



Autumn Newsletter

October 2025

Dear members, patrons and interested parties

With this autumn newsletter, we would like to inform you about developments of our activities in 2025 and ask for your valuable support.

Annual General Meeting 2025

On 22 June 2025, our 27th Annual General Meeting took place at the Farnsburg restaurant in Liestal. Around 20 interested individuals attended. Together, we looked back on the association's year in 2024 and discussed current issues. Afterwards, we enjoyed an inspiring exchange over an antipasti brunch.

What has happened so far in 2025?

Land rights

We are in regular contact with lawyer Oscar Ayala, who has been commissioned by the Totobiegosode indigenous community to represent their interests vis-à-vis the state. The Human Rights Commission of the Organisation of American States continues to deal with the indigenous people's complaint. However, there is cause for concern as a large company has applied to the government for a permit to commercialise land in the protected area. Together with Oscar Ayala, we are trying to obtain as much detailed information as possible about this. Only by preserving the forest can the Totobiegosode's livelihoods be secured in the long term. Protecting their land rights strengthens their role as guardians of the land and encourages their active participation in nature conservation.

Land monitoring

The so-called 'monitoring trips' remain a key tool for land protection. We support these missions financially and with satellite images, which are evaluated by our loyal team members Peter and Alfred Sawatzky. Unfortunately, the patrols were only possible to a limited extent this year: devastating rainfall in early winter (May/June) made many roads impassable. As a result, we had to provide financial and organisational assistance at short notice to supply the communities with food. Our team member Dr. Fernando Elias did a great job in this regard. We are striving to find further allies on site and are actively working on establishing new contacts with organisations and individuals. We have established a partnership with EAMI, a Paraguayan NGO that has experience in working with indigenous groups. We will be happy to share the evaluation of this trial at the next annual meeting.

Education project

Our new project, 'Education for Young Indigenous People,' is increasingly taking shape. Dr. Julio Duarte (lawyer) is committed to supporting the young people who want to attend school. We provide financial support for food, accommodation and school materials. The school is several hours away from the village. So far, five young people have started classes; unfortunately, two of them had to drop out because they have to work as day labourers to support their families. Nevertheless, interest in taking advantage of this educational opportunity is growing within the community. It is also encouraging that one of the three remaining students is a girl, as we also want to improve the prospects for girls and women.

Health project

We are also making encouraging progress in the area of health. We provide financial support through Dr. Fernando Elias. He has put together a team of specialists who visit the communities (700 km each way!) and train local staff in basic medical care and establish important contacts. He has also initiated cooperation with a hospital and a pharmacy in the nearest town.

CALL FOR DONATIONS!

This autumn, we would like to draw your attention to education and health.

Education

The sustainable development of communities begins with the education of the younger generation. One semester cost around CHF 1,500 per pupil, which includes accommodation, transport, materials, support and, in emergencies, food. We would like to increase the number of pupils and intensify our support. Please help us to enable as many young indigenous people as possible to receive an education. What we take for granted in Switzerland is a precious privilege for them. If you are interested in sponsoring a school year for a pupil, please contact us!

Health

Health is another cornerstone for the development of communities. Your donation will enable medical care, the training of local first aid contacts, exercise and nutrition programs, and much more. Every contribution is used directly and unbureaucratically on site.

Please help us to strengthen these communities – so that they can protect their land and their habitat and continue to develop as a healthy, self-determined society. Two payment slips with our two donation accounts are enclosed. You will find other payment options on our website.

Thank you for your ongoing attention and support! We want to continue to help these underprivileged people. Together, we can make a big difference in small ways.

On behalf of the entire board, with warm regards,
Hans Weenink and Claudio Losa