



# ANNUAL REPORT







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### FOUNDERS' LETTER

We see a future where healthy tropical forests and thriving local communities exist in harmonious relationship with each other, contributing to the well-being of the planet.

This is ACT's vision, the horizon we work towards in alliance with like-minded peoples and organizations around the world. How far ahead this lies depends on vastly more than our efforts as political, environmental, and economic challenges subside, grow, and emerge.

Yet no matter the shape of the landscape, ACT is unyielding in the fundamental belief that we can and will reach this horizon. This conviction has long given us the strength to endure lean times and the trust that windows of opportunity will open.

As you will read in this report, we are proud to have shared in historic conservation achievements in Colombia this past year, enabled in part by a head of state exceptionally supportive of the causes of conservation and indigenous peoples. However, a new Colombian administration will assume power in 2018, casting doubt on the permanence of the policies and decisions that underpinned such progress. Pair this with a difficult political environment in the United States for investment in ecosystem protections and social programs, and some might advise ACT to accept meager achievements in the near term.

Additionally, the menace of climate change is increasing, creating challenges in the field that were unfathomable when our work began. Cycles of flood and drought have besieged many areas of the Amazon, impacting our partner communities' ability to sustain themselves. In one of the apocalyptic disasters of 2017, the Colombian city of Mocoa was inundated by mudslides, drowning hundreds of people and leaving hundreds more homeless. This tragic event and its aftermath put huge stresses on our partners in the surrounding areas.

We are also facing an ever-expanding globalized economy, increasing risks to the forest with it. Our partner communities adapt wherever possible, but threats to the integrity of forests, such as unsustainable logging, infrastructure projects, and gold mining are near-constant and may never entirely recede.

But ACT does not retrench – we are gearing up.

Our 2020 goals assertively respond to these challenges. Among our primary goals is to expand our impact, direct and indirect. Cognizant of the need to work with whole ecosystems, we seek to grow into other regions and countries that share borders with the traditional lands of our partner communities, as in the case of a recent invitation from the leadership of French Guiana's Parc Amazonien de Guyane to apply lessons learned by ACT in neighboring Suriname. We also plan to develop instructional models from our successful programs, which we will make available to indigenous rights movements and the conservation community at large, having started with a guide to indigenous land titling.

Additionally, we are on track to fully institutionalize the tools and techniques of adaptive management over the next several years. We will test the impact of our initiatives, test assumptions to understand why some succeed or others fail and adapt initiatives to improve their effectiveness.

Of course, much of our approach is evergreen. For twenty-one years and counting, we have been developing strong and lasting bonds with our partner communities, learning from each other while jointly designing more realistic programs to increase the chances of sustainability. We also encourage the introduction of alliances outside of their communities, especially relevant in remote regions of Amazonia. Further, we help our partners advocate for the enactment of culturally responsive legislation, policies, and regulations, especially community land rights. As more communities receive those rights and learn effective governance and management of their territories, more lands and ecosystems can be protected.

Having launched this letter with our vision, we will conclude with our mission: the Amazon Conservation Team partners with indigenous and other local communities to protect tropical forests and strengthen traditional culture. Now, until that vision is our reality.

Mark Plotkin President

Mark J Plocking

Liliana Madrigal Sr. Director of Program Operations





# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Through our three-pronged strategic approach to conservation focusing on land, livelihoods, and governance, ACT is working with our partners to attain these aspirations while strengthening their traditions.

The following pages highlight 2017 ACT initiatives that correspond to these overarching strategies.



Promote Sustainable **Land** and Resource Management

Ensures the protection, stewardship and recovery of prioritized landscapes, including the biodiversity and natural resources they encompass.



Strengthen Communities' Internal **Governance** and Traditions

Increases the self-determination of our partner communities.



Promote Communities' Secure and Sustainable Livelihoods

Improves the local economy and livelihood conditions within our partner communities through environmentally and socially sustainable means.











reserve collect and sow native seeds by tradition, and with ACT's support, this activity has become a means to meet their families' basic necessities without affecting the forest. With ACT's guidance and

(Caryodendron orinocense) in nurseries and collect

local and international level.

