

TREESISTANCE

You don't have to be in the forest to join the fight

An IR Publication

In collaboration with



SYNERGY

ILLUME INVESTIGATIONS



Nordeq

“Lawyers were the defenders of the oppressed in the beginning. The white knight on the great charger fighting for the rights of an individual. Not the whole of humanity but to ensure justice is served for that person. Justice must not only seem to be done. It must be done. This has been lost over time, but I feel a moral and ethical obligation to once again try to use my office, my learning and my economic support to reach forward to defend justice and ensure it is done on a specific case and so we have Sinchi and our project. Treesistance is the public face that provides the support and structure to encompass the goals of husbanding the resources given by the Creator and allowing all of the people of the earth, no matter who they are, to stand strong and save themselves, their future and all of us yet achieving this on a direct actual focussed, hands on basis.”

Jayson Schwarz, Schwarz Law, Canada

”



IR Globals founding philosophy is based on making a positive difference in the business world and to instigate meaningful social impact. Over the last decade, IR has both invested heavily and collaborated with members through multiple initiatives. To address human rights violations, illegal extractivism and providing the tools / resources to Indigenous peoples on the frontlines of protecting the environment.

We are proud to lead this program in support of Treesistance platform and grateful to the 6 member firms who joined us in this initiative. This is great example of the network making meaningful impact and leaving a legacy that goes beyond business.

TREESISTANCE



Why activism is important to help Indigenous peoples and the environment.

In June 2023, the Sinchi Foundation launched a major new initiative with an emphasis on Indigenous people's rights, dovetailing with justice, technology, the environment, and sustainability.

Many hours have been spent in the background by the team to bring together global influencers and professionals in environmental, social and governance affairs to attract the attention of businesses, NGOs and governments worldwide.

The ambitious campaign – called Treesistance – is nothing less than a mission to transform how the world looks at forest crime prevention and handles environmental preservation.

TREESISTANCE

Access to justice model

Underpinning Treesistance is a forest guardians' model. The objective is to provide the tools and resources to the local Indigenous communities, so they can effectively defend the forest and carry out their role as the custodians for one of the planet's most important ecosystems.

The forest guardians model starts with a demarcation plan. This involves drawing clear lines of where the Indigenous territories are and making the necessary land claims.

Once these demarcations have been created groups of forest guardians will carry out patrols and surveillance within the communities. This identifies and halts illegal activity and deforestation caused by loggers, soy farmers, mining companies and cattle ranchers that are illegally invading their territories. Importantly, evidence gathered on larger scale operations needs to reach public prosecutors and the Federal Police to ensure appropriate action is taken.

The members of the communities taking part comprise everyone from the chiefs and teachers to doctors – these guardians will take turns patrolling the area using GPS cameras.

At the moment there are forest guardians active in three territories that represents 710 km² in the Amazon. The idea is to scale this up and six new forest guardian teams will be created in 2023, which will bring more than 1500 km² under protection.

It's a model that is expandable, proven (featured in the last UN module on Forest & Fauna) and can be replicated globally. The aim is to start with Brazil and build out in the Amazon before expanding to other tropical forests in Africa and Asia. It's a simple but disruptive idea that will help to change the existing systems by giving power back to the communities on the ground.

To help make all this happen the Sinchi Foundation recently appointed Dr Tim Boekhout van Solinge as Head of Forest Crime Prevention. Tim's role will be to lead 'on the ground' actions and activities relating to coordinating access to justice strategies with Indigenous leaders and law enforcement. His background is criminology and he's a UN author specialising in forest and wildlife crime, organised crime and community-based forest crime prevention.

Each new group of Forest Guardians in 2023 will be sponsored by an IR member firm.

In the following pages, you will hear from these firms about why they got involved, what this project means to them and why protecting primary rainforest should be important to everyone.



