Annual Review 2001
For the forests and their peoples
Our Mission

The mission of the Rainforest Foundation is to support indigenous peoples and traditional populations of the world’s rainforests in their efforts to protect their environment and fulfil their rights by assisting them in:

• Securing and controlling the natural resources necessary for their long term well being and managing these resources in ways which do not harm their environment, violate their culture or compromise their future.

• Developing means to protect their individual and collective rights and obtain, shape and control basic services from the state.

Our work...

Around the world, there are millions of people living in rainforests whose livelihoods and cultures depend on their natural environment. In many cases, the basic rights of these people are threatened or undermined by forest destruction, land theft and resource exploitation. The Rainforest Foundation believes that the long-term protection of rainforests and the rights of indigenous communities to land, life and livelihoods, are inextricably linked.

We therefore focus on initiatives which assist indigenous forest peoples in fulfilling their own needs. These can range from projects that promote their legal land rights, to programmes promoting community forestry, agricultural self-sufficiency or teacher training.

A worldwide organisation...

The Rainforest Foundation network includes organisations in the USA, Norway, the UK, Austria and Japan. Our work collectively spans all major tropical forest regions. Each organisation is autonomous, but we continuously work together to achieve the common objectives set out in our mission statement.

And in the UK...

This report details the activities of the Rainforest Foundation UK (RF UK) during 1999 and 2000. The Foundation is a registered charity, which works closely with local partner groups, to develop and support projects in conjunction with local non-governmental or community-based organisations.

We also conduct campaigning and advocacy programmes, as well as education and public information work in the UK and more widely in Europe.

Key to symbols used in this report

1 fundraising income generation carpentry capacity building legal land claims sustainable agriculture community forestry resettlement indigenous campaigning indigenous education
Central Africa

Empowering communities
in the face of forest destruction and displacement

The Central African rainforests are the second largest after Amazonia, covering more than one million square kilometres, an area twice the size of France. However, these forests are rapidly diminishing because of logging, mining, clearance for agriculture and settler colonisation. More than 100,000 square kilometres of the Congo Basin forest, an area equivalent to the size of Scotland and Wales, were destroyed between 1980 and 1990.

Building the capabilities of local organisations

AFRICAPACITY is a major new, multi-national project, part-funded by the European Commission. Started in October 2000, and initially due to run for two years, it aims to build the organisational capabilities of local non-government organisations in the six Central African countries of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Central African Republic.

Working with two or three organisations in each country, the project will focus on training and the development of skills and information exchange. This will enable them to better engage in policy advocacy activities for the rights of forest peoples, establish and manage forest conservation projects and conduct public education.

Funding essential small projects

With the help of the Body Shop Foundation, the Rainforest Foundation has established a Small Project Fund for Central Africa to support the local organisations with whom we currently work and to help new project partners, particularly those benefiting from our AFRICAPACITY programme. Small grants will be distributed to fund essential equipment (such as solar-power units), training, travel expenses, bicycles and other low cost items, making it easier for local partners to carry out their vital, grassroots work and communicate effectively.

“Before 1992, the villagers weren’t organised to defend their interests and their rights. There was no structure to speak in the name of civil society and so loggers and cocoa buyers could lie to the villagers and cheat them. We are looking forward to working with the Africapacity project in 2001, both to develop CIAD’s capacity and to help connect us to important developments.”

Elias Djoh, Director, CIAD, Lomie, Cameroon
Cameroon

Working in partnership with the Baka and Bagyeli

The Rainforest Foundation’s first major project in southern Cameroon with local partner, Centre for Environment and Development (CED), was completed in 2000.

Work was carried out with both Baka and Bantu communities over a three-year period assisting them in using their forests in a sustainable, long-term way and empowering them with the means to become increasingly self-sufficient in the future. The project started the process of setting up Community Forests, promoting the use of new agricultural practices, and developing trade in non-timber forest products, such as honey. One particularly successful outcome was the establishment of over a hundred fishponds, providing communities with an ongoing source of food and income.

CED has also been working to raise the political profile of the issues facing forest communities in Cameroon.

