



**GROWING TREES NETWORK
FOUNDATION**

WAWAZONIA Project



Nature-based solutions

With indigenous communities in the Amazon to meet

Climate change - Biodiversity conservation - Ecosystem restoration



Background

The Shuar and Kichwa communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon live in some of the world's most biodiverse rainforests, home to species like jaguars and pumas. They face significant socio-economic challenges despite their self-sufficiency in food. Limited economic opportunities threaten their traditional ways of life, pushing them towards illegal logging and hunting as potential livelihoods. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, leading to the collapse of ecotourism and traditional markets, further endangering their cultural and environmental heritage.

There are numerous ways to support the Wawazonia Project.

The price varies from 16/24 DKK (2.15/3.25€) per tree depending on the model (climate or mixed forestry) and whether you need carbon ownership.

Check out more about support on page 11 or call us



LARS: +45 40 15 35 94
KIM: +45 31 13 01 03



Two kichwa children of Sumac Pakcha watching a drone over the rainforest for the first time



PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In the heart of the Ecuadorian Amazon, The Wawazonia Project represents a pivotal effort to address deforestation and biodiversity loss in the Amazon by empowering the Shuar and Kichwa indigenous populations through sustainable forestry. By intertwining traditional wisdom with the principles of sustainable forestry, this visionary project aims to transform the landscape and the lives of indigenous peoples.



This approach serves dual purposes: it protects pristine rainforest areas and fosters economic growth. Additionally, the creation of the Shuar Climate Fund will finance further sustainable activities, showcasing a scalable model for ecological and economic resilience in indigenous communities.





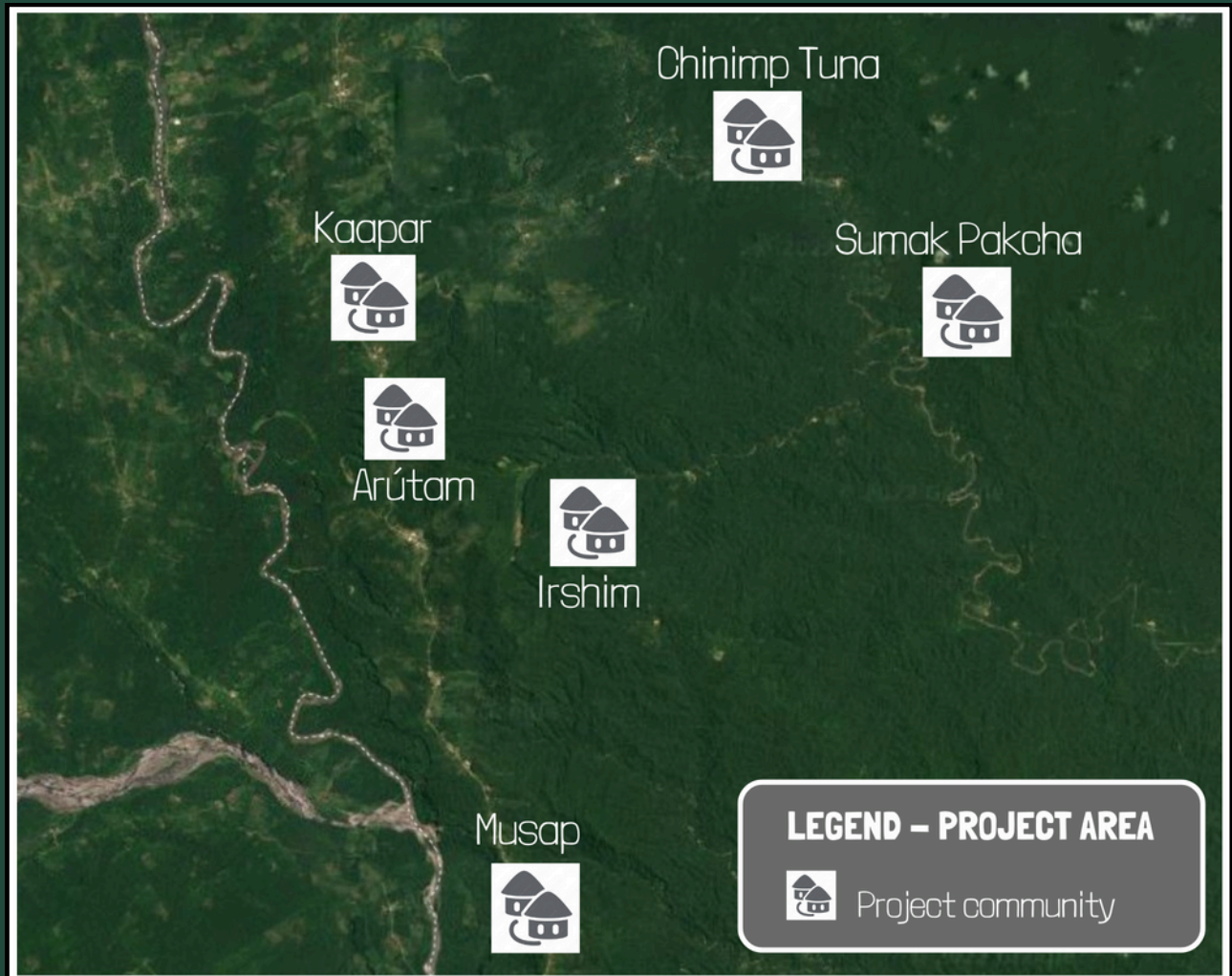
EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Wawazonia Project is set to achieve transformative environmental and social impacts across six indigenous Shuar and Kichwa communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Key objectives include:

