



**LOVE
FOR
LIFE** 

Indigenous-Led Clean Energy Access Creation & Ecosystem Conservation

An initiative in Latin America at the intersection
of rainforest protection, sustainable development,
indigenous rights and effective climate action

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Indigenous-Led Clean Energy and Ecosystem Conservation Initiative



North-eastern Amazon rainforest of Ecuador

The regional Initiative in Latin America ensures the conservation of ecosystems and protects the biological and cultural diversity in megabiodiversity hotspots in the Amazon rainforest of Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru as well as in the Talamanca rainforest of Costa Rica. In direct partnership with six Indigenous Peoples, the initiative combines nature-based, innovative, and traditional approaches for biodiversity conservation with the creation of sustainable access to clean, safe, and independent solar energy.

At the intersection of effective climate action and the recognition of indigenous rights, the initiative follows a holistic bottom-up approach based on the self-formulated vision and historical cooperation of six Indigenous Peoples, including the A'i Kofan, Secoya-Siekopai, Siona, Waorani, Cabécar, and BriBri, who together protect more than 4.5 million hectares of primary rainforest in Central and South America.



Secoya-Siekopai elder from the community of San Pablo in the Ecuadorian Amazon

Collaborative Work with Indigenous Peoples: the Most Effective Solution for Rainforest Protection



Four generations of a Waorani family in the rainforest community of Acaro, Ecuador

Tropical forests are among the most species-rich ecosystems on the planet. Although they cover less than 10% of the global surface, more than half of the world's flora and fauna live in them. They are crucial for the water and carbon cycle and serve as an important carbon sink. According to the Global Forest Resources Assessment of 2020, there are only about 1.11 billion hectares of primary forest left on Earth. Although, Indigenous Peoples play a key role in global biodiversity protection and effective climate action they have received only marginal attention in national and international strategies and projects.

The north-south and south-south collaboration as well as the multi-stakeholder approach of the initiative show to what extent the implementation of biodiversity protection, climate action, and sustainable development goals can succeed through the exchange of knowledge and in direct partnership with Indigenous Peoples, civil society as well as public and private actors.



Cabécar territory in the Talamanca rainforest in Costa Rica

Empowering Indigenous People Through Sustainable Access to Solar Energy

Creating sustainable access to clean, safe, and independent solar energy is a cornerstone to poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality, livelihood and general quality of life, as well as a catalyst for local empowerment and self-determined development. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hinge on the ability to create energy access for all and to specifically target those people and communities who are currently left behind.

LOVE FOR LIFE focuses on precisely this goal to create sustainable and clean energy access for the most vulnerable and hardest to reach people. In particular, LOVE FOR LIFE has proven to successfully implement holistic, community-led solar energy projects in the most remote places on Earth by building local capacities and strategic partnerships for long-term project sustainability.



Traditional Cabécar house with solar home system in the Talamanca rainforest



Transportation of solar system materials in the Amazon rainforest

Locally-Owned and Community-Led Clean Energy Access



Cabécar people after the community training in Orochico, Talamanca rainforest

Local ownership and empowerment are at the heart of the Initiative's goals to make sure that power is generated long after system installation. We have built comprehensive and self-sustainable regional infrastructures (including the set up of two training facilities, trained indigenous solar technicians, developed training material in six different languages, etc.) in Central and South America ensuring successful replication and up-scaling of sustainable solar energy solutions for last-mile populations.

The Initiative combines the use of smart regenerative technology and intensive capacity building programs along with an alternative and cultural-sensitive payment model. So far, we have completely solar-electrified 33 remote rainforest communities in five different Indigenous territories in four countries and empowered six Indigenous Nations that together guard and protect more than 4.5 million hectares of pristine rainforest territory.



