

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

Still working toward our Atlantic forest dream

Teis Communal Forest shows how restoration of degraded forests is both possible and necessary, especially with the leadership and involvement of local communities

Organisations and individuals involved

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Location

Galicia, Spain



IN NORTH-WEST SPAIN lies Teis Communal Forest. This ancient type of communal property was established centuries ago, and still exists in Galicia and North Portugal as little by little people are reclaiming their customary rights (about 22 per cent of Galicia is communally managed).

Teis Communal Forest was officially founded in 1998, when a highway was being constructed straight through it. The forest was already suffering numerous problems, including high-voltage cables, garbage dumping and the introduction of exotic species. The community decided to respond by restoring the native forest.

The biggest obstacle to this restorative dream was the battle against Black Acacia, plantations of which had been abandoned, leading to forest fires which killed the last remaining pockets of native forest.

Twenty years later and the story is quite different. Much of the Black Acacia is gone, replaced with a variety of native species. This process of profound healing has allowed native animals, plants and mushrooms to return after more than

seventy years, proving that with the right conditions you can have strong native forests near to a city.

Locals are benefiting from increased employment and the return of traditional forest uses. Local schools undertake guided visits and volunteers get together to control the bush and fight against Black Acacia.

Transforming degraded forests helps communities to conceive of a new ethic, based on respect for nature. If those in government can walk in a real forest full of colour, smells, sounds and life, they will understand that nature must be respected, not replaced.

Now, we need a legal institution to promote native forests, with a real budget, a plan, and the tools to analyse problems and measure progress. The timber industry too must contribute to the preservation of native forest. Given the effects of intensive and extensive forestry, it is scandalous that it has not been regulated before now.

Finally, schools can play an important role in explaining that we are part of nature and that native forests are essential.

Testimony

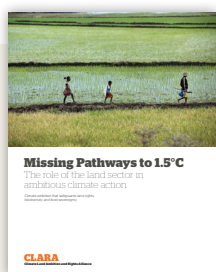
Manuel López Rodríguez, Secretary of Communal Forest of Teis

“The forests are sending a clear message to STOP, to change the way we live and to recover land for native forest. We can stop deforestation and we can collectively wake up and realize how damaging exotic species plantations are to the whole ecosystem.

From the Communal Forest of Teis we understand that action is key. We urgently need to invest time and resources to teach kids the fallacy of “us vs. nature”. We cannot love what we do not comprehend. Ignorance is the enemy of the forest. We must teach how we are all interconnected. We ARE nature.”

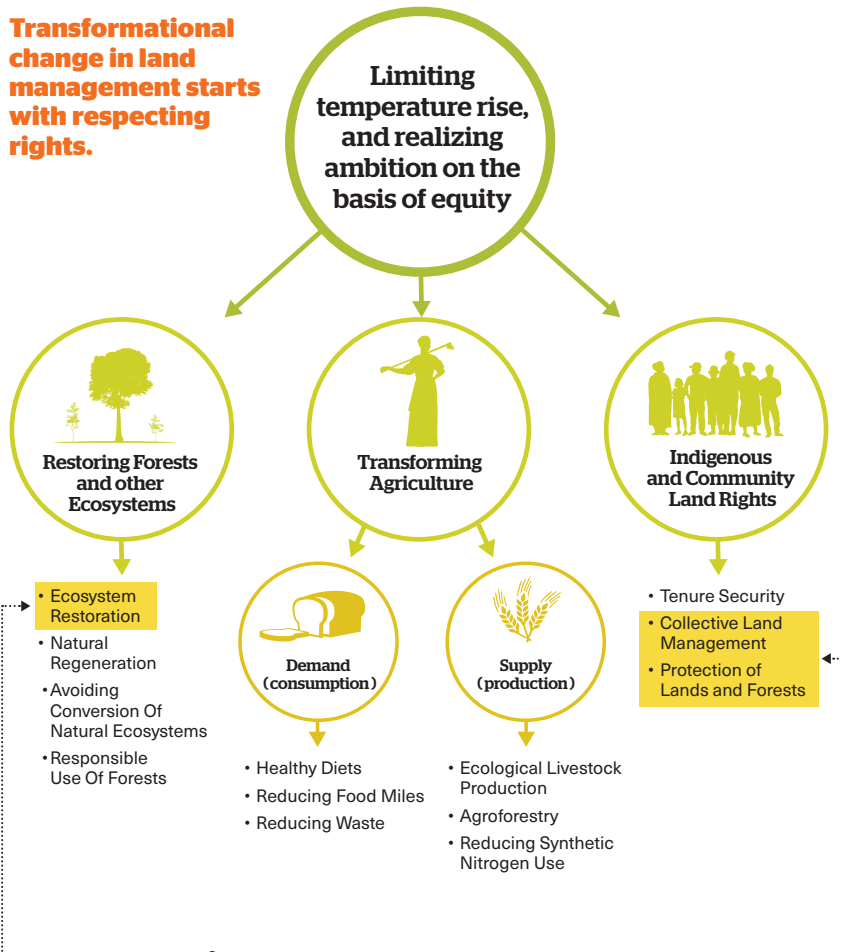
‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



This example follows ‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action by...

Connecting the dots between degraded land and climate and ecological breakdown, as well as reinforcing and strengthening the basic connection between people and nature. One reason for forest degradation in this case was a lack of understanding that eucalyptus and pine plantations cannot replace natural biodiversity or do the same work for the climate as carbon-rich ecosystems. The planet is heating up and the restoration of native forests is vital if we are to turn down the temperature - so we already have the tools we need in order to act.



Communities in Teis are harnessing their ancient right to collective land management, towards local ecosystem restoration and the protection of lands and forests, resulting in a range of socio-environmental benefits.

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