#### **COLOMBIA**

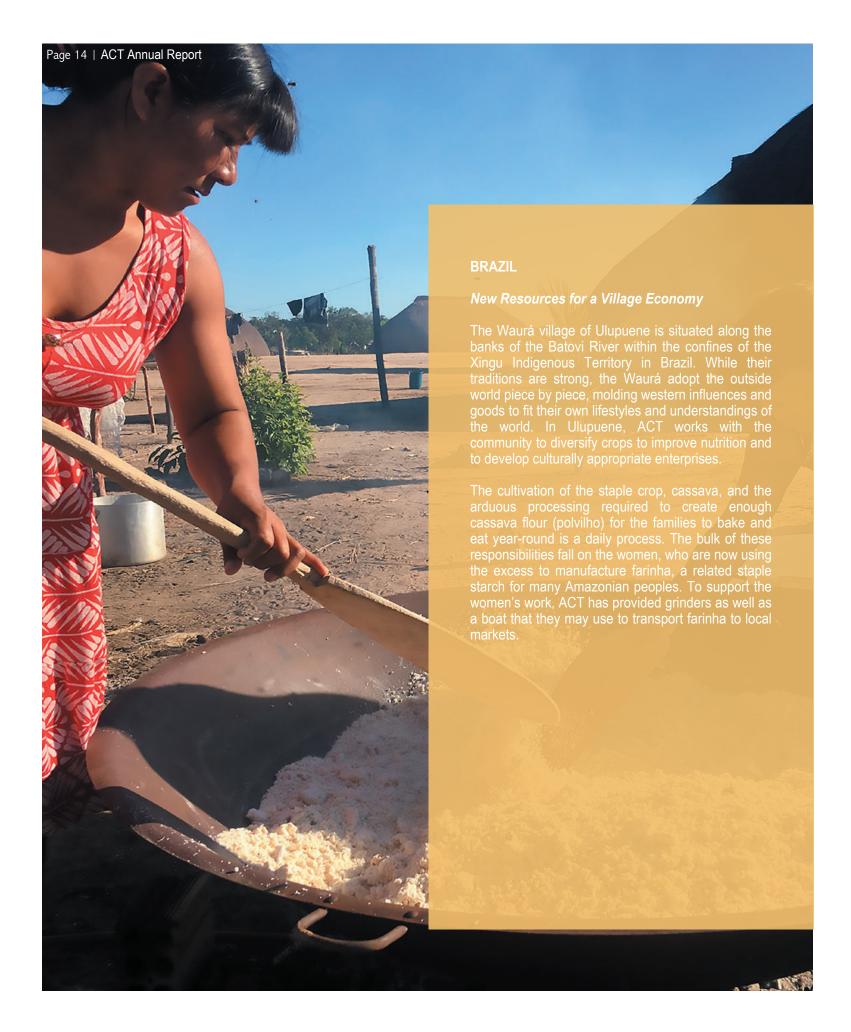
### Improving Water Quality and Health for Indigenous Students

In 2017, within the property of the Yachaikury indigenous school of Yurayaco, Caquetá, Colombia, ACT markedly improved the aqueduct and water system and thereby the quality of life of some 140 students—especially boarders—and their educators. From a local stream, a filtration tank propagates water to pipelines that lead to access points across the educational center property.

With the aqueduct's renovation, the frequency of gastrointestinal and skin diseases has decreased, because now the members of the educational community consume water of excellent quality directly and through cooked food. Moreover, the Yachaikury members and visitors can bathe and wash their clothes every day without having to travel to the river, where younger children were at risk. The gardens and orchards of the school can also be continuously irrigated. Currently, a bathing and bathroom facility is being constructed to provide the boarding students with improved hygiene.

The health of the Yachaikury community is particularly important as it serves as a model and flagship institution for indigenous education in the region—twelve indigenous primary schools in the department of Caquetá are part of the Yachaikury Ethnoeducation Network. Additionally, through ACT's and Yachaikury's partnership with PROCAT and the University of the Andes, these students play a major role in helping to monitor local biodiversity and ecosystem health.







### **ACT ADVANCES** IN 2017

# 1.4 Million Acres

In Colombia, 1.4 million acres (568,000 hectares) of indigenous territory were titled, integrating the country's largest national park into a 36-million-acre (14.5-million-hectare) conservation corridor—the largest in the northwest Amazon.

## 314 Acres

In northern Colombia, two new indigenous reserves established and one sacred site property purchased, recovering 314 acres (127 hectares) of ancestral indigenous territory.

# 80 iri

In the Waurá village of Ulupuene in Brazil, ACT built a school and community center serving 80 men, women, and children and sponsored the college-level degrees of two teachers from the community.