Hear from our Forest Guardian Sponsors



Koffels Solicitors & Barristers (Carla Koffel)

Koffels is a founding supporter of the Forest Guardians Initiative. Prior to this we have supported the Sinchi Foundation for many years. Sinchi undoubtedly makes a significant impact upon the Indigenous communities they work with – to support them, defend their rights and their land. They are also an excellent communicator, helping companies and people not otherwise involved to understand the people and the issues they face, creating opportunities for meaningful corporate engagement through their projects. The sensitivity and effectiveness of their approach to sharing Indigenous peoples' perspectives is engaging for a broad audience, which is rarely seen.

The project is directly supporting Indigenous communities to protect the Amazon forest, which could not be more urgent. In addition, the project had been designed and is carried out by leaders in the Indigenous communities that are participating in the project. This exemplifies the respect and integrity with which the Sinchi Foundation approaches its work, listening to the people it is seeking to support.

It is an exciting time for Sinchi. It is such a creative organisation and we look forward to seeing how the work continues to evolve and expand.

Australia

<https://koffels.com.au/>



Moore Barlow (Andre Botha)

The firm has been a longstanding member of IR Global, but this is our first opportunity to get involved with the Sinchi Foundation. We are, very proudly, one of the inaugural sponsors of the Forest Guardians Initiative.

When we first got to meet Chief Dadá (in the film 'The Letter') who is leading the surveillance teams, this drove it home. Moore Barlow's purpose is to make a difference and our first value is "Human First" – the Foundation and this project, gives a zoomed out, global view of this and it's a great opportunity for us to get involved.

The Amazon is the most biodiverse ecosystem on land. The obvious reason to be involved for me was that we could make a difference on a global front. We would be supporting a local community in the Amazon to equip them to help maintain and improve on this. One of the key drivers for me was knowing that 100% of donations made to Sinchi and the Forest Guardians Initiative will reach the Indigenous peoples on the ground – and that as administration and operational costs of the organisation are covered by IR Global, we have a clear sight of what our contribution/support is achieving.

UK

<https://www.moorebarlow.com/>



ILLUME INVESTIGATIONS

Illume Investigations (Kieran Leahy)

I strongly believe we all need to play our part, however small, in helping to resolve the crises that threaten nature, and with it, life on earth. Indigenous peoples are on the frontline of this fight. The foundation's work in supporting the Forest Guardians and the Indigenous peoples of the Tapajós region offered my firm and I the chance to begin to play our own small part.

I had the pleasure of attending Tom's speech on the foundation at last year's IR Global annual conference. It was a really inspiring talk and after that I didn't hesitate to reach out to get involved. It was my first IR Global conference and I had no idea of the foundation before I joined IR Global, so it was all very serendipitous. Indigenous people's voices, identities and rights have been violated and repressed for so long. It's not a coincidence that this has occurred in parallel with the destruction of so much of the natural world. Initiatives such as Sinchi that help to lift up Indigenous voices and change dominant narratives are vital.

There's a Leonard Cohen song I love that has the line "there's a crack in everything / that's how the light gets in". The work the foundation is doing – specifically around bringing more awareness to Indigenous ways of being and values vis-à-vis the environment – makes me think of the same line.

US New York

<https://illumainvestigations.com/>





SYNERGY BUSINESS LAWYERS

(Shai Kuttner)

As a long-time IR Global member I found the support of Sinchi an important part of what IR Global stands for. We are not just about providing services to our clients, we also care about the global environment we all live in.

The Amazon forests are the lungs of our planet. We must take care of those forests as if they are in our backyard. We all have a stake in it. The project is a great way for us to support its preservation from wherever we are in the world.

We share the view that any commercial organisation must have a social identity and must actively care for the planet. We are at the very last moment in attempting to save it from destruction for future generations. Sinchi is all about such values and we are happy to take part in its activities.

As IR Global members we appreciate these social justice activities and are proud to support Sinchi. I thank Tom for allowing us all to take an active role in supporting this agenda and I look forward to getting more involved by helping to spread the word within IR Global network, to clients and peers. We must mobilise as many business community members to be active in such important activities. We cannot afford to be passive.

