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ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE FACING CLIMATE CHANGE

Abstract

The solution to climate change is not related to big issues. Natural phenomena have existed since time immemorial, but how our ancestors faced them can be a perfect guide for facing them today. Latin America and Africa have not ceased to provide raw materials for those who today are the largest producers of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Let's consider a case in point: Galapagos, only 8000 km² in size, located in the central Pacific, 1000 km from the American continent, with only 25000 inhabitants, has a major water dilemma. The residents receive contaminated water through pipes, initially brackish but now contaminated with fecal coliforms due to poorly managed septic tanks. In 2016, the local authorities received a simple suggestion for septic tanks: use dry toilets. So far, 32 million has been spent on a drinking water and sewage project, but due to administrative irresponsibility, this critical health problem has not been solved. The dry toilets are easy to implement, economical, and above all, do not generate contamination. These options, like the solutions to climate change problems, are straightforward. The 32 million dollars are nothing compared to the USD 100 billion per year that the international community will deliver for the construction of green infrastructure to adapt to torrential rains and defend against heat waves and drought. That was the solution disclosed. We have clear enough data, but the ambition of the industries knows no limits; even new oil extraction megaprojects were announced during the COP27 itself. The 100 billion could once again be deemed ineffective in the fight against climate change. Although not very widespread, indigenous communities are always the most successful in reforestation or soil conservation projects. Neither states nor NGOs can surpass them. But it is the corporations that own the land, with the permission of the governments that facilitate the agreements. It is the indigenous communities that have the relevant information, but others have the land and exploit the resources regardless of the damage they cause. Respect for nature in indigenous communities begins at a very young age. They are told about the taita Imbabura, the mama Cotacachi, and mountains referred to as people. Even in their Kichwa language, resources are not things; they are living beings that should be respected, cared for, and thanked for keeping us in good health. Maybe they don't know about climate change. But they know about respect.