ACT strengthened forest monitoring capacity in Ulupuene by training 15 Waurá in the use of forest monitoring applications on mobile devices that allow community members to record important cultural information and to receive near-real-time deforestation alerts.

### 50,000 Acres

In northern Colombia, An ACT-trained Kogi mapping team mapped 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of mountain watersheds that feed into the coastal sacred site of Jaba Tañiwashkaka.

# **Participants**

In southern Suriname, ACT provided ranger training to 32 participants from six tribal communities strengthening local capacity to monitor and sustainably manage their land.

Local people In seven tribal communities of southern Suriname, roughly 100 local people, predominantly women, participated in piloting value chains for four sustainable product lines: ground hot pepper, jewelry and crafts, wild honey, and herbal teas.

Households

In the rainforest village of Tepu, Suriname, ACT installed a solar electric grid that will provide electricity to more than 80 households. ACT also secured the training of three indigenous women who now are prepared to install and maintain the solar panels.

# FEATURE STORIES

### **Celebrating Newly Recognized Territories**

In September 2017, during a ceremony at the National Geographic Society, ACT staff and leaders from the Murui-Muina, Inga, Kamentsa, Kogi and Arhuaco indigenous communities presented Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos with a map commemorating the expansion and establishment of reserves in the Amazon, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Putumayo, and Caquetá and honoring him for his role in these achievements, each facilitated by ACT. In each case, local indigenous organizations, international cooperation networks and the government joined forces to simultaneously support the territorial rights of indigenous communities and build conservation mosaics or corridors.

In August 2017, with ACT's legal and technical assistance in support of the efforts of the majority Murui-Muina people, the Colombian government carried out the expansion of the Puerto

Sábalo – Los Monos and Monochoa indigenous reserves, placing 1.4 million more acres of Amazonian rainforest under official protection and effectively establishing a conservation corridor of nearly 25 million acres that includes Chiribiquete National Park.

Chiribiquete itself was earlier expanded by the Santos administration to an area of one million hectares with the support of ACT, the Andes Amazon Fund and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Per President Santos: "Colombia is a world treasure of biodiversity. Our duty to current and future generations is to protect it and ensure the sustainable development of our country." We celebrate his words and congratulate all Colombians on this bold and important progress.



## **Empowering Autonomous Land Management**

In South America, indigenous communities have traditionally depended on their territories to fulfill their physical, cultural and spiritual needs. Over many hundreds of years, these communities typically have developed best practices for managing their forests. Today, as pressures mount, including the recognition of the great value of their forests to climate change mitigation, more complex administrative conditions are being imposed on their ability to exercise their territorial rights. ACT partners with communities over the long term to ensure that their capacities are sufficient to meet that challenge and that their governance of ancestral lands is fully restored.

In 2017, in Colombia, the work ACT commenced years ago with the Murui-Muinane (Uitoto) people of the lower Caquetá River culminated in long-awaited reserve expansions of 1.4 million acres connecting the nation's largest national park and indigenous reserve. Gaining title to the additional land required an environmental management plan as well as a demonstration of capacities to autonomously oversee government resources allocated to their communities.

In partnership with the Universidad de los Andes, the Colombian Ministry of Planning and the NGO Sinergias, we embarked on an innovative and ambitious program to bring college-level governance, land management and financial management training to members of the reserves. We called it *Empowering the Autonomous Management of Indigenous Territories in Caquetá, Colombia.* 

The participants in the training now see themselves as part of a larger movement: they want to continue the program, to increase their skills, and to share it with other indigenous communities. They want to work with ACT to establish *La Escuela del Rio—the School of the River*—to empower local communities across the Amazon to take control of their destinies, to partner with their governments, and to protect and manage their forests and lands for the wellbeing of us all.



# **Protecting Isolated Indigenous Groups in Colombia**

Since 2011, in Colombia, ACT has been at the forefront of research into and efforts to protect indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation. In 2017, ACT coordinated meetings between the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) and the Colombian Ministry of the Interior to agree on a final version of an anticipated official decree for the protection of these groups.

Further, through collaboration between indigenous authorities, ACT, the Colombian National Parks Service and the Ministry of the Interior, illegal mining camps and barges were

identified and removed from the territory of indigenous peoples in isolation in the area of the Río Puré National Park. Additionally, ACT contributed to the design and implementation of a monitoring plan for the protection of isolated peoples in the Park, the first of its kind in the country.

