



Akinanantí

Permaculture and chacras integrales:
Reciprocity to regenerate the Amazon

Akinanantí

As in many Amazonian cosmologies, for the **Shipibo** people both human and non-human. The plants and trees, the animals, and the rivers are all interconnected with humankind. Drawing its name from the Shipibo culture, Akinanantí is a cosmology that recognizes all beings that make the rainforest their home.

Emerging from this cosmology, one of the main pillars of Amazonian cosmology is the experiential knowledge that, as individuals, we do not exist in isolation but are woven into a net of inter-being that entails mutual responsibility with our non-human family.

In the Shipibo language, this is called **Akinanantí**: reciprocity, mutual respect, and thriving community.



the rainforest is a vast, diverse community of sentient beings, animals, the rivers and all of nature's phenomena are interwoven. The **Chaikuni Institute** is committed to defend and protect

Andean indigenous wisdom is the truth of **interdependence**: we do not exist in isolation. As members of an organic community we are responsible for the wellbeing of each other, our human kin as well as

Animals and mutual responsibility are the primary pillars of a heal-



Supporting eco-social enterprises in the Amazon

Our revolutionary initiative aims to put reciprocity and mutual aid at the forefront of our individual and planetary healing process. It is about to **and generously give back to the Amazon**, its plants, and its people through eco-social enterprises in the Amazon. These projects will provide:



- Reforestation in the Amazon to create productive agroforestry systems.
- Income for local communities in the medium and long term.
- Regenerative agriculture to address the ever increasing demand and counteract resource scarcity.

Amazon

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s a call to stand together
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Amazonian families short,
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Protecting the Amazon rainforest:

An imperative of our times.

The Amazon rainforest is crucial to life on earth as we know it: It contains over half of the planet's remaining rainforest habitat, produces one fifth of the planet's oxygen, is responsible for 25% of the terrestrial absorption of global CO2 emissions and produces one sixth of the planet's fresh water. It is the world's premier bio-cultural diversity hotspot, home to dozens of unique cultures, mythologies and languages, as well as animals and healing plants.

Yet, the Amazon is being deforested at a massive 1.4 million hectares per year,¹ facing the greatest environmental and social challenges it ever has.

This trend has been greatly exacerbated by a widespread shift away from a regenerative, interdependent and mutually nurturing forest management paradigm, developed for millennia by indigenous peoples, towards industrial models of slash and burn mono-culturing with devastating ecological and human costs.

¹ https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/forests/deforestation_fronts/deforestation_in_the_amazon/



The Amazon rainforest in numbers:

1/2 of the planet's remaining rainforest habitat

1/5 of the planet's oxygen production

25% of the terrestrial absorption of global CO2 emissions

1/6 of the planet's fresh water production

First world's bio-cultural diversity hotspot

Chacras Integrales

An alternative to slash-and-burn agriculture

There is a direct link between the health of the ecosystems and the health of native human communities. Indigenous forest-management practices have ensured harmonious and balanced relationships between people and environment for millennia.





Some local people have referred to this modality as chacras indígenas or chacras integrales, a permaculture like method based on successional poly cropping and forest management techniques.

With colonization, immigration, and westernization, the shift from abundant, sustenance-based economies towards market-based cash economies, most of those practices have been lost to the now ubiquitous and devastating slash-and-burn techniques, resulting in widespread deforestation, forest degradation, and diverse socio-environmental conflicts.

“Slash-and-burn” agriculture describes the practice where a patch of living, thriving forest, is razed to the ground and then burned. This is essential to be able to turn the nutrient-poor and acidic Amazonian soil into a yucca, plantain or maize monoculture. However, this practice rapidly depletes the soil, and unless heavy chemical fertilizers² are applied, the land loses its productivity after a couple of years, eventually forcing local or industrial farmers to clear new patches of land, while the previous plot will take decades to regenerate, if at all.³

² Chemical fertilizers might prolong the time a field is producing and increase yields in the short-term, however, they are highly detrimental to the soil and land and completely destroy it in the long run.