- **Sustainable Forest Management:** Establishing 200 hectares of sustainably managed forests, encompassing 250,000 trees, to foster biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Protection of 2,500 hectares of undisturbed pristine rainforest, safeguarding its rich biodiversity for future generations.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Creation of local jobs and empowerment through sustainable timber production, focusing on native species like balsa, Doncel, Pechiche, Tamburo, and Chuncho, bolstering community resilience.
- **Education and Capacity Building:** Enhancing local knowledge and skills in sustainable forestry and conservation practices, contributing to community empowerment and environmental stewardship.
- **Climate Action:** Significant carbon sequestration through reforestation efforts, with one hectare of balsa plantation capturing approximately 40 tons of carbon annually, illustrating the project's contribution to global climate mitigation efforts.
- **Community Support Fund:** Establishment of a local Community Climate Fund, which will finance sustainable community development initiatives, including ecotourism, craft production, and traditional medicine, through contributions from tree planting and timber sales.
- **Broad Impact:** Engaging over 300 villagers across 8 communities, with a strategic allocation of land that prioritizes conservation, sustainable forestry, and traditional agriculture, thereby ensuring a balanced approach to environmental conservation and community development.

PROJECT AREA

The project area is located in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The area is one the most biodiverse nature regions in the world and home to the Indigenous Shuar and Kichwa people. The trees will be established on previous farmland in six different Shuar villages in the Pastaza region.



Left: Rainforest at Arútam Community. Right: The Pastaza River at Musap Community

THE RAINFOREST AND BIODIVERSITY

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PHOTOS FROM CAMERA TRAPS

Top: Two-toed sloth (Choloepus didactylus) from the forest of Chinimp Tuna.

Middle: Ozelot from (Leopardus pardalis) from Kusuntsa River, Irshim Community

Bottom: Puma (Puma concolor) from Arútam Rainforest Reserve



The Shuar

The Shuar community, residing in the Ecuadorian Amazon, has a rich cultural heritage marked by a profound connection to the rainforest, viewed as an essential element of existence. Historically characterized by their warrior prowess and the notable practice of producing shrunken heads, the Shuar have transitioned from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to more permanent settlements due to interactions with missionaries and settlers. This change has led them to unite in defense of their ancestral lands and ecosystems.

Deeply intertwined with nature, the Shuar's daily life, spiritual beliefs, and community decisions are significantly influenced by dreams, omens, and celestial observations, reflecting their holistic worldview. Their subsistence is primarily derived from agriculture, hunting, and gathering, following a sustainable living model that respects and preserves the rainforest. Women, revered as skilled agriculturists, cultivate a variety of crops, including plantain, cassava, and taro, contributing to the community's food security and cultural continuity.

Men primarily engage in hunting and fishing, clearing land for cultivation, which complements the women's role in farming and domestic responsibilities. Chicha, a traditional light beer made from cassava, stands at the core of Shuar culture, symbolizing female productivity and playing a vital role in social and ceremonial occasions. This beverage underscores the gendered division of labor and the cultural significance of cassava as both a staple food and a ceremonial drink.

Through these practices, the Shuar not only sustain their physical livelihood but also maintain a rich cultural identity that emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. Their way of life offers valuable insights into sustainable living and the importance of preserving indigenous cultures and their environments in the face of modern challenges.



THE KICHWA



Nestled within the lush, verdant expanse of the Ecuadorian Amazon, the Kichwa people cultivate a life that is in profound harmony with their environment. This deep, spiritual connection to the natural world not only shapes their cultural identity but also informs their worldview. Home to roughly 100,000 individuals, these communities are vibrant testimonies to the resilience and richness of indigenous cultures in the Amazon basin.



