

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**.

# Large Scale Forest Conservation with Indigenous Peoples in the Threatened Brazilian Amazon

Kayapo-NGO collaboration has already led to the continued protection of nine million hectares of primary forest

## Organisations and individuals involved

Local indigenous NGOs representing the Kayapo: "Associação Floresta Protegida", "Instituto Raoni" and "Instituto Kabu"; international conservation NGOs "Conservation International" (USA), "Environmental Defense Fund" (USA) and "International Conservation Fund of Canada".

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## Location

The south-eastern Amazon region of Brazil in the states of southern Para and northern Mato



**THE LANDS OF THE** Kayapo people of the highly threatened southeastern Amazon of Brazil lie in one of the world's most intense deforestation zones. Infrastructure mega-projects, mines, illegal logging and gold-mining, and the proposed weakening of the constitutional rights of indigenous people threatens forest recovery. In the early 2000s the Kayapo forged alliances with conservation NGOs to help them counter these intensifying threats.

The Kayapo assert a fundamental interdependence between cultural identity and territory and, therefore, their struggle coincides with the mission of conservation NGOs to preserve biodiversity, natural ecosystems and carbon stocks. Kayapo territories protect carbon stocks on 9.4 million hectares of mostly primary forest to the order of one billion tons.

International NGOs have committed with the Kayapo to help them build capacity to protect their lands, constitutional rights and the primary forest ecosystems on which their culture and livelihoods are based. NGO projects combined with other support for Kayapo communities have developed scalable

resource management and income generation projects as well as enabling territorial monitoring and control. International NGOs have helped Kayapo communities to set up and administer their own local indigenous NGOs that are critical to building capacity to manage their territories sustainably. Nine million hectares of primary forest remains reasonably intact where Kayapo communities have local NGO representation and receive outside investment; whereas, 1.2 million hectares of the contiguous Kayapo territories that receives no NGO investment is invaded and degraded.

There are already signs that the Amazon is approaching tipping points that could lead to severe ecological changes. Thus scale-up is essential. The Kayapo project provides a successful model that has resulted in protection of millions of hectares of primary forest. On the Kayapo project, we have found that the sky is the limit as far as sustainable economic development based on non-timber forest products and services and the desire of indigenous people to protect their land and culture.

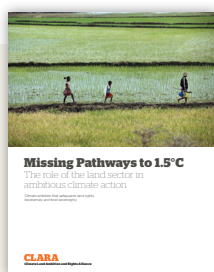
# Testimony

**Barbara Zimmerman, Kayapo Project Director for the ICFC and EDF**

“The Kayapo fight to protect their culture, their livelihoods and their very existence. Alliances with outside agencies have enabled protection of over nine million hectares of their forested territories within a lawless region of high deforestation. Key to success has been ongoing support for resource management, development of income generation activities and territorial surveillance that is so essential in the absence of government enforcement of indigenous land rights. Outside investment is making the difference between survival of Kayapo society and territory, and rampant invasion and destruction of both.”

## ‘Missing Pathways’ to climate action

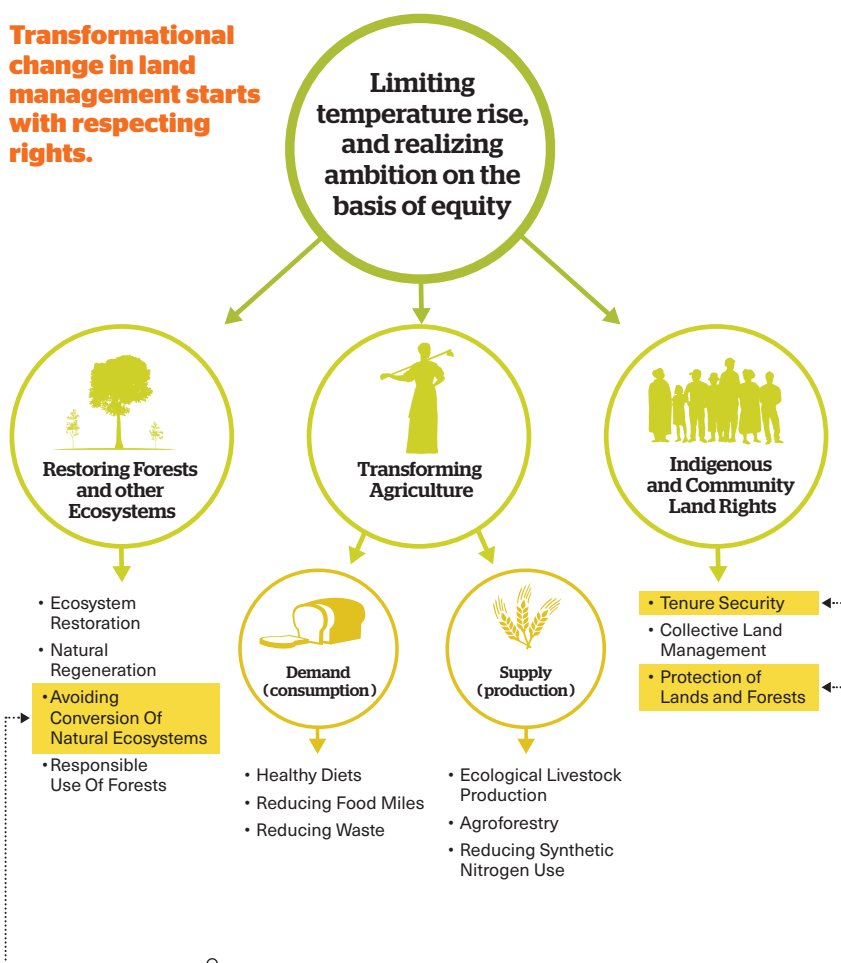
Last year, CLARA published the report ‘Missing Pathways’, identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



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

Acknowledging, sustaining and strengthening the role played by indigenous peoples as forest stewards and knowledge-holders, and therefore as crucial actors regarding climate and conservation goals. The same principles of project design with the Kayapo will apply to other indigenous groups: i) equitable benefits sharing, ii) income generation and territorial surveillance projects designed to fit with Kayapo culture and capacity, iii) support to set up and administer local indigenous NGOs, iv) long term outside commitment to subsidize development and administration costs of conservation based enterprise and territorial monitoring and control.

**Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.**



This large-scale forest protection by an NGO alliance with indigenous people demonstrates that indigenous peoples who hold exclusive **tenure rights** are indispensable to the **protection of lands and forests**, and for **avoiding conversion of natural ecosystems**.

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