Netherlands

<https://sbl-lawyers.com/>



Schwarz Law

(Jayson Schwarz)

First of all, holistically, by helping to reduce the destruction of the rain forests I help try to save the future for my children and grandchildren. What really drew me, however, was the fact that this is a direct application of funds for a specific purpose in a hands-on fashion, which allows the local Indigenous population to assist in stopping illegal deforestation. This was not touchy feely posturing; this was the application of dollars in a particular focussed fashion, with a single purpose: training a cadre of individuals intent on saving their own homes and futures.

As a lawyer I am constrained by the walls of my office, but outside the office I hunt, fish and teach my children and grandchildren to shepherd nature and protect her from wanton destruction and greed. Whether in northern Ontario or the rainforests of South America, it is our responsibility to guard the very earth that keeps us alive. There is only so much abuse that can occur before the results are cataclysmic. In providing what I see as a small contribution to the future, I can see tangible, actual victories howsoever small, such that the cumulative effect may someday be the difference between survival and destruction.

Canada

<https://schwarzlaw.ca/>



Nordeq Management

(Neil Smith)

For the past five years, Nordeq has been supporting IR Global's 'one billable hour' initiative. When Tom explained the Forest Guardians model, I saw its potential impact immediately and knew this was something we would be keen to support.

I have always been interested in Indigenous communities and concerned that their culture is not supported sufficiently. It was inspiring to see the Sinchi team storming ahead and making a practical difference in the lives of Indigenous communities.

Corporate Social Responsibility is hugely important, but it shouldn't simply be a box-ticking exercise. Supporting Sinchi allows us to be involved in CSR projects, which we are truly passionate about, and which make a real difference to communities on the ground. The way this has made a practical difference in the lives of the communities is very appealing. And it's not just important for the communities themselves, but also a key part of a wider ecological project.

Denmark

<https://nordeqmanagement.com/>





This Treesistance access to justice model will be supported by three other strategic pillars:

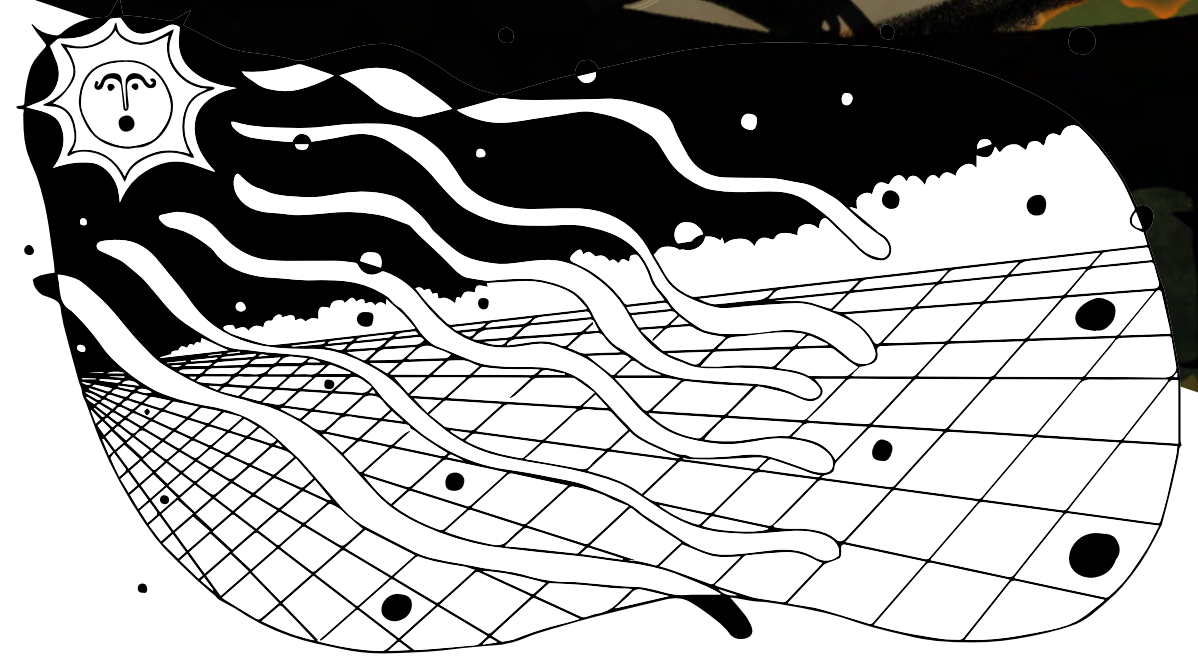
- Digital Equity - Project Amazon Connect.
- Renewable Energy Transition - Project Green Natives.
- Sustainable Economic Development - Project Indigenous Equity.