Concurrently, ACT carried out research regarding the presence of isolated peoples in the vicinity of the Chiribiquete National Park. The product of this research was included in official technical studies supporting an expected expansion of the Park.



## **An Abundant Landscape of Conservation Partnerships**

As demands on available resources for conservation rapidly increase, ACT deeply appreciates both the power and necessity of supporting partnerships beyond our essential alliances with traditional communities.

Our work would not be possible without investments from highly engaged funders. Our work to facilitate the expansions of the Puerto Sábalo - Los Monos and Monochoa reserves was indispensably sponsored by the Andes Amazon Fund and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation; the latter has also strongly supported our large-scale sustainable agriculture work in adjacent regions. In partnership with the Omidyar Network, ACT is facilitating efforts to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capabilities and the institutional ability of middle Caquetá River basin indigenous communities to locally administer and manage programs and develop consensus-based governance systems.

In complementary fashion, the Skoll Foundation has been our ally in supporting indigenous communities in the middle Caquetá River basin in their aspiration to self-govern; this effort also engaged the University of the Andes and the Colombian National Planning Department. Meanwhile, the Mott Foundation is our partner in an effort to establish sustainable renewable energy systems in 56 indigenous communities of the middle and lower Caquetá River basins.

At the governmental level, ACT has enjoyed the collaboration of the Colombian National Lands Agency and Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development in our work to facilitate indigenous reserve establishments and expansions in multiple regions of the country, protecting vulnerable territories and establishing their connectivity with nationally protected areas.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Karla Lara-Otero
Director of Operations and Finance

As we developed our Strategic Plan / 2020 Vision, we stressed the importance of magnifying our influence. We seek to both increase our impact on the ground and fortify our institutional infrastructure in order to respond to challenges with agility. Our 2017 financial results reflect investments in both areas.

Into the future, the programmatic and institutional goals enumerated in the Plan will guide our primary investments to ensure the stability of our operations and the organization's long-term sustainability.

Observations regarding the revenue and expense trends exhibited in this section follow:

**REVENUE:** 2017 closed with an overall revenue decrease of US\$1.2 million over prior year. In 2016, ACT received a large, one-time restricted contribution for land purchases and management in Colombia, accounting for a large portion of this difference (see Individuals line item).

**EXPENSES:** Overall expenses increased 40% over 2016 levels. A large portion of this increase was a result of spending on the basis of multiyear contributions and foundation grants received in 2016, with large tranches to be expended in future years.

Program service expenses increased by 42%, due primarily to investments in our country programs and the field. The General and Administrative expense category increased by 38% due to investments in our external and internal communications efforts as we seek to improve ACT's visibility and institutionalize our knowledge management practices; we also continue to invest in the implementation of a robust monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting system so that we may more accurately measure the effectiveness of our actions on the ground.

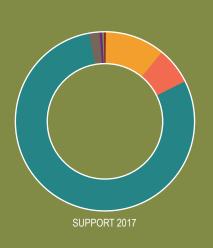
Going forward, ACT will remain a field-based organization. We are determined to grow gradually and carefully, while remaining nimble. Investments to be made in the organization over the next years will strengthen our expertise, our reach, and ultimately our impact. We are committed to leveraging our financial resources to maximize conservation return.

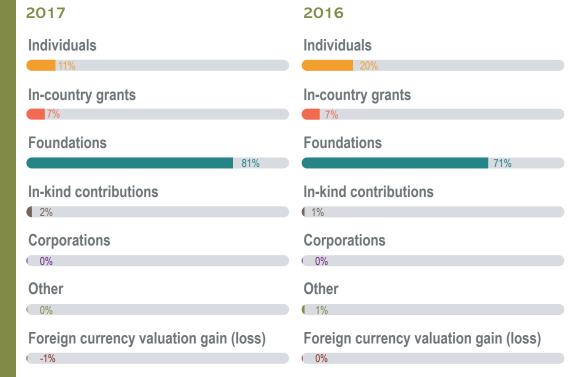
ACT's staff and partner communities are deeply grateful for the support of so many generous donors who believe in our team and the importance of our work.

