



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Partnering with Indigenous peoples and local communities to conserve the world's wildest areas and most threatened species

NATURAL PARTNERS

Re:wild recognizes that the most effective guardians of vital habitats and ecosystems and the species that rely on them are often the Indigenous peoples and local communities that have protected them for generations.

Indigenous people are the stewards of nearly a quarter of the planet's surface area, safeguard up to 80% of its biodiversity, and are keepers of traditional knowledge that is critical to staving off the worst effects of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Most of the factors that threaten biodiversity also threaten these peoples, and the best pathway to ensuring a healthy planet is to support conservation solutions that are harmonized with the traditional knowledge, rights, and practices of peoples and communities for whom nature and culture are inseparably linked.

Re:wild and our partners provide direct support to Indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation priority areas around the globe; building understanding, learning from each other, and working together to identify and achieve shared conservation goals.

COVER IMAGE: Leaders and elders of the Waorani nation, who won a historic victory against oil drilling protecting a half million acres of their ancestral territory, participate in a regional assembly in the community of Nemonpare in Ecuador's Pastaza Province. © Amazon Frontlines

THIS PAGE: With Arhuaco communities in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia we are combining Indigenous and Western science to devise strategies to conserve the last remaining populations of harlequin toads, considered guardians of water and symbols of fertility. © Fundacion Atelopos



Today, Re:wild’s partnerships with Indigenous peoples and local communities span over 60 sites across 25 countries. We have supported conservation in over 80 million hectares (approximately twice the size of Montana) and have had positive impacts for people through greater security and empowerment, strengthened governance, and livelihood creation. These results were achieved by dozens of local and regional projects working in partnership with Indigenous peoples and local communities.



Together, we can conserve some of the world’s wildest areas, home to vast numbers of threatened and endangered species, alongside rich Indigenous knowledge and cultures.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Re:wild works around the globe with Indigenous peoples and local communities in Key Biodiversity Areas, High Biodiversity Wilderness Areas, and on programs to conserve some of the world’s most threatened species and ecosystems. This work includes projects to:



»»» Strengthen governance, management and protection of more than six million hectares of biodiversity-rich Indigenous territories from land encroachment, destructive development, resource theft and displacement. «««

In some of the largest remaining forests of Central America we are working with the Indigenous Rama and Afro-descendant Kriol people of Nicaragua, the Miskitu of Honduras, the Bribri and Cabecar people of Costa Rica, and the Embera people of Panama to improve locally led monitoring and patrolling efforts and disincentivize the cattle ranching development that is destroying their ancestral lands. We also work with Arhuaco Indigenous communities in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia co-developing strategies to strengthen their traditional governance structures and recover traditional knowledge systems that have ensured the protection of their biodiverse territories for centuries.

»»» Enhance community-based solutions to protect and restore the world’s most threatened species and habitats and promote Indigenous livelihoods and cultural resilience. «««

In the Philippines, the Tau Buid people consider their future to be inextricably linked to that of the last 500 tamaraw (dwarf wild buffalo). In Vietnam, our work to secure the future of the Saola and Large Antlered Muntjac depends on the cooperation of the Tai, H’Mong, Dan Lai, and Ka Tu peoples.

In Africa, the Mbuti and Efe peoples safeguard the habitat of the Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Spanning the Kenya-Somalia border, we are supporting the hirola habitat restoration project in partnership with Northern Rangelands Trust aimed at restoring rangelands while improving community livelihoods by promoting nature-based enterprises. As part of our conservation efforts to protect Red Colobus monkeys – the most the most threatened group of primates in Africa – in Kenya and the Niger Delta respectively, we are supporting the Orma community to improve their agriculture practices and access to markets and we are working with the Apoi-Gbanraun-Kokologbene and Kolotoro-Ongoloba peoples to establish a community conservancy. We also aim to strengthen community capacity and resilience across Madagascar as part of a massive effort to restore vital forests.