Cabécar house illuminated by the new solar home systems in Talamanca

Energy Access for All

Creating sustainable access to clean, safe, and independent solar energy involves:

- + The installation of off-grid solar home systems to 100% cover the energy needs of Indigenous families solar-electrifying complete rainforest communities including health centres and schools
- + A capacity building training program at four interrelated levels: 1) Organizational level: building and strengthening the organizational structures and capacity of the local partner organizations; 2) Regional level: training local solar engineers for the capacity building programs of the community technicians; 3) Community Level: training Indigenous people to become community solar technicians who independently install, operate, maintain, and repair the solar home systems in their communities as well as train each end-user; 4) End-user level: training each family to operate and maintain their solar home systems safely
- + The protection of rainforest areas and strengthening of Indigenous communities by enabling the use of monitoring devices and processes, including GIS, mapping, drone recording, smart phones, GPS and radios, for the defense of Indigenous land rights.
- + Strategies and communication campaigns to promote the importance of the active inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their rights for the implementation of national and international conservation plans as well as biodiversity and climate protection goals



Cabécar family in the community of Orochico in the Talamanca rainforest



Solar home system installation in the community of Mañoko in the Peruvian Amazon

Addressing Gender Gaps Through the Creation of Clean Energy Access

Energy access is gendered. Women use and benefit differently from access to electricity. The renewable energy component is built upon an integral women's empowerment approach that beyond creating clean energy access supports and strengthens women to become leaders, advocates, and agents of sustainable and future-oriented change in their communities and beyond.

The Women's Empowerment component combines the promotion of the inclusion of women together with the revival of their traditional handcrafting and knowledge, as well as the creation of productive activities based on their own culture and tradition. The women's empowerment program safeguards and revives the vital role of Indigenous women as protectors of the sacred and key holders of ancestral wisdom. Investment in women has a multiplier effect as they reinvest in their communities and society as a whole benefits.



Women's empowerment workshops in Orochico in the Talamanca rainforest



Iris, Cabécar solar technician and women's empowerment facilitator from Talamanca

Indigenous Women Regaining Their Fundamental Role in Shaping New Generations

A team of Indigenous women facilitators visit each community where solar home systems are installed to provide a safe and trustworthy space for the transmission and exchange of traditional knowledge. During each session women, children, men, and elders share their ancestral stories, mostly forgotten by the new generations. The information is used to advocate and shape culturally adapted educational curricula and programs at a national level. The gender lens approach involves actions towards:

- + Gender equality through creating open and trustworthy spaces for women and men
- + Promotion of traditional productive activities in the hands of women
- + Indigenous women as key actors in shaping education: reviving knowledge, principles, and ancestral values
- + Building strategic partnerships and beneficial networking
- + Strengthening of the management structures and strategic capacities of local Indigenous women associations
- + Strategies and communication campaigns to promote the importance of the active inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous women and their rights



Women's empowerment workshops in Arenal in the rainforest of Talamanca



Worani woman working on traditional handicrafts in Acaro in Ecuador's Amazon

Agroforestry & Traditional Conservation Practices

The strengthening of the Indigenous management, protection of Indigenous territories, and the recognition of Indigenous rights, practices, institutions, and knowledge systems are (according to the latest research results) essential for the fulfilment of national conservation goals and for transformative, bottom-up contributions to the implementation of global agreements – such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Paris Convention, UN Agenda 2030 and the Escazú agreement. Along this line, the work with our local partners in the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador has been dedicated to the conservation and restoration of a jungle area isolated from the encroaching cities and deforestation practices by developing an environmental research station focused on preservation, investigation, and education.

And more recently, LOVE FOR LIFE together with its local partners in Costa Rica and Ecuador has set up action plans towards nature-based and Indigenous-led solutions to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. As part of these plans, in the last three months, 400 Indigenous families in Talamanca and the Amazon rainforests have been able to have access to local food by reviving ancestral practices, cultivating and safeguarding native seeds and strengthening their own local production systems.