Kula Jua

# FINANCES AT A GLANCE

SUPPORT	FY 2017		FY 2016	
	In US\$	Percentage	In US\$	Percentage
Individuals	885,690	11%	1,900,952	20%
In-country grants	537,582	7%	640,069	7%
Foundations	6,442,000	81%	6,603,274	71%
In-kind contributions	174,020	2%	48,977	1%
Corporations	30,232	0%	23,000	0%
Other	24,349	0%	55,688	1%
Foreign currency valuation gain (loss)	-36,451	-1%	30,197	0%
Total Revenue	8,057,422	100%	9,302,157	100%





### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Program services

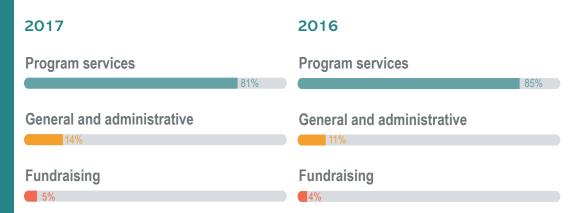
General and administrative

Fundraising

**Total Expenses** 







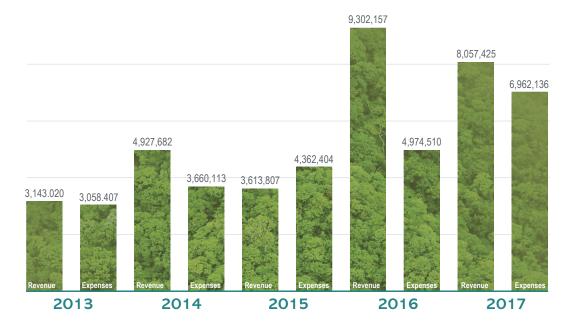
### REVENUE AND EXPENSE TRENDS

### Revenue (\*)

### **Expenses**

[\*] Significant annual fluctuations in revenue are attributable to receipt of multiyear grants, the full value of which is recorded as revenue in the year awarded.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3,143,020	4,927,682	3,613,807	9,302,157	8,057,425
3,058,407	3,660,113	4,362,404	4,974,510	6,962,136



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(For the Year Ended December 31)

	2017 In US\$	2016 In US\$
Cash and cash equivalents	6,485,479	5,763,874
Grants and pledges receivable	1,473,491	1,101,262
Field operating advances	42,669	-
Prepaid expenses	21,106	31,437
Property and equipment, net	249,685	77,890
Security deposit and others	20,057	19,623
Total Assets	8,292,487	6,994,086

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	187,871	141,253
Deferred revenue	219,272	60,159
Due to related party	-	1,697
Deferred rent	4,466	3,063
Other liabilities	-	450
Total Liabilities	411,609	206,622
Unrestricted	4,822,980	4,118,642
Temporarily restricted	3,057,898	2,668,822
Total Net Assets	7,880,878	6,787,464

8,292,487

6,994,086

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** 

<sup>•</sup> Funds are presented according to the accrual method of accounting.

<sup>•</sup> ACT's audited financial statements, which reflect an unqualified opinion, can be obtained online at amazonteam.org or by calling (703) 522-4684.

### COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

(For the Year Ended December 31)

	2017 In US\$	2016 In US\$
Contributions	4,621,642	5,243,452
Grants	3,273,862	3,923,843
In-kind contributions	174,020	48,977
Investment income	13,413	7,368
Other	10,936	48,320
Foreign currency valuation gain (loss)	-36,451	30,197
Total Revenue and Support	8,057,422	9,302,157
Program Services:		
Biodiversity	3,642,077	2,259,408
Health	648,196	505,408
Culture	1,378,685	1,234,186
Program Services	5,668,958	3,999,002
Supporting Services:		
General and administrative	963,437	698,069
Fundraising	329,741	277,439
Supporting Services	1,293,178	975,508
Total Expenses	6,962,136	4.974,510
Change in Net Assets before Translation Adjustment	1,095,286	4,327,647
Translation Adjustment	-1,872	-
Change in Net Assets	1,093,414	4,327,647
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	6,787,464	2,459,817
Net Assets, End of Year	7,880,878	6,787,464

### BOARD / LEADERSHIP

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Computational Biologist Secretary