We are building the resource management capacity of local communities of the Bahamas and Insular Caribbean. And in Ecuador and Bolivia, we are supporting the Achuar, Shuar, Cofan, and Siekopai peoples to restore degraded areas of their ancestral lands using methodologies that benefit biodiversity while encouraging the transmission of traditional knowledge and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

»»» Secure and protect Indigenous peoples’ rights of over 20 million hectares of traditional territories and ancestral domains, encompassing large, high-biodiversity wilderness areas that support globally important ecosystems and species. «««

This work primarily focuses on Amazonia, where Re:wild supports critical efforts in Suriname, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia to title and seek long-term protected status for ancestral lands of indigenous peoples. Outside of Amazonia, we support similar efforts with Indigenous and Afro-descent communities, alongside government organizations, in the Tropical Andes and the Choco Biodiversity hotspots.



OUR APPROACH

We recognize that the solutions to our biggest challenges can be uncovered when learning together and innovation can be sparked by combining Indigenous and Western knowledge. We have learned that working with Indigenous peoples and local communities requires patience, sensitivity, building of trust, accepting different viewpoints, and learning and adopting new ways to approach conservation challenges. There are no blueprints for this -- each solution must be carefully crafted to address the threats to both nature and culture.

Specifically, Re:wild is committed to:

- **Taking time to build relationships and learn** about and acknowledge the rights, cultures, values, beliefs and practices of the communities with whom we work.
- **Recognizing and respecting the ownership and value** of Indigenous knowledge and traditional cultural property and skills.
- **Recognizing the principles of fair and equitable sharing** of benefits arising from genetic resources.
- **Incorporating the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) framework** in the design, planning and implementation, and decision-making in our projects and abiding by all international instruments that protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities.
- **Amplifying the voices, views, and visions** of Indigenous peoples in the management of their resources.
- **Adapting our ways of working and communicating** to those of our community partners.
- **Providing direct technical and financial support** to Indigenous communities and their organizations for mechanisms that can enable long-term autonomous management.

Re:wild supports Indigenous peoples to implement autonomous conservation solutions and to develop the organizational capacity to do so.



The Importance of Partnerships

Re:wild's partnership-based model, based on long-term relationships, is ideal for working with Indigenous peoples as well as local communities. We work closely with national, international and multi-lateral partners that share our approach, but we do not try to impose externally developed solutions. Concurrently, we prioritize direct collaboration with local partners, including Indigenous communities, territories, and organizations to support autonomous efforts to protect their biodiverse ancestral lands and promote their cultural resilience.

Re:wild's engagement with Indigenous peoples occurs through proactive, community-based participatory approaches, respecting and building on local decision-making processes, promoting local ownership of projects and directing funding to Indigenous peoples and their organizations.



AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

With projects and partnerships spanning 25 countries and from local to regional to global scales, Re:wild is an important partner to the Indigenous movement. We provide direct technical and financial support to Indigenous peoples that will help them to create the enabling conditions for long-term, Indigenous-led and community-based conservation actions and ultimately, a healthy, biologically and culturally diverse planet for all.

Effective, lasting community partnerships work on different timescales and through different pathways than conventional projects. They require time, patience, flexibility and adaptive approaches that require sustained support over longer periods, alongside single short-term investments.

Our vision is expansive, long-lasting protection of millions of hectares of vital landscapes by those who live in, understand best, and have a direct stake in conservation of these areas.

PREVIOUS PAGE: The Indigenous Ye'kwana people participating in a harvest ritual performed with the participation of shamans from various communities. Their territory in Brazil and Venezuela is threatened by illegal mining however, their high organizational capacity has allowed them to protect more than 6 million hectares of Amazonian forest. © Wataniba, Jesús-Chucho-Sosa

THIS PAGE: A Cofan elder holding a tree that will be used to restore her community's forests. We support the Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) to restore their traditional lands. © COICA



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