Digital Equity

Access to justice is linked with digital connectivity and technology. For the campaign to work, the forest guardians need to be able to send information in real time. Therefore, it's critical to have access to good communications networks.

The communities take pictures with GPS coordinates to document illegal activity – these coordinates are needed by the authorities to prove illegality and to take appropriate action to remove such operations.

In addition, the introduction of the internet will also have a positive impact on both the healthcare and education sectors, to further support the most vulnerable, the young and the future of their people.



Renewable Energy Transition

Currently, there is a reliance on fossil fuels powering boats and other transport in the Amazon. Travelling over huge distances is expensive. The deeper one travels into the jungle, the more difficult and expensive everything becomes. This leads to abuse including the sexual exploitation of women in the region and locks people into a cycle of poverty. Often Indigenous peoples living in such remote locations spend most of their spare funds on logistics, travelling from A to B. Solving these financial challenges is essential in combatting inequality.

Sustainable Economic Development

For the team at Sinchi, this is possibly the most important long-term factor. The campaign must show to Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples that the forest is worth more standing than it is felled. With sustainable development, communities will be able to thrive and dedicate more time to preservation and regeneration.

“Everything is interconnected”

According to Tom Wheeler, the four elements must be considered as one: “If one is achieved but not another, there could be good short-term results, but it will ultimately fall down. Everything is interconnected.”

“The Treesistance campaign is an active and optimistic refusal to comply with a system that exploits nature. It’s focused on the protection of the rain forest through prevention, on community building and storytelling. These stories are essential if the word is going to get out beyond the forest and into the wider world.”





Chief Dada

Crucially, the Sinchi team has an influential ally in Chief Dadá Borarí of the Maró Indigenous Territory. The inhabitants of Maró are on the frontlines of the resistance to defend the forest and have become a shining example for other Indigenous communities in the region.

Dadá recently featured in the movie 'The Letter', in which he met the Pope as the voice of the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon. Amazingly, 'The Letter' was viewed some 6 million times in the first few months of release.

The participation of Chief Dadá in the campaign is essential, as he leads the expansion and implementation of the Forest Guardians model throughout the Amazon.

June 2023 The Launch

The launch in June 2023 of the Treesistance (incidentally, World Rainforest Day) was streamed online to a global audience.

The intentions of the organisation are to now build upon their impressive foundations and bring in new partners who share their vision, so their actions and message, can be amplified.

Expect to see in the coming year, film releases, branded apparel, media and creative collaborations.

Partners already include CAKE, a company that is developing the world's first zero emission motorbike, Pubity Group Media Publishing – owner of the world's largest Gen Z and Millennial social media platforms – and Marcio Silva, one of the world's more renowned mixologists who has created a special cocktail to raise funds and visibility for the Treesistance.





TREESISNANCE



TREESISTANCE

If you would like to know more about the project and how you can get involved,
please contact **tom@treesistance.com**

Nature is taking back its power
Join the fight of the decade
Join the Treesistance

www.treesistance.com

TREESISTANCE

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Fabio Quireli
Cosmo Roncón Jr

Photos and Animations
taken from
WaterBear Film - Curupira