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**Juan Mayr Maldonado** 

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Emeritus

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**Janell Cannon** 

Author and illustrator

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Project Healthy Children

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Jane Goodall Institute

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Aspen Institute

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Musician and philanthropist

May Pang

Author and producer

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Purdue University

Miranda Smith

Miranda Productions

**Heather Thomas-Brittenham** 

Actress and author

**Cheryl Tiegs** 

Environmentalist, Designer, and Model

### ACT TEAM

#### **Brazil**

João Nunes

ACT-SynBioBrasil Coordinator

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María C. Prada

Administrative & Financial Sub-director

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Field Technician, Fragua-Churumbelos Program

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Yanelis Julio

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Erna Aviankoi

Communications Coordinator

**Peggy Baisie** 

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Niradj Hanoeman

Field Station Coordinator, Matawai

Johan Hardjopawiro

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Land and Resources Specialist

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Keoma Jungerman

Finance & HR Manager

Carlo Koorndijk

Management Assistant and Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator

Rayan Madhar

Field Station Coordinator, Apetina

**Donicia Molly** 

Administrative Coordinator

Poernima Monilall

Finance & Administrative Assistant

Feliz Sahebdin

Monitoring Assistant

Maureen Silos

Program Manager

Lucio Wajacabo

Field Station Coordinator, Curuni and Kwamalasamutu **United States** 

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Co-Founder & President

Liliana Madrigal

Co-Founder & Senior Director of Program Operations

Karla Lara

Director of Operations & Finance

Crisbellt Alvarado

Finance & Human Resources Manager

**Angie Bolzan** 

Grants and Development Coordinator

Liliana Chacon-Menay

Head of Communications

Jessica Hardy

Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Reporting Coordinator

**Brian Hettler** 

GIS & New Technologies Manager

Rudo Kemper

GIS & Digital Storytelling Manager

**Francelys Peche** 

Office Coordinator

**David Stone** 

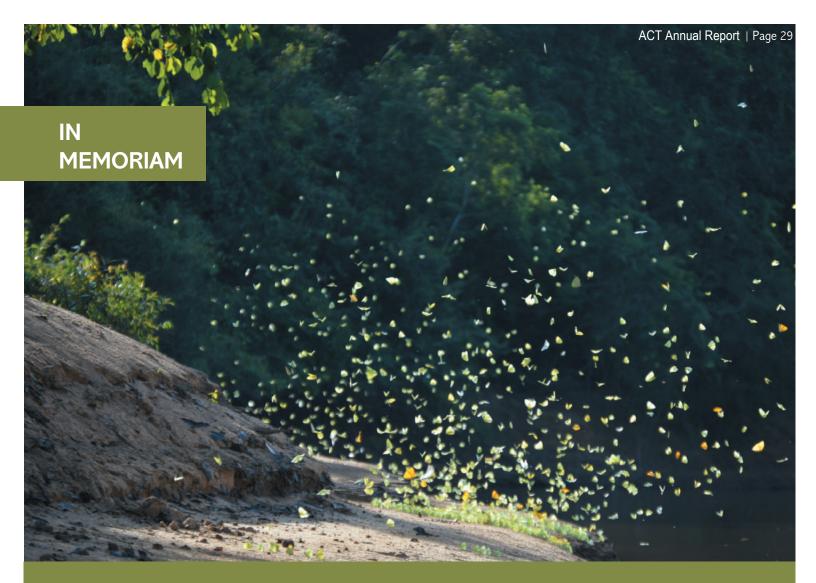
Information and Content Management Specialist

Sarah Voelkl

Consultant, Corporate Partnerships

**Antonio Peluso** 

Consultant, Brazil & Communications Support



In no instance is the principle of partnership that is enshrined in our mission more profoundly felt than when we learn of the passing of indigenous colleagues. In all such cases, we have lost more than an ally: we have lost a member of our extended family. Some have been taken from us while protecting their communities' basic right to a healthy and safe environment; their struggle is ACT's struggle, and when one activist is slain, it hits very close to home, reminding us of the ever-present risks of carrying out our mission. We honor and remember these leaders' great service to their people and territories, as well as their compassionate humanity. They are sorely missed.

#### **Mario Jacanamijoy**

was a dynamic leader of the Tandachiridu Inganokuna association of Colombia's Inga people. In his final days, he had become the departmental health advisor of the Indigenous Peoples' Consensus-Building Council of Caquetá. Armed groups had targeted him because of his participation in social and political processes in his territory. We resonate with a tribute from the pan-Amazon indigenous organization OPIAC: "Father of a family, brother, son and friend, he will be remembered in our hearts always, and his teachings and steps will be an example to follow for the new generations."





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