

# PaddleforLife and The Machiguenga Indians

The Machiguenga Indians live in Pucani, Peru. They are amongst the most abandoned and poorest people in the world due to a series of events including being exploited by:

Terrorists in the 1980's and early 1990's  
Professional bird trappers in the late 1990's  
Illegal Mahogany loggers in early 2000

Peru Verde is a non profit conservation group trying to protect the Pucani region and trying to help the Machiguenga Indians. One of the most fascinating features of the Pucani region is the largest macaw and parrot clay lick in the world. It is also the very fragile natural habitat of the Emperor Tamarins (the emblem of Paddle for Life). Peru Verde are trying to help the Machiguenga Indians by paying them to protect the clay licks from professional bird trappers. They are also the guardians of this fragile rain forest.

The illegal loggers were a huge potential danger to the clay licks and to the Machiguenga Indians and destroyed over 20,000 acres of prime Mahogany forest with their huge logging and clearing machines. Peru Verde convinced the Machiguenga Indians they should evict the loggers. In the process of evicting the illegal loggers, both the Peru Verde local representative and the village leaders were threatened with death. In the end, the illegal loggers left the area because they did not want a scandal involving press in Lima and the international press, which is what Peru Verde threatened them with.

Peru Verde have helped the local community by paying them to protect the clay licks and to help conserve the area. They have shown the Machiguenga Indians ways in which they can become more independent and standards of health and education are slowly rising. This support is costly and funds are required to continue this conservation and protection work.

Peru Verde would like to build a small schoolroom for the Machiguenga Indian children and supply a teacher. The cost of building a small schoolroom for the children is \$15,000 and to supply a teacher for one year would cost \$7,500. Once the schoolroom and teacher are set up, the Peruvian Ministry of Education have pledged to maintain the ongoing costs of supplying a teacher. So you can see the importance of building the schoolroom for the Machiguenga Indians and the contribution you can make.

In addition, the Machiguenga Indians need medical supplies and training. The idea is to facilitate the Machiguenga Indians so they can invite conservationists and ornithologists to the area to study the wildlife and so any help with a marketing budget for a website and brochure would be appreciated.

Robert visited these Indians a number of years before the loggers, the terrorists, and the commercial animal trappers arrived, having paddled through the Pongo de Manique. The Indian villages have been devastated by the wave of globalisation and are considerably poorer as a result. They are the forgotten guardians of one of the most beautiful corners of our planet.

We must ACT NOW to help them.

Paddle for Life aims at raise a minimum of £20,000 during the next 12 months.

