

Rainforest Action Network Guidelines

Working with Partners and Frontline Communities

This is an evolving document.

Rainforest Action Network commits to the following practices:

1. CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

RAN will strive to adhere to the following when determining campaign priorities:

-RAN will prioritize working with partners when we are invited by a welcoming body that has been elected or is otherwise broadly supported within the partner community or organization.

-RAN will strive to maintain open and honest communication with diverse entities within communities and organizations and will seek to avoid situations where our involvement could substantially increase internal divisions.

-When RAN is working with partners and frontline communities on a specific campaign we will work to create mutual bottom line demands that are supported by both parties and we will represent a campaign as 'won' or a company as being transformed only if these demands are met.

-RAN will not represent a company as being 'socially / responsible' if we are working with partners and frontlines communities and they are dissatisfied with attempts to resolve their concerns. This does not preclude us from recognizing progress when it is made as long as outstanding concerns are simultaneously acknowledged.

-RAN will advocate for moratorium, protected areas, or other land-use designations, on Indigenous lands only if they have the support of the relevant Indigenous peoples, consistent with the right to FPIC.

-RAN will actively encourage other organizations to endorse and implement principles that are consistent with this document.

-RAN will thoughtfully and openly solicit and receive feedback and constructive criticism from our allies and partners about our actions relating to these principles.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

-RAN will strive to contextualize our work highlighting both ecological and human issues equally.

-RAN will gain the consent of Indigenous people and frontline allies before using their images and where appropriate provide captions with their names, Nations, and communities. Where possible RAN will gain the consent and acknowledge the Indigenous title holders of land whose images we use.

-RAN will obtain the permission of partners when we profile their stories and share copies of those profiles with them. We will also make available the contact information and relevant information sources of those groups if they so desire.

- When entering into a new working relationship with a partner group and in other appropriate circumstances, RAN will obtain ideas, feedback, and approval from these partners when developing any materials that mention them (including flyers, pamphlets, reports, posters, press releases, stickers, profiles, web pages, etc.)

-RAN will keep all sensitive information about partners confidential unless permission is given to share that information. This includes, but is not limited to, strategic information, legal advice, cultural, spiritual, and personal information.

-RAN will facilitate and support partners and their spokespeople to speak for themselves and represent themselves whenever possible and appropriate. (Eg. press releases, press conferences, rallies, meetings, conferences, workshops, panels, updates, web pages).

-Where appropriate RAN will recognize and identify the ongoing impacts of and resistance to colonization and oppression on Indigenous peoples.

-RAN will support the rights of Indigenous and frontline communities to determine their economic priorities and path.

-RAN will make these principles and commitments public on our website and to our supporters and partners.

3. FUNDRAISING/ FINANCES

-RAN will gain the permission of partners before undertaking any fundraising efforts that feature those partners.

-RAN will continue to make Protect An Acre, Global Green Grants Fund, and Climate Action Fund grants available to support the grassroots efforts of our Indigenous partners, as well as to support the efforts of Indigenous communities whose work does not directly intersect with our current campaign work. RAN will seek to grow the pool of funds for these programs.

-RAN will seek opportunities for joint fundraising with partners to support RAN's solidarity work and the work of those peoples.

-RAN will seek to offer travel, lodging, and food expense re-reimbursement, and reasonable honorarium to Indigenous representatives who we invite to participate in our events/projects, unless they are doing so in a paid capacity and have those expenses covered by their employer or other sponsor(s).

4. TIME and COMMITMENT

RAN recognizes that our time, resources and commitment differ greatly from those of Indigenous and Frontline communities. For example an Indigenous community's commitment to critical issues could last for decades and environmental justice may not be seen for generations. RAN recognizes that engaging in meaningful collaboration, building trust, and establishing relationships with Indigenous peoples in many cases requires long term commitment and follow-thru. RAN also recognizes that Indigenous communities and organizations often use different decision making structures and practices whose needs may not always correspond with those of our campaign time lines.

-RAN will strive to build long term working relations with partners to the extent possible within our organization's resource limitations.

-RAN will discuss the time and organizational resource commitment, and anticipated duration of our active involvement with Indigenous communities at the onset of our collaboration.

- RAN will discuss the anticipated duration of our campaigns and campaign strategies including bottom lines and exit strategies with communities.

- RAN will ensure that partners know the extent of RAN commitment and expected outcomes in working with RAN, as well as what organizational resources would be available to support the collaborative effort (such as campaign support, media and web support, fundraising support, etc.).
- RAN will honor and follow through on its commitments to partners.

-RAN will strive to be accommodating of the time our partners need to make decisions relating to our collaboration using their own decision making practices (this includes creation and approval of campaign materials, press release, actions, strategy, etc.)

-RAN recognizes the potential need for, and value of, continued support for partners after the immediate period of campaign collaboration has passed (for example through PAA, media support, contacts, action alerts, small projects, visits, web support, coalition maintenance)

5. SUPPORT FOR RAN STAFF

RAN recognizes that working with partners and frontline communities is often more time and resource intensive than our work with other traditional allies. Relationships with partners and frontline communities often must overcome previous negative experiences with NGOs, cultural differences, a legacy of inequity and ongoing oppression. Building relationships of trust is a core part of meaningful collaboration and requires an understanding that relationships with Indigenous partners are inherently and necessarily personal as well as institutional and cannot be initiated and terminated easily. This relationship building usually requires staff travel to remote areas for face-to-face meetings, and gestures of support and solidarity that go beyond immediate campaign collaboration. RAN engages in the following practices to support and enable staff members who collaborate with partners:

Education and Orientation

-RAN will promote education of all our staff, managers, executives, and board about working with partners and frontline communities and RAN's commitment to these issues and practices.

-RAN will incorporate such education and orientation practices into the Anti-Oppression and Diversity Work-plan

Employment Policies and Practices

RAN will incorporate the needs of staff who are working with partners into all appropriate human resource and employment policies, including explicit policies addressing travel, vacation and compensation time. These policies will include the recognition and accommodation of:

- Staff working in remote locations

-Staff requiring additional time to manage office and administrative duties after returning from the field

-Recovery time owed to staff that should be provided in a flexible manner

Programmatic and Budgetary Support

-RAN will assign team and individual responsibilities and tasks in accordance with the aforementioned policies

-In work planning and budgeting RAN will facilitate building and maintaining working relationships with partners.

-RAN will respect the constraints of co-workers in the field by creating and honoring time lines, decision-making, and work processes that are respectful of such constraints.