



Generation Restoration: Restoring the Ecosystem for All



Land degradation is one of the world's most pressing environmental problems and it will worsen without rapid remedial action. Globally, about 25 percent of the total land area has been degraded. When land is degraded, soil carbon and nitrous oxide are released into the atmosphere, making land degradation one of the most important contributors to climate change. Scientists recently warned that 24 billion tons of fertile soil was being lost per year, largely due to unsustainable agriculture practices. If this trend continues, 95 percent of the Earth's land areas could become degraded by 2050. Globally, 3.2 billion people are affected by land degradation, especially rural communities, smallholder farmers, and the very poor who depend on the land for survival (UNESCO). Efforts to restore the ecosystem are more important than ever for the future of our planet and her people.

Ecosystem restoration is the story of living in community with the earth, its species and one another. The history of a community and its culture is intertwined with its ecosystems. The stories and histories of a community inform the present and can help to frame a narrative for the future. They can also help to navigate the pitfalls and wounds that come from colonialism, environmental degradation, or internal conflict. Ecosystem restoration requires us to learn from one another and from the Earth to create pathways for life to emerge. As we celebrate the feast day of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, patroness of ecology and the environment, let us open our hearts and our minds to learn from the wisdom of indigenous communities in stewarding the land. This edition of the newsletter highlights efforts of indigenous communities to restore the land. Visit [UN Decade on Restoration](#) to learn more.

JPIC Days of Remembrance

July 14

St. Kateri Tekakwitha

Patroness of

Ecology and the Environment

July 30

World Day Against Trafficking in

Persons

August 9

International Day of the

World's Indigenous Peoples

August 23

International Day for

Remembrance of the

Slave Trade & Its Abolition

August 23/August 30

St. Rose of Lima Patron Saint of

Peru and the Americas



St. Rose of Lima



St. Kateri Tekakwitha

For Reflection

- What are some ways I can learn more about the histories and cultures of indigenous peoples in my region and around the world?
- How do issues such as land rights, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation intersect with indigenous cultures and aspirations?
- What are some Indigenous-led initiatives I can support or amplify?

Restoring Life for Future Generations

It is restoration day in a village high in the Andes and the mood is festive. After limbering up with a traditional dance, dozens of volunteers each grab an armful of bushy green saplings. Then they clamber onto pickup trucks, motorbikes and horses and stream up a treeless mountainside to plant them.

Grassroots reforestation efforts like this one in Ecuador's Chimborazo Province are the hallmark of Acción Andina, a multi-country initiative to restore Andean forests, home to one-sixth of all plant life on the planet.

As well as reviving unique mountain landscapes and biodiversity, it is an attempt to work along Indigenous communities to protect their livelihoods and culture from the ravages of climate change – and to slow its progression. Many in the Andes are particularly worried about water security.

"Our children, my children, will grow up and have families of their own here," says Laura Punina, a Kichwa community leader in Chomborazo, Ecuador. "I think about that when I am planting. I hope that these trees will someday become a forest and generate more water."



Photo by UNEP/Todd Brown



Constantino Auca Chutas with Indigenous Leaders from Peru.
Photo by UNEP/Marco Antonio

[Acción Andina](#) was recently recognized as a United Nations Flagship restoration project. It is the first multi-country, large-scale initiative to restore high altitude forests spanning five Andean countries of South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Perú.

Acción Andina has enabled the set-up of 22 projects, engaging 25,000 people to restore 5,000 hectares of Andean forests and protect more than 11,250 hectares of existing forests. More than 200 local communities have benefited.

The initiative was originally championed by Indigenous Peruvian leader, Constantino Auca Chutas. It follows the ancient Inca principles of Ayni & Minka, which embody a profound commitment to work together for the common good. "Acción Andina will plant millions of native trees along the Andes, to secure water, landscapes and protect the ecosystems, biodiversity, and culture. Local and native communities demand it, and the planet deserves it" said Auca. (Article courtesy of UNEP)

Divine Creator,

Guide our hands to nurture and protect the delicate balance of ecosystems, so that future generations may also marvel at Your wondrous creations. Instill in us a reverence for all life forms, understanding that each has a unique role to play in the symphony of existence.

May our choices be guided by love, compassion, and respect for the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Grant us the courage to confront the forces of greed and exploitation that threaten Your creation. Inspire us to cultivate lifestyles of simplicity and sustainability, mindful of the finite resources You have entrusted to our care.

May Your guiding light illuminate our path as we journey towards a more harmonious and sustainable world.

Amen

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