazon area in the fight against climate change and the importance of preserving the human and cultural capital of the indigenous peoples, the exchange led us to new reflections on sustainability – especially, in the fields of natural environment, education, poverty eradication, culture and minorities. The exchange strengthened the perception of the necessity for a global movement to combat overexploitation of natural resources, not only in regions with a global impact such as the Amazon, but in areas with local range impacts, too.”

Anna Michou, City Councillor of Thermi, President of Centres of Social Providence & Care and of Preschool Education, Member of the Lifelong Learning Municipal Committee

Nevertheless, the realities of life for indigenous communities dwelling in the Amazon rainforest, who are very much dependent on their natural environment, cannot be equated with the everyday lives of citizens in towns and cities in Europe. Instead, they raise the question of “translatability” and learning from one another. The call for alternative concepts, the need for community and a conscious, careful approach to the environment and its resources is becoming ever louder – continuing the way things are is simply not sustainable!

“The climate partnership of the city of Munich with the Asháninka helps the indigenous peoples of the Peruvian rainforest to defend their rights and their living environment, and thus also nature. We are therefore protecting the rainforest and the climate together. Whenever the Asháninka visit us in Munich, we use this opportunity for educational purposes and to raise awareness. It allows us to learn what impact our lifestyle has on the lives of the people of Peru

Stephanie Jacobs, Head of the Department of Health and Environment of the city of Munich

Beside the political support for indigenous concerns, conscious and critical consumption as well as climate-friendly mobility in our own municipality are part of what makes a “good life” for all. In this context, development policy education and awareness raising are important tasks that cities and municipalities in Europe can support and implement for themselves.



“The highlight of our time in Greece was visiting two communities and a women’s cooperative that makes traditional grain products and sells these in a restaurant. The local administration and its advisors were particularly interested in better understanding the reality of the Rio Negro and were open to further cooperation.”

Carla Dias, ISA Brazil and participant in the third delegation trip

The fact that growth-oriented policies are not necessarily sustainable is demonstrated by mining projects in Greece just as much as by mines in the Amazon region. Western countries are often viewed as “developed” and as a model for the countries in the Global South, which are often referred to as “underdeveloped”. It is becoming clear that the Western model of development consumes the earth’s resources too quickly and often has little regard for human rights.

The insights into the continuing struggle of the Sarayaku community against oil extraction in its territory, the unwavering commitment of indigenous women to their rights and the struggle of resistance on the Rio Negro in Brazil encouraged many participants to take action for global and local climate protection.

A “good life” in Europe

Initiatives show how the concept inspired by indigenous communities in Latin America can also be put into practice here in Europe. Community-supported agriculture, for example, which promotes the regional and seasonal supply of agricultural products with the help of all shareholders. Organic, sustainable cultivation, an economic system characterised by solidarity and sparing use of resources reflect the aspiration of “buen vivir” in European municipalities.



Paths to Sustainable Development

The encounters with the indigenous representatives have shown that there are diverse forms of society and ways of life, which vary depending on the cultural and historical context. There is no prescribed path to sustainable development. Societies cannot be divided into "traditional" and "modern". Preserving traditional practices, values and norms does not necessarily rule out the possibility of benefitting from technical innovations such as mobile phones, computers or renewable energy sources at the same time.

This must also be taken into account in the future through the encounter with indigenous partners. The perceptions and romanticising as backward people dwelling in the rainforest entirely cut off from the rest of the world and at one with nature should be avoided for instance. This also includes addressing the challenges frequently faced by (not only) women in indigenous communities such as "machismo". Here, too, parallels can be drawn with the realities of life for the urban population for whom it is important to boost mutual understanding and break down stereotypes.

"I believe that the partnership between European municipalities and indigenous communities is very important because the Europeans can only truly understand the situation of the indigenous peoples through direct contact. [...] This experience helps to change our vision of development and consumption patterns. We are living on the same single earth, and only through cooperation and mutual support can we implement such ambitious large-scale projects like the SDGs."

Zoltan Hajdu, Focus Eco Center, Romania

In addition to the exchange, the trips also offered a platform for the indigenous partners to communicate their concerns at an international level and explain their own concepts to different target groups. Eriberto Gualinga, who travelled to Europe as a representative of the Sarayaku community, introduced the concept of "selva viviente" (the "living forest") at the Climate Alliance Annual International Conference in Dresden, for example. If the indigenous concept is to be recognised as a formal protection category, international support is urgently required.



Cooperation with a Future

The varied inspiration from the travel experiences gained by both sides is reflected in creative ideas for further cooperation. For example, the city of Wels was motivated by the trip to organise an exchange between Austrian and Brazilian students. The city of Munich used the knowledge gained to organise an entire conference on the concept of "buen vivir". A virtual exchange between nature park schools and indigenous communities is being implemented by kate, the centre for ecology and development based in Stuttgart. In Luxembourg, the project partner ASTM organised a delegation trip of

local government representatives and journalists to Ecuador. Another example from Greece shows the direct effect of the visit: the town of Thermi is planning to set up an education centre for young people in a nature park.

In order for this cooperation to continue to bear fruit in the long term, the expansion of partnerships must be further strengthened. Only with alliances based on solidarity, such as those between municipalities in Europe and indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin, is it possible to ensure a sustainable future and a good life for all!

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**Meeting of indigenous representatives
Jhenny Munoz and Teresita Antazu with
Stephanie Jacobs, Head of Health and
Environment of the state capital Munich**

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**Networking and exchange between
German NGOs and Eriberto Gualinga**

Appendix

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Legal Notice

Published September 2017

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Design and graphics: Splendid Design Co. www.we-are-splendid.com

Printed on 100% recycling paper (Blue Angel)

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This publication has been produced in the framework of the project "EYD 2015: The Future We Want – Local Authorities for Sustainable Development" with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Climate Alliance and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



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District court of Frankfurt am Main | Registry No: VR10149 | VAT ID: DE244331692 | Presidents: Holger Matthäus and Tine Heyse

