



Indigenous rights and bilingual education

In the past, many Asháninka children could not be registered in the official birth records for financial reasons. Without birth certificates, however, the children are not able to go to school, they do not get a passport later and they are not able to vote. That is why Munich supported the Asháninka to train their own "registrars" and to establish small "registrar's offices" in villages that were conveniently located from a strategic perspective. Approximately 3,500 children (and adults) received birth certificates this way and today, even wedding ceremonies are performed. In the Rio Negro district, roughly 95 percent of the people possess a birth certificate today and can thus exercise their rights.

Until shortly, the Asháninka did not have a lot of reading material in their language – a drawback for any culture. The Association of Bilingual Teachers tracked down stories passed down by word of mouth, illustrated them and published a bilingual storybook in Asháninka/Spanish. Donations and returns from the sale of a calendar with photographs of the rainforest published in Munich made the realisation of this project possible. Some of the stories have also been translated into German and are available for free in the brochure "The naughty monkey and the unequal brothers".



Solidarity-based economy

In three villages, 40 Asháninka women have joined forces and have started to produce jewellery made from seeds, fruits and other rainforest materials. They now have a small shop and a company with its own label. In Munich, the jewellery is sold at the Tollwood-Festival or at the Weltladen at the EineWelt-Haus, for example. The Asháninka women do not only earn an income for themselves and their families, but they were even able to pay for their own training courses. What is more, community projects also profit from the jewellery production: With the earnings, fish ponds were built in the villages of the producers.

In other villages, cocoa seedlings were planted with support from Munich. Today, a few years later, roughly 20 women produce chocolates, chocolate ice-cream, chocolate cake, chocolate biscuits and much more. This became possible due to a training conducted by a famous master chocolatier from Lima that was financed with funds from Munich. After a small cooperative was formed, the mayor's office provided the women with a small compound in which they can slowly build a workshop. They have set up a detailed work plan and the proceeds from their work are divided among the women in a fair manner.

Further information

Further information on the Munich- Asháninka partnership:

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The educational project "Rainforest protection and sustainable ways of life in Europe" for children and adolescents is organised by Ökoprojekt MobilSpiel e. V. on behalf of the Department of Public Health and the Environment at schools and extracurricular childcare facilities. Teachers and kindergarten teachers who are interested in taking part in this project can learn more at: www.oekoprojekt-mobilspiel.de
oekoprojekt@mobilspiel.de

Nord Süd Forum München e.V.
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The Nord Süd Forum München e.V. has a rainforest suitcase with information and educational materials that it lends to schools and daycare facilities and it also has expert speakers on the topic.



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Munich's partnership with the Asháninka people in the Peruvian rainforest

Rainforest Conservation - Protecting the Climate and Humans





The rainforest

Our future depends on the future of the rainforest. Huge amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) are stored in its plant biomass. When the forest is cut down or destroyed by means of slash-and-burn, the climate killer CO₂ that is responsible for global warming escapes into the atmosphere.

What is more, the rainforest is a gigantic air conditioning system. The strong solar radiation results in the evaporation of huge amounts of water. The clouds that are generated do not only feed the forest's hydrologic cycle, but also have a cooling effect on the global climate.

In addition, the rainforest offers a fabulous wealth of biological diversity. According to scientific estimates, millions of species who live in it have not even been discovered.

The Amazon Rainforest spans nine countries on the South American continent and measures 6.7 million square kilometres – two thirds of Europe! Due to its meaning for the global climate and its biodiversity, we often forget that it is the home of many indigenous peoples. It is only thanks to their way of life that the tropical rainforest still exists – and it will only have a future with them. The Asháninka in the Peruvian rainforest are one of these peoples. They are connected to Munich in a vibrant partnership.



The Asháninka

With approximately 80,000 people, the Asháninka are the largest indigenous people in the Peruvian rainforest. They live in small settlements or in individual estates, mostly in the vicinity of a river. Wherever possible, the village communities are self-sufficient. The families in the forest live off agriculture and their small gardens in which they grow manioc, bananas and medicinal herbs, amongst other plants. In places where the rivers are not polluted from the mines in the Andes, they catch fish.

The Asháninka have no privately owned property. If they have successfully fought to attain land titles, the property is shared and permanently used by the village and the families. They grow coffee and cocoa to sell on small plots. In some villages, the women make jewellery from rainforest materials and thus contribute substantially to the the family upkeep.

Due to the increasing threat to and destruction of their livelihood, the Asháninka are fighting for survival. Massive overexploitation by timber companies, illegal gold mining, the drug mafia, land seizures, for example for palm oil plantations, plans to build large hydroelectric power stations and the pollution of rivers with wastewater from mines endanger the Peruvian rainforest and the people living in it.



The partnership

In the 90s, the City of Munich joined the "Climate Alliance of European Cities with Indigenous Rainforest People" network. Amongst other things, it is committed to the protection of the tropical rainforests and to supporting projects of its indigenous partners. Within the scope of this commitment, Munich entered into a partnership with the Peruvian rainforest people Asháninka that rests on three pillars:

Education and information campaigns to raise awareness among the citizens of Munich for the meaning of the Amazon rainforest

Support for specific projects in the Peruvian rainforest according to key aspects determined by the Asháninka. Political support to protect the rainforest and its inhabitants

The partnership is jointly organised by the Nord Süd Forum München and the One World Office at the Department of Public Health and the Environment at the City of Munich.

"The cooperation with Munich is positive and important for us because it is greatly valued by the Asháninka villages. These are projects in which they can decide for themselves and therefore they actively participate." Teddy Sinacay, Office for Sustainable Development of the Asháninka in the Rio Negro district, Peru)



Securing land and reforestation

Due to the fact that the Asháninka hold no private property, all families living in a village are provided with land to use. However, only with an officially acknowledged and registered land title do the people have the opportunity to secure their common land and protect themselves from expulsion. That is a tedious process that costs between 150 to 400 Euro – depending on how complicated the matter is. Among other things, the money is needed to cover the drive to the land registry, for notary and administrative fees and, in many cases, for a lawyer who has to get the process running in the first place. Support comes from Munich. The village Nuevo Amanecer Haway, for example, managed to attain a land title for more than 35,000 hectares of rainforest that were threatened by lumbermen with the help of 350 Euro.

In places where the rainforest has already been destroyed, food and water run short, the microclimate changes and, after strong rainfalls, there are floods. A reforestation with bamboo, palm trees, fruit-bearing trees and hardwood is therefore urgent and of special importance. Measures to preserve the forest or undertake reforestation are therefore always combined with sustainable agriculture in the Asháninka villages.