



DEFENDING LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE



WE'RE BUILDING A WORLD WHERE:

- People and the planet are living in mutual interdependence, with a just distribution of resources to support human life and healthy ecosystems.
- The rights to land, water and other natural resources are guaranteed for all people, especially Indigenous people, the rural poor, women and other marginalized communities.
- Rural and Indigenous communities have achieved food sovereignty—the ability to produce diverse, sustainable crops to earn a living and feed themselves.

THE CHALLENGES

Rural and Indigenous communities everywhere are fighting for their rights to live with safety, justice and dignity—and often their very survival—in a rapidly changing world.

The aggressive drive to develop land, build mega-dams, mine for minerals, harvest rivers and oceans and log the earth's remaining forests is pushing millions of Indigenous people and small farmers out of the homes where they've lived for generations. These communities are not consulted, respected, or at times even acknowledged as their lands and waters are plundered for profits that will not be shared.

Further, our global dependence on carbon-emitting fossil fuels and large-scale industrial agriculture are deepening the climate crisis. But these dangers are not experienced equally by all people. The rights of rural and Indigenous communities to live how they choose—sustainably and independently—are unjustly stripped away.

HOW WE MAKE CHANGE

To counter these grave challenges, AJWS supports communities working to slow climate change, stop harmful development projects and protect the land, water and natural resources that they depend on for survival. We support a constellation of grassroots organizations and determined advocates as they shape powerful social movements to ensure that land, water and natural resources are used equitably and sustainably.

In communities around the world, our grantees' efforts are resulting in critical progress for vulnerable rural people. Communities are fending off illegal land-grabs and winning legal battles reaffirming that their land can't be used for development without their consent. They are preserving access to clean water, stopping the destruction of forests, and implementing innovative solutions to ward off threats posed by climate change.

Above: Members of ACODET stand next to the Chixoy River, which the Guatemalan government has threatened to dam. *Photo by James Rodríguez.*

OUR IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD

The activists, organizations and movements we support are making progress in their communities and around the globe:

- A coalition of 36 villages that dot the shores of Guatemala's Chixoy and Copón Rivers, AJWS grantee **Association of Communities for Development and the Defense of the Land and Natural Resources (ACODET)** has been fending off corporate plans for a hydroelectric dam that would flood the river valley and forcibly evict many of its 19,000 Indigenous residents. With support from AJWS grantee **Puente de Paz (Bridge of Peace)** and funding from AJWS, ACODET has been able to halt the proposed Xalalá dam, allowing these Indigenous communities to focus on returning to toxin-free agriculture and supporting youth to study law to defend their territories as the climate crisis causes flooding and crop loss. ACODET is ensuring that the fight for land and life will continue for as long as it must.
- In Kenya, communities across the country are being threatened by the LAPSSET Corridor project—a mega-development plan that includes a crude oil pipeline that will sever villages, and a massive network of trains and highways that will endanger fragile ecosystems throughout the region. In the remote reaches of northern Kenya, over 2,500 Indigenous Samburu people are among those in the way of this industrial colossus—but they're fighting back. AJWS grantee **Samburu Women Trust (SWT)** is part of a nascent coalition, including many AJWS partners, working on multiple

In 2025, AJWS invested in **164 social change organizations** around the world to slow climate change and protect the land, water and natural resources that rural and Indigenous people depend on for survival.



fronts to prevent and remedy LAPSSET's harm. SWT is helping Samburu communities obtain legal titles to their lands to prevent the destruction of their homes. And at every opportunity, they are emboldening women to take the lead.

- In Thailand, massive development projects have uprooted local communities and disrupted fragile ecosystems across the country. But **Save Andaman Network (SAN)**, an AJWS grantee, refuses to allow these sacrifices. When plans for an environmentally damaging coal-fired power plant were announced in the coastal Krabi region, a coalition of community-based organizations including SAN mobilized thousands of people into a powerful social movement demanding that seaside and island communities and resources be protected. After years of tireless, coordinated advocacy and public protests, SAN prevailed—the Thai government canceled the project in 2022.



Samburu women connect following a community meeting in Memirlosho village, in central Kenya. *Photo by Lameck Ododo.*

American Jewish World Service
45 West 36th Street
New York, NY 10018

📞 212.792.2900
800.889.7146
✉ ajws@ajws.org

🌐 ajws.org
📘 [/americanjewishworldservice](https://www.facebook.com/americanjewishworldservice)
🐦 [/ajws-humanrights.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/ajws-humanrights.bsky.social)
📷 [/americanjewishworldservice](https://www.instagram.com/americanjewishworldservice)



Updated December 2025