Mapping Baka forests for their right to land

CED has been developing an innovative project aimed at securing the civil and land rights of Baka ‘pygmy’ communities.

These traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers live in deep poverty and their rights are often ignored by local and national authorities. Very few Baka have birth certificates or national identity cards, and are often denied access to healthcare and education. Most communities hold no legal right to the land on which they currently live.

Since January 2001, with the RF UK’s support, CED has been training ten Baka communities in obtaining basic civil rights and helping them to carry out community censusing, formal registration and participatory mapping of their homelands. The project will help to improve the Baka’s standard of living and enable them to start the process of gaining legal rights over their ancestral lands.

Protecting Eastern Cameroon’s unspoilt rainforests

The area around Lomie, in Eastern Province, contains some of Cameroon’s last unlogged forests. It is adjacent to the globally important Dja Biosphere Reserve, and is home to several thousand Baka ‘pygmies’. But this region is also a focus for the attention of logging and mining companies.

The Rainforest Foundation is supporting a local Non-Governmental Organisation, the Centre International d’Appui au Developpement Durable (CIAD), to promote awareness of the need to conserve the local forest. Starting in 2001, CIAD will also be developing a programme to secure basic Baka civil rights, and to gain official legal recognition of their communities.

Helping the Bagyeli help themselves

During 2000, the RF UK provided financial help to CO DEBABIK, an organisation formed by and for Bagyeli pygmies in southern Cameroon. CO DEBABIK has been working to protect the rights of the Bagyeli, whose traditional lifestyles are particularly threatened by the development of an oil pipeline.
Kenya

The Ogiek – fighting for their rights to land

The lands of the Ogiek people, the last remaining forest-dependent community in Kenya, are under severe threat from logging, colonisation and unsympathetic local and national government policies.

The Rainforest Foundation has been supporting the Nakuru-based Ogiek Welfare Council (OWC) to help protect the ancestral lands, language, culture and identity of the Ogiek people. The Foundation has provided funds to cover legal advice, and assist the OWC to strengthen its organisation. This has enabled it to increase the international profile of the problems faced by the Ogiek, and prevent their eviction from the remaining forests.

Madagascar

Community forests in Ambohimahamasina

Deforestation in Madagascar has already reduced forest cover to a mere 15 per cent of its former extent and the island has more endangered species of mammal than any other country in the world.

This long-term project, run by local organisation CCD Namana, is located in the Communes of Ambohimahamasina and Ikongo in the south-east of the country, an area suffering acute poverty and facing rapid environmental degradation. We are assisting approximately 24,000 Betsileo and Tanala people, and the overall aim is to develop protected Community Forests and encourage sustainable agricultural and income generation initiatives in the farmlands adjacent to a critical forest ‘corridor’. The project will enable communities to boost their income from the local forests whilst ensuring their long-term protection.

Venezuela

Mapping the Ye’kwana and Sanema lands

During 1998 and 1999, with the support of the RF UK and the Forest Peoples Programme, the Ye’kwana and Sanema Indians of the Upper Caura River basin, southern Venezuela, have produced detailed maps of their traditional territory, an area of 34,000 square kilometres.

Using these maps, the Ye’kwana and Sanema are now developing a legal land claim, ensuring that their homelands are protected from increasing external threats such as logging and mining. The project, to take place during 2001 and 2002, will also help to develop an integrated land management plan making sure indigenous communities can actively participate in the long term development of the region.
The Ashaninka regain their territories

Since 1998, the Rainforest Foundation’s local partner, Asociacion para la Conservacion del Patrimonio del Cutivireni (ACPC), has been successfully helping the Ashaninka Indians of the Rio Ene region to secure their forest homelands in the Peruvian Amazon.

During the 1990s, the Ashaninka were the victims of a violent conflict between the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrilla movement and the Peruvian government. Thousands of Ashaninka died or were forced to flee their homes.

The project has been helping over 3000 Ashaninka to legally reclaim their ancestral lands and empowering them with the skills needed to deal with new threats such as logging and colonisation. Training has been given in practical skills such as new agricultural techniques, and carpentry, to afford the Ashaninka greater economic independence and security.

