

# **ASSIMILATE CULTURAL BIODIVERSITY TO UNDERSTAND NATURAL BIODIVERSITY**

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The last great reservoirs of biodiversity on the planet are linked to Ancient tribes, for years, many years, have taken care of their nature and their diversity, keeping them intact over time. They have wisely integrated human existence, in a harmonious synergy with their lands. The great biological diversity that they manage is not indistinct to them because it is sustenance, home, school and pharmacy; and therefore life. This sustainable culture has been transferred from generation to generation through the word and today is the day that this

undocumented knowledge becomes essential to face the climatic challenges that we face.

A few years ago, a varied group of people traveled to Indonesia to visit a project for the recovery of fauna and flora for the subsequent protection of the area. Together with the team of biologists, led by the veterinarian and activist from [International Animal Rescue Karmele Llano](#), a large number of local people worked who, without an approved degree, were key for the identification of fauna and flora varieties... This combination of scientific and indigenous knowledge was critical for the realization of the project. All that was not written in the books.

Interested in the local culture and its methods of conservation and reforestation of some ancient species, we fell into a Dayak village in Kalimantan. There they received us with hospitality and with the need of someone who wants to show you an uncomfortable truth. It was Mass Sunday, a day of rest, so they took us to see their new job and home, the palm plantations. You no longer lived in the village but in barracks piled on mud and overlooking what was and never will be: thousands of kilometers of cleared tropical forest. Palm, used to make palm oil that in the first world for cosmetics, food products... and biofuels. Uprooted families, poverty, deforestation, irrecoverable loss of biodiversity, was the balance of putting "ecological" fuel in our vehicles. The same day we arrived in Bilbao, a ship from Indonesia with biofuel was docking at the port.

This is not an isolated case, it is repeated with other threats and other crops where there are remnants of great biological diversity and indigenous populations. Soon the planet has an important event: Rio+20. There, where it all began, you can decide if we sit down as before and sign the end or if we are going to do something. The ingredients are on the table, the IPCC has once again warned that we are close to entering the point of no return, the NGOs are working on their proposals, the governments too, and the indigenous community is willing to ask for more rights and more voice. We have spent years demonstrating that first world societies do not know about conservation that does not entail invasion and irreparable losses. I think it is our time to keep quiet, to ask and prevent, and to listen to those who have shown that they know about this. Although for this, we must first get off our mental scheme and structure the concept of Sustainable Development, until now focused on society, environment and economy, to introduce a fourth pillar: CULTURE, because natural biodiversity cannot be understood without cultural biodiversity.

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