³ Regeneration time will depend on different factors, such as crop planted, for how many years, and the applied agricultural practices (e.g. use and dosage of chemical fertilizers). If deforestation is large scale, without any remaining forest in the vicinity, natural regeneration might not be possible

Our part of the solution

Remembering chacras integrales and developing

Permaculture proposes a radically different solution; a permanent one, but regenerates it. Drawing from local, ancestral knowledge and technologies, we develop **integrated systems and successional polycultures.**⁴ Our permaculture

1. Our permaculture centre: where we demonstrate permaculture principles, practices and technologies



3. Our capacity building with neighboring communities

2. Investigation: we generate knowledge about permaculture and best practices



⁴ Polyculture is the planting of more than 1 species of crops which also involves the rotation of crops (and in some cases livestock) on a piece of land.

on:

oping tropical permaculture.

ment culture, a way of cultivating the land that doesn't deplete
e, at Chaikuni **we advocate for sustainable agroforestry**
lture program concentrates itself along five main pillars:

reach;
building
ghboring
unities



5. Environmental
education



4. Supporting market
access for neighboring
communities



Our Permaculture Program

Since its inception in 2012, the permaculture program of the Chai-kuni Institute has been recovering and researching healthy and regenerative ways of interacting with our environment, while sharing what we learn with the surrounding communities. The Permaculture Center, situated on the land of our sister organization, the *Temple of the Way of Light*, is a place where local Amazonian farmers work together with colleagues from across the planet, both to innovate and to remember.

On one hand, we aim to reclaim and remember ancestral ways of interacting with and managing the rainforest, practices that are rapidly being forgotten by local farmers. On the other hand, we aim to cross-pollinate local knowledge with the best insights and practices adapted from our experience with western-style permaculture. Our aim is to promote practices that are economically and environmentally appealing to the local communities, and can eventually provide a viable, alternative paradigm to the current dominant models that are overwhelmingly taxing the local ecosystems.

How does a regenerative agroforestry system work?

Instead of slashing-and-burning the forest, forest plots are selectively cleared. Valuable species are thus preserved, while others are cleared to make space for desirable crops or for nurturing the existing plants. Cut vegetation is left on the ground, mimicking the natural cycles of the rainforest ecosystem. Species that can coexist on mutually beneficial terms are planted next to each other. A wide, diverse variety of staple crops are planted together with fruit and timber trees, as well as medicinal plants (including the Ayahuasca vine).

By creating a living, thriving ecosystem, where different crops are harvested at different frequencies and in different seasons, this method provides regular, all-year-round income to local farmers and their families.

This multifunctional agroforestry landscape simultaneously provides economic, environmental and social resilience for the local families and, if applied widely, for a whole region.

Ayahuasca plantations

Generating sustainable income.

The recent global interest in Ayahuasca has been a mixed blessing for indigenous peoples. Although in some cases it provides economic opportunities and supports the continuous evolution of their practices and traditions, it is also —amongst other issues— causing a sharp decline in the local availability of the slow growing vine.

Around cities such as Iquitos or Pucallpa —the main epicenters of the current ayahuasca boom— scarcity means that local people need to travel further and further away in order to provide for their medicines. The extent of the global demand, however, also creates vast economic opportunities: the cultivation of ayahuasca holds untapped potential to generate alternative sources of income for amazonian populations.

Between 2011 and 2017, over 1.800 ayahuasca vines have been planted on the land of the Temple of the Way of Light, some of which are almost ready to be harvested. Our mid and long term goal is to teach, support and empower local farmers and communities to acquire the skills and the knowledge necessary to implement their own projects and diversify their income.





Our goal and long term impact

We aim to lead the way into true Akinananti for our global community by promoting the regenerative cultivation of income generating local products and medicinal plants, in particular the Ayahuasca vine, as a sustainable income source for rural Amazonian farmers, and as an inseparable and essential aspect of the long term restoration of balance and reciprocity between people, society and environment.

Restoring harmonious agro-forest management practices will promote economic resilience and abundance for the local communities, as well as ensuring that sacred cultural practices will continue to thrive and expand for the sake of our future generations.

Reciprocity in Practice become involved

To boost our project, we are organizing a world class **Permaculture Design Course** to educate and train a core group of highly dedicated and motivated individuals in the techniques of Permaculture.

Currently, we have an agreement with **Tierra Martinez** from a group of experienced and renown permaculture teachers in Latin America, to host the first such PDC for local farmers, we are planting precious seeds of entrepreneurship. The PDC, however, will only be possible if we

SUPPORTS

Practice:

Permaculture Design Course (PDC), specifically tailored to educate rural Amazonian farmers into the basic principles and tech-

in the [Na'Lu'Um Permaculture Institute](#), one of the most experts to come and teach the PDC for us in May 2019. By organizing these seeds that will bloom into successful projects of eco-social development, we reach the **funding goal of our campaign.**

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