A particularly successful element of the project has been ACPC’s work with Ashaninka women and girls, assisting them in reviving traditional handicraft production (for sale in local markets) and in establishing organised clubs so they can participate more actively in Ashaninka society.

En Perú, la Fundación Rainforest ha estado apoyando el trabajo de la ACPC – Asociación para la Conservación del Patrimonio del Cutivireni – una ONG local, en pos de ayudar a 3,000 indígenas Ashaninka, víctimas de la violencia política de los años 1990, a recuperar sus territorios ancestrales y enfrentar nuevas amenazas a su cultura y medio ambiente. Un elemento del proyecto que ha adquirido especial connotación por su éxito, ha sido el trabajo de la ACPC con las mujeres y niñas Ashaninka, ayudándolas a revivir la producción de artesanía tradicional (a ser vendida en los mercados locales) y en el establecimiento de clubes organizados de modo que ellas puedan participar en formas activas en la sociedad Ashaninka.

In MUCH of Guyana’s forest is now threatened by logging and mining activities. In collaboration with the Amerindian Peoples Association of Guyana (APAG), the Rainforest Foundation is helping six Amerindian communities of the Upper Mazaruni region to prepare and progress a legal claim to secure rights to the lands on which they live.

The Amerindians in Guyana

Au Pérou, la « Rainforest Foundation » a donné son soutien à l’ONG locale ACPC, afin d’aider 3 000 Indiens Ashaninka, victimes de la violence politique dans les années 90, à recouvrer leurs terres ancestrales et à faire face aux nouvelles menaces pesant sur leur culture et leur environnement. Un des éléments les plus réussis du projet a été le travail effectué avec les femmes et les adolescentes Ashaninka par l’ACPC, qui leur a permis de faire naître la production d’objets artisanaux traditionnels, vendus par la suite sur les marchés locaux. En outre, des clubs ont été organisés pour les encourager à prendre une place plus active dans la société Ashaninka.

Much of Guyana’s forest is now threatened by logging and mining activities. In collaboration with the Amerindian Peoples Association of Guyana (APAG), the Rainforest Foundation is helping six Amerindian communities of the Upper Mazaruni region to prepare and progress a legal claim to secure rights to the lands on which they live.
The Rainforest Foundation Worldwide

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Advocacy

Working towards change in the European Commission Development programme

The Rainforest Foundation UK has continued to campaign to improve the management of the European Commission (EC) aid programme.

The campaign builds on the findings of our 1998 report “Out of Commission - The Environmental and Social impacts of development funding in tropical forest areas”. The Foundation discovered that rainforests had been felled to make way for badly planned EC development schemes and indigenous peoples had been forced from their lands or had their homelands destroyed as a result of EC funded projects.

What has been achieved so far?

The Foundation has continued to monitor events and press the Commission to:

• include environmental considerations and indigenous peoples’ rights in development policy;
• improve the management of individual projects in tropical forest areas.

Since the launch of the Foundation’s campaign, there has been a wider recognition, including amongst European governments and the Commission itself, of the need to improve the quality of European Commission aid programmes. Some important new steps have been taken by the Commission, including the adoption of an overall development policy, the establishment of a ‘Quality Support Group’, and the publication of more information about development projects on the Commission’s website.

The Foundation has contributed directly to a number of developments, including:

• New European Commission policies on forests in the tropics, and on the integration of environmental concerns into development programmes, which included recommendations made by the Foundation;
• The development of a new manual of environmental procedures and safeguards, for which the Foundation provided detailed recommendations;
• The revision of specific projects, including in Cameroon and Guyana, taking into account concerns raised by the Foundation and our partner organisations.

European Union Indigenous Peoples Policy

There has continued to be slow progress on implementation of the EU’s 1998 Policy on Indigenous Peoples. The Foundation has been instrumental in the formation of a network of European indigenous rights organisations, the aim of which is to bring pressure on the EC to implement the policy. In 2002, the Foundation will organise, with the support of the European Commission, and DANIDA a major conference to consider ways in which indigenous peoples’ concerns can be better addressed.
Fundraising

The work of the Rainforest Foundation continues to grow due to the vital ongoing support of many individual, corporate, trust and statutory donors:

- The Netaid.org Foundation: provided support for our project in Madagascar during 2000.

