



NATIVE FUTURE

Protecting Cultures • Conserving Threatened Lands

Panama Enacts Indigenous Land Titling Legislation

On December 23, 2008, Panama enacted historic “Tierra Colectiva” legislation that for the first time provides indigenous communities with a mechanism to gain legal title to their communal lands. This law, known as “Ley 72 de 2008” brings Panama into compliance with human rights norms established by the United Nations and by the Organization of American States. The Wounaan played a key role in securing the passage of this legislation, which they have been seeking for over a decade. In particular, the Wounaan testimony before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in October brought significant political pressure to bear on the Panamanian government. Thanks to your support, Native



Indigenous communities such as Río Hondo, pictured here, will now be able to title their communal lands

Future was able to send Leonides Quiroz to the IACHR



Marsha Kellogg,
President

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Wounaan and Native Future can celebrate three important milestones this year. First, the passage of the pivotal Panama “Ley 72” is a momentous accomplishment for the Wounaan and for Panama’s other indigenous peoples. The second milestone is the award of a record 103 Native Education scholarships this year. For the first time, through the Wounaan Foundation, twelve Wounaan secondary and post-secondary students received scholarships, in addition to many Ñgäbe and Buglé students in western Panama. Native Future’s collaboration with the Wounaan Foundation is increasing their capacity to manage scholarships and land tenure activities and meet the development needs of their people. The third and final milestone, is the official celebration of the graduation of Leonides Quiroz, the Native Future Higher Education Scholarship recipient, and first Wounaan lawyer. Congratulations Leo! And congratulations to the Native Future community for all you have done to help the Wounaan, Ñgäbe, and Buglé achieve these important milestones!

Native Education Program Distributes \$11,000 in Scholarship Funds

Native Future's Native Education Program and the Basilio Perez Scholarship Fund distributed over \$11,000 to over 100 Ngäbe-Buglé and Wounaan students for the 2009 school year (March through December). Thanks to the generosity of donors, the average child received more than \$100 to help with expenses. For secondary students (and several post-secondary), cash gifts for tuition and supplies were given. Primary students received uniforms, shoes, books, and school supplies – a labor intensive effort involving parental trips to the city and arduous hauling of purchases up mountains to distant villages.



The joy of reading



Pablo and David are twin grandsons of Basilio Perez, namesake of the scholarship fund

This program is now in its 9th year and it's gratifying to see results. At the program's inception in 2000, children in remote villages rarely attended secondary school. Now, a secondary school education is a priority for most families in the same way that college education has become a priority for families in the United States. The Native Education Project and the Basilio Perez Scholarship fund are proud to have played a role, however small, in bringing about this change, and we are delighted to be able to continue to help further the aspirations and hopes of these families.

Panama Enacts Indigenous Land Titling Legislation, cont'd

hearing in October, where he testified on behalf of the Wounaan people, and the other indigenous peoples of eastern Panama. Just two months later, Ley 72 was enacted into law.

The Wounaan communities of Río Hondo, Platanares, and Majé-Chimán are now seeking to become the first indigenous communities to take advantage of Ley 72 to title their communal lands. The law sets out a number of requirements that indigenous communities must meet in order to title their lands. The Wounaan are submitting paperwork to the appropriate Panamanian government agencies, and negotiating with the Panamanian government regarding the boundaries of their territory.

But even though there is much optimism among the Wounaan regarding their land tenure prospects, it remains to be seen whether Panama will fully comply with the provisions of the law, and whether it will help the Wounaan to enforce their land rights once title has been granted. For the moment, migrant cattle ranchers continue to cut down Wounaan forests unabated. Your continued support of the Wounaan Land Tenure Project is critical to ensuring that the Wounaan are able to fully take advantage of Ley 72, and finally gain control over their lands and their futures.

Sustainable Arts Project Launched

Native Future and the Wounaan Foundation are happy to announce the launch of the Sustainable Art project. This collaborative project will market Wounaan folk arts domestically and internationally and help conserve the forests and forest products on which their art depends. The aims of the Sustainable Art project are to generate a greater market for the Wounaan arts and greater income for Wounaan artists. At the same time it will create a more sustained source of funding for Wounaan Foundation activities such as the Wounaan Land Tenure project, the Educational Scholarship program, reforestation, and community-based tourism.

Wounaan handcrafted arts made from forest products are an important source of income for Wounaan families. When Wounaan forests are cut down by migrant ranchers for pasture, the Wounaan lose the



President Marsha Kellogg and Wounaan Cacique Chilin Piraza sign agreement between Native Future and the Wounaan

raw materials on which their art depends, such as the chungá palm. At the same time, unsustainable harvesting practices, such as cutting down the whole chungá palm tree for the tender fibers at the tips of their leaves, is making it increasingly difficult to find this critical plant. Wounaan are walking greater and greater distances into the forests to find and harvest palm fibers. Finally, the increase in demand - domestically and internationally - for Wounaan baskets and carvings places greater pressure on these forest resources.

This May, Native Future and the Wounaan Foundation brought together Wounaan artists and leaders of the Wounaan Congress (“Congreso”) to develop a one-year start-up action plan for the project. The Wounaan Foundation has se-

lected Tonny Membora, tagua carver and founder of the Wounaan Congress to lead this initiative. Over the next year, Native Future will work closely with Tonny, the Wounaan Foundation, and other support organizations to develop a business plan, acquire start-up funding, and organize themselves to market their art and artists within Panama and internationally.

Please help the Wounaan make this social enterprise a success by donating to Native Future’s Sustainable Development Program. Your donation will help:

- Send Tonny Membora and selected Wounaan artists to business and language training and help them acquire the skills to manage this social enterprise.
- Defray the costs of communications and travel that Tonny and Wounaan artists will incur as they develop this business within Panama and internationally.
- Support the execution of important forest management and business planning studies, such as forest inventories, market analyses and cost, revenue and profit projections.



Tonny Membora with Wounaan handcrafts

Make your donation today at www.nativefuture.org. Thank you!



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Adopt-a-Hectare Campaign Raises \$17,810 for Wounaan Land Titling



Thanks to the generous support of nearly sixty individuals and businesses, the Wounaan Land Tenure project succeeded in raising \$17,810 through the Adopt-a-Hectare fundraising campaign. Collectively, these sixty donors adopted 168 hectares of Wounaan rainforest, helping to ensure that these forests will be protected from the incursions of migrant cattle ranchers.



Even though Panama has now enacted important land titling legislation for indigenous communities, the incursions of the cattle ranchers in the areas of Río Hondo, Platanares, and Majé-Chimán continue unabated. The funds raised through the Adopt-a-Hectare campaign will help these communities to pursue their legal rights under the new Ley 72, and to preserve their lands from cattle ranchers once and for all. Your support is making a difference!



Special thanks goes to the Semilla Fund of the Sonoma County Community Foundation for their continued generous support of Native Future, and to Peter Hetz for his creative matching gift campaign.



Native Future
2101 Piihola Road
Makawao, HI, 96768