Project GREEN

100 GREEN PAINTINGS – a project for Amazonia

100 indigenous words for the colour GREEN in 100 paintings that 100 supporters purchased so that 100s of indigenous people in Brazil were able to receive social and medical support.

The artist and the paintings
Berlin-based artist Michael Arantes Müller visited the Amazon region a number of times between 1994 and 2006, gaining inspiration for his work there. He was particularly fascinated by the abundance of terms for green in the languages of the indigenous people.

Climate Alliance
is a partnership comprising 1,700 European municipalities and the Coordinating Body for the Indigenous Peoples Organization of the Amazon Basin (COICA). Within Project GREEN, Climate Alliance collected and managed the donations. climatealliance.org

medico international e.V.
provided technical support and helped to implement the project in Amazonia. The social and medical aid organization has been active in countless countries in the southern hemisphere since 1968. medico.de

The partners in Amazonia
União das Nações Indígenas (UNI): Organização das Mulheres Indígenas do Acre, Sul do Amazonas e Noroeste de Rondônia (Sitoakore); and Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação Indígena (IEPÉ) are committed to enhancing the health and autonomy of indigenous women, mothers and children, and provided support for the project work in the field.

Kulturdepot e.V.
promotes art, culture and development aid, and was actively involved in supporting and organising the project from the outset.

Our sincere thanks to all donors and supporters for their interest in the project, patro-nage of the paintings, and above all their financial backing!
A project for Amazonia

Artist Michael Arantes Müller brought the concept for Project GREEN back with him from Amazonia in 1994. Fascinated by the nature and the indigenous cultures, he developed Project GREEN - a captivating mosaic comprising 100 images of one square metre in size. Each individual painting relates to a word from the indigenous languages. When the green paintings were acquired by European municipalities and institutions, the mosaic was divided up and transformed into patronages to help fund social, ecological and cultural projects.

The generous donations have allowed the partners in Brazil to organise midwife courses for indigenous women, plant herb gardens, host self-sufficiency courses, and reinforce the autonomy of the Waiãpi indigenous people.

The indigenous peoples dwelling in Amazonia use and protect their natural surrounds with the utmost respect according to their special knowledge. All of these peoples have their own social and political structures as well as mythologies, historical traditions, medical concepts, and biological classification systems. It is precisely here that Project GREEN gets involved, bringing together stakeholders from Europe and the Amazon basin, who associate the environment and art with the protection of cultural identity and social justice. Building on medicó’s many years of experience, the project partners support the autonomous (health) development of the indigenous peoples of Amazonia.

The social and medical aspects of the project were implemented in the Brazilian state of Acre. In cooperation with a group of indigenous women, a total of five midwife courses were run between 2003 and 2005 with the financial support of Project GREEN in which over 100 indigenous midwives participated. Besides imparting medical expertise, the focus of the courses was above all on reinforcing the role of women as indigenous midwives. The call for state recognition of the indigenous midwives was voiced during the discussions with the health authorities. One major improvement was the founding of a political association by the women.

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Medicinal herbs for primary care

At the end of 2004, the midwives expressed the wish to set up a garden to cultivate medicinal herbs and vegetables. Concrete planning could already begin in May 2005. Groups were formed in five different areas - women’s organisations, families and indigenous communities, who wished to work on a herb garden together.

Particularly for villages in very secluded areas, the idea of a herb garden represents an important opportunity to be able to provide primary health care locally. The gardens encountered fertile soils! The participants marked out a series of planting areas with bricks on which a variety of vegetables and medicinal plants could soon be harvested.

The midwives also used the herb gardens for training purposes, and organised seminars with presentations and workshops. Participants travelled to the herb gardens from the surrounding communities, and learned to cook, filter tinctures and distil cough syrup. Planting of the herb gardens has allowed the villages’ women to ensure independent primary health care!

Waiãpi – medical support with no cultural conflicts

The Waiãpi dwell in the rainforest in the southeast of French Guiana as well as in the drainage basin in the north of Amazonia in the neighbouring Brazilian states of Amapá and Pará. There are around just one thousand Waiãpi left in Brazil, who live in voluntary isolation. Their culture and ways of life are under threat.

Contact with the outside world, which intensified around 35 years ago, has led to a dramatic drop in the number of Waiãpi due to diseases brought in from the outside. Mestizo health workers are not always accepted by the Waiãpi, even when they are from the local area: mistrust and fear come up against the racism of the non-indigenous population.

Since 2011, Project GREEN has helped the partner organisation Instituto de Pesquisa e Formação Indígena (IEPÉ), the indigenous peoples of Amazonia, and above all the Waiãpi to reinforce their autonomy.

Attempts are being made to help the Waiãpi gain greater independence from the state authorities in basic health matters through the development of special health courses. The courses also help reinforce self-organisation, and allow them to uphold their right to access to health care.