- Our new programme, Africacity (see page 2), was awarded 50 per cent funding from the European Commission’s Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. With this support, we were also able to gain valuable donations from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the Baring Foundation, ensuring full funding for the first year of this project.

- The Community Fund awarded the Rainforest Foundation a grant of nearly £184,000 over a three-year period for our project in Madagascar (see page 6).

- Comic Relief will fully fund, for 3 years, one of our projects in Cameroon which is helping Baka communities to secure their civil and land rights (see page 4).

- We received a £20,000 donation from The Body Shop Foundation to establish a small grants fund for Central African projects.

- Sainsbury’s relaunched its Rainforest fromage frais product with colourful, stylish new packaging and is raising awareness of our projects in Cameroon, Madagascar and Peru. This initiative has raised over £160,000 so far.

- The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation generously continued to support our campaign work.

- New corporate supporters have included Lexmark International SNC, who made a donation to the Rainforest Foundation, and is raising awareness across Europe about our work through their Linea cartridge Rainforest Project.

- Due to the dedication of one of our supporters, Carmen MacDonald, the Rainforest Foundation was awarded joint second prize in British Airways’ Cheques for Charity scheme.

- Over 50 volunteers helped us collect nearly £9,000 in donations and distribute information leaflets at Sting’s ten Royal Albert Hall concerts in March 2000.

- Our “Run for the Rainforest” initiative once again placed runners in the London Marathon in April, raising over £1,500 for our work. “Run for the Rainforests” offers runners of any age or experience advice on how to get involved with local running events – be it 4 miles, marathons, triathlons or Fell Running – and fundraise on our behalf.

- The Rainforest Challenge, the Foundation’s first overseas fundraising trek, took place in Madagascar, in October, and raised over £27,000. Uniquely, participants had the chance to visit our local project working with Tanala and Betsileo communities.

- The Rainforest Foundation Fund, set up by Sting, Trudie Styler and Franca Sciuto in 1999, has been generously supporting the RFUK’s project working with the Ogiek people of Kenya during 2000, and is also contributing to our work in Central Africa and Venezuela.

“Thank you” to everyone who has supported our work. Whether making a donation, volunteering or fundraising to take part in one of our challenge events, your help is very much appreciated by us, our project partners and beneficiaries!
Raising awareness of human rights and rainforest issues

The year 2000 has seen the continued dissemination of both our Information and Education Packs, raising awareness of the issues surrounding rainforests and their peoples, to a general audience nationwide.

Our website is fast becoming a crucial informational tool, enabling supporters to register and participate in campaign activity, and keeping them up to date with current rainforest community issues in the areas where we work. General information about our projects and rainforest topics are available, and internal publications, such as our Information sheets, newsletters, research reports, and other reports from the field, are also available online. In 2001 we launched an on-line donation facility.

"Once again, I’m honoured to contribute to the outstanding work the Foundation is doing with indigenous communities in rainforest countries around the world. Your efforts are critical in maintaining the diversity and health of this beautiful planet on which we live."

Susan Hanafee, regular donor

The Rainforest Foundation UK
City Cloisters,
196 Old Street,
London, EC1V 9FR,
UK; Tel: +44 (0) 20 7251 6345
Fax + 44 (0) 20 7251 4969
rainforestuk@rainforestuk.com;
www.rainforestfoundationuk.org

Board of Trustees:
Chair: Dr Marcus Colchester
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Our international partner organisations

The Rainforest Foundation US
270 Lafayette Street,
Suite 1107
New York, NY 10012, USA
Tel: +1 (212) 431 9098
Fax: +1 (212) 431 9197
rffny@rffny.org
www.savetherest.org

The Rainforest Foundation Norway
(Regnskogsfondet)
Postboks 2113, Grūnerlika,
0505 Oslo, Norway
Tel: +47 2204 4700
Fax: +47 2204 4701
rainforest@rainforest.no
www.rainforest.no

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