Despite their modest numbers, the Kichwa's impact on the cultural fabric of the region is profound. Their way of life is a testament to communal living, with extended families collectively engaging in hunting, fishing, and agriculture. The latter, serving as the cornerstone of their existence, involves the cultivation of a diverse array of crops such as yuca, plantains, and maize on small-scale farms, illustrating a sustainable approach to agriculture over generations.



Rituals and ceremonies are pivotal to the Kichwa, bridging their spiritual connection with the environment and reinforcing their cultural heritage. These practices not only solidify community bonds but also serve as a counterbalance to the challenges and changes imposed by external forces. Amidst this backdrop of cultural and environmental pressures, the Kichwa's resilience shines through, as they endeavor to preserve their unique lifestyle. This includes the creation of mocahuas, their renowned pottery, and the ceremonial consumption of wayusa, a traditional drink, both of which are integral to their cultural legacy and continuity.

In the face of modern challenges, the Kichwa's commitment to their traditions and the preservation of their heritage underscores a community's strength in unity and the enduring value of living in harmony with the natural world. Their existence is a poignant reminder of the importance of cultural and environmental stewardship for future generations.



ESG AND SDG's

Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) actions have moved to the top of the agenda for many companies due to accounting standards, EU Taxonomy Regulation, and demands in the value chain.

Our nature-based solutions provide a business-oriented approach for companies to make climate and biodiversity part of their business, ESG reporting, and SDG agenda, become nature-positive, and take responsibility for actively helping to solve the global and local challenges within climate and biodiversity.

"The Wawazonia project combines afforestation, SDG work, and development in a new co-creative way, where people and nature are at the center of focus to establish solid, long-term, and sustainable solutions serving us all": Lars Heiselberg Vang Jensen, Chairman, Growing Trees Network Foundation.

Growing Trees Network Foundation can help your organization address sustainability issues. With our project partners in Ecuador Wawazonia, we offer a unique and impactful way of addressing ESG or CSR transformations, revitalizing old agricultural lands into diverse forestlands.

Our engagement with the SDGs permeates every facet of our project activities in Ecuador, reflecting a deep-seated commitment to these global objectives. Through meticulous Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) adherence, we ensure transparency and accountability in our endeavors, underscoring the significant role of sustainable practices in contemporary business strategy and environmental stewardship.



OUR REFORESTATION SPECIES

CORE SPECIES



BALSA (*Ochroma pyramidale*)



CHUNCHO (*Cedrelinga cateniformis*)
DONCEL (*Otoba parvifolia*)
MARIA (*Calophyllum brasiliense*)
TUCUTA (*Guarea guidonia*)
PECHICHE (*Vitex cymosa*)

ENRICHMENT AND DIVERSITY SPECIES



TAMBURO (*Vochysia leguiana*)
CEDRO MACHO (*Cabralea canjerana*)
LAUREL (*Cordia alliodora*)
CANELO AMARILLO (*Nectandra macrophylla*)



PLANTAIN (*Musa spp.*)
PIGUE (*Pollalesta discolor*)



AHUANO (*Swietenia macrophylla*)



Make a change support us

WAYS TO SUPPORT

There are numerous impactful ways to support the Wawazonia Project. The number of trees planted and the size of the protected area can be customized to align with each company's needs and campaign goals.



1

Climate Forestry: Planting 2,500 trees per hectare. This model involves planting native, fast-growing balsa trees, which absorb 40 tons of CO₂ per hectare—three times more than an average Danish forest. Balsa trees also enhance soil quality and biodiversity on degraded farmland. This model allows for CO₂ ownership, with a cost of 24 DKK (3.25€) per tree. Balsa wood is crucial for constructing windmill blades. Additionally, 2,500 donated trees help protect 3 hectares of primary rainforest.

2

Mixed Forestry: Planting 2,500 trees per hectare. This model features a mix of native timber species and balsa trees. Balsa provides short-term benefits, while the timber species take over for long-term sustainability. All species are native and many are locally endangered. Planting these endangered species densely helps prevent their felling in pristine forests. Additionally, this model absorbs 25-30 tons of CO₂ per hectare, and 2,500 donated trees help protect 1 hectare of primary rainforest. The cost is 16 DKK (2.15€) per tree.

3

Certification of Support: Companies receive a certificate detailing the amount of CO₂ absorbed by their donated trees and the number of protected hectares of rainforest.

4

Tax and VAT: For corporate entities, all contributions are VAT-exempt. Private individuals can also enjoy tax deductions on their contributions.

Growing Trees Network Foundation S/I

Norddigesvej 2, 1.th.

DK-8240 Risskov

CVR: 37360791

Lars: +45 40 15 35 94 - Kim: +45 31 13 01 03,

lars@growingtrees.dk - kim@growingtrees.dk

Website: www.growingtrees.dk