Restored jungle in previously contaminated rainforest area in north-eastern Ecuador



Local food and seed packages for A'í Kofán families in Ecuador's Amazon rainforest

Revitalizing Traditional Ecological Knowledge

The protection and regeneration of biological and cultural diversity through the promotion of agroforestry and traditional practices involves:

- + Indigenous communities expand and disseminate their knowledge on the importance of biodiversity and actively participate in the nature-based use of biodiversity through traditional agroforestry practices; such as local production systems, including medicinal plants, product exchange based on Indigenous values and principles as well as cultivation and conservation of seeds
- + Direct action towards self-protection, soil regeneration, and ecosystem restoration
- + Environmental education and application of traditional knowledge to restore local food sovereignty through ecosystem-based solutions and applied permaculture
- + Creation of alternative, agro-ecological livelihoods and medium-term income opportunities
- + Building strategic partnerships and networking
- + Strategies and communication campaigns to promote the importance of the active inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and their rights for the implementation of agroforestry and traditional practices in the hands of Indigenous People



Secoya-Siekopai shaman in the community of San Pablo along the Aqua Rico river



Secoya-Siekopai woman from the community of Mañoko in Peru

Tropical Rainforests in Latin America



Partnership with Alianza Ceibo

Alianza Ceibo, winner of the 2020 Equator Prize, represents four Indigenous Nations (A'í Kofan, Siekopai, Siona, and Waorani) in Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru.

+ Alianza Ceibo, based in Ecuador, is strongly committed to the fight against deforestation, the recovery and maintenance of the **health of its communities and ecosystems** in the north-western Amazon.

+ For decades, these Indigenous Nations have been **fighting for their physical and cultural survival** and have been severely affected by oil exploration, contamination, mining, logging and further agro-industrial business.

+ Through **capacity building and sustainable access to renewable solar energy**, we are supporting the struggles of the Indigenous stewards in protecting more than **5 million acres of their ancestral rainforest homelands**.

+ Our Initiative includes the alliance with Amazon Frontlines and Amisacho Restauración, which are committed to **regenerating the health of communities and ecosystems**.



Ancestral rainforest territories of the four Indigenous Nations of Alianza Ceibo



AMISACHO

Partnership with ADITICA

In Costa Rica, the Solar Initiative is locally-led by ADITICA, which works in three Indigenous territories of the Talamanca rainforest.

+ Together with ADITICA (Asociación de Desarrollo Integral del Territorio Indígena Cabécar) we work in Indigenous territories (Talamanca Cabécar, Nairíí Awarí and TaynÍ) that are **protected by the Cabécar People and amount to over 30.000 hectares.**

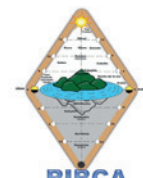
+ ADITICA is member of regional networks, such as the “Alianza Mesoamericana de Pueblos y Bosques” and the Indigenous Network of Bribri and Cabécar (RIBCA), **enabling further replication of our Initiative to include other territories and Peoples of Costa Rica, as well as of Central America.**

+ In this region, rainforest communities are most vulnerable to deforestation, ecosystem degradation, land rights violation and forced displacement.

+ For project sustainability we have established **strategic alliances with governmental institutions**, such as the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE) and the Ministry of the Presidency



Cabécar-Bribri rainforest territories where the solar energy initiative is implemented in partnership with ADITICA



COSTA RICA
GOBIERNO DEL BICENTENARIO
2018 - 2022

Creating Real and Lasting Impact Together



Waorani people in Acaro and Rose, LOVE FOR LIFE Project Coordinator (s.f.r.)

Our Initiative is one of the most effective ways to protect precious ecosystems and their biodiversity by supporting and strengthening Indigenous Peoples who have inhabited these forests for thousands of years and are the guardians of the natural world. Together we are protecting tropical forests which absorb more than half of the world's carbon dioxide for climate change mitigation. The survival of us all depends on the protection of the rainforests of the Earth.

Therefore, we invite you to join and support our mission. With your support, we will not only be impacting and changing the lives of many Indigenous People, but also ensuring that critical habitat of endangered species stays protected, that the carbon held underneath the ground is kept there, and that tropical rainforests continue to purify the air that we all breathe and depend on.

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