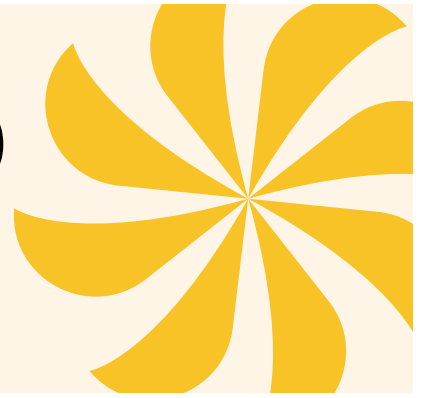


@pathto2030

✦ Jericho High School



The Kayapo People

The Kayapo people are located within South America and are spread out over 26 million acres of the Amazon rainforest.

How does this community value the forest culturally?

This community is known for their especially strong connections with nature and incorporating natural settings into their culture and traditions. The Kayapo people view the forest as a sacred space inhabited by spirits and deities. Believing that their ancestors were taught by insects, the Kayapo paint their bodies to resemble creatures of the forest to internally convene with their Great Spirit in the forest. The forest is interwoven with their beliefs, traditions, hunting and gathering, and interactions with the environment.





How does this community demonstrate the cultural significance of the forests in which they live?

The Kayapo's traditional governance systems often incorporate forest management strategies that prioritize sustainability and biodiversity conservation. They have developed communal decision-making processes that involve careful consideration of the forest's resources and their equal distribution within the community. By incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into their communal practices, they showcase their interconnectedness between human well-being and forest preservation.





The Kayapo view the condition of their environment as synonymous with the peoples' wellbeing. The importance they place on their natural habitat especially comes to play in their passionate response to deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. The Kayapo are committed to protecting their environment, and this is shown through their constant activism and lobbying for native rights as well as advocating for sustainable business practices.

What ecological knowledge does the community hold about the forests that others can learn from (medicines, resources, preservation techniques, etc.)?

The Kayapo have a masterful knowledge of agroforestry, a process in which crop cultivation is utilized in tandem with ongoing forest cover preservation. The Kayapo practice a form of shifting cultivation, also known as swidden agriculture, which involves clearing small sections of the

forest for cultivation and allowing the land to fallow and regenerate over time. This traditional agricultural method allows them to grow crops such as manioc, sweet potatoes, and various fruits, ensuring food security while maintaining the forest's ecological balance.

The Kayapo also plant a combination of food crops alongside trees and shrubs. This practice helps maintain soil fertility, provides shade for the crops, and creates a more diverse and resilient agroecosystem. Trees and shrubs can include fruit trees, leguminous plants, and other species that contribute to soil enrichment and support a more sustainable farming system.

The Kayapo often maintain small gardens that include a variety of medicinal plants and herbs alongside food crops. This type of agroforestry system not only provides them with a diverse range of nutritional and medicinal resources but also serves as a living pharmacy, reflecting their deep understanding of the healing properties of the forest.



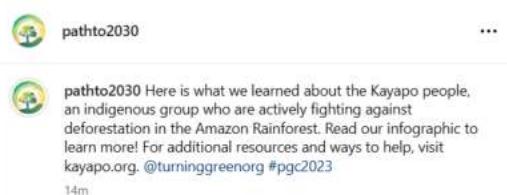


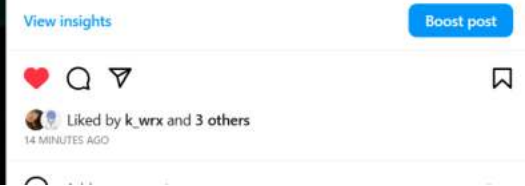
How can we incorporate both the cultural and ecological lessons that we learn from this group into our own way of relating to forests?

Embracing sustainable land management techniques such as agroforestry, organic farming, and reforestation efforts that prioritize biodiversity conservation would be the main objective of those with interest in sustainable farming. We can also learn valuable lessons from the Kayapo's balanced management of resources, such as reducing consumption in order to conserve food and agricultural supplies.

The Kayapo advocate for the protection of Indigenous land rights and advocate for the recognition of Indigenous communities as key stakeholders in forest management and conservation efforts. It is necessary to amplify their voices and empower them to preserve their cultural heritage and the ecosystems they rely on.

Instagram Link





Background



The Kayapo people are indigenous people who inhabit the Brazilian Amazon rainforest in South America. Renowned for their environmental activism in protecting the rainforest, they rely on traditional practices to prevent deforestation and environmental degradation. These people remain crucial advocates for the preservation of the Amazon and indigenous rights in Brazil.



Culture Based in Nature

Spirits and Deities



The Kayapo people have a rich spiritual tradition deeply rooted in their natural environment. Their belief system revolves around spirits and deities associated with the elements and animals of the Amazon rainforest. They paint their bodies to resemble the creatures in the rainforest to meet with their Great Spirit.

Key Spirits

Sun and Moon Spirits = These bodies mark the passage of time and changing of season.

Jaguara and Serpent Spirits = The jaguar is seen as a powerful being and serpent spirits are believed to inhabit rivers as protectors of waterways.

Shamanic Spirits = These heal the sick and provide guidance to the community.



Insect Messengers

The Kayapo people have a rich oral tradition, including stories and myths passed down through generations. Some of their myths and legends involve insect interactions, passing down knowledge or teachings from the ancestors.

In these myths, insects, like ants or bees, are portrayed as messengers between the spirit world and the living Kayapo. They are used symbolically to represent the transfer of **wisdom from the ancestors**. These stories emphasize the importance of the interconnectedness of all living beings.

Art Using Nature

Body Painting from the Kayapo utilize natural pigments derived from plants, clay, and other materials found in the rainforest. These designs often represent cultural symbols and stories, and are an important part of their cultural expression.

Beadwork from the Kayapo create intricate patterns and designs using colorful beads, often representing elements of nature, animals, or cultural motifs.

Feathered Headdresses are adorned with feathers from various birds found in the Amazon rainforest, highlighting the deep connection between the Kayapo people and the natural world.

Ecological Relationships



The Kayapo people utilize their deep, spiritual connection with nature in many ecological aspects as well. Their vast knowledge of nature have enabled them to create agricultural and remedial techniques that represent the best of nature.



Agroforestry

The Kayapo have a masterful knowledge of **agroforestry**, a process in which crop cultivation is utilized in tandem with ongoing **forest cover preservation**. This traditional agricultural method allows them to grow crops such as manioc, sweet potatoes, and various fruits, ensuring food security while maintaining the forest's **ecological balance**.



Medicine

Resources

Instituto Socioambiental (ISA):

a Brazilian nonprofit dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities

Cultural Survival:

an organization committed to protecting the cultural rights of Indigenous peoples

The Kayapo Project:

a project funded by Canada that works at the front lines of areas undergoing deforestation and work exclusively with the Kayapo people



Caption: Here is what we learned about the Kayapo people, an indigenous group who are actively fighting against deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest. Read our infographic to learn more! For additional resources and ways to help, visit kayapo.org. [@turninggreenorg](https://twitter.com/turninggreenorg) [#pgc2023](https://twitter.com/pgc2023)