

Nemonte Nenquimo

Nemonte Nenquimo is an Indigenous environmental campaigner from the Ecuadorian Amazon. Part of the Waorani Tribe, Nemonte has lived her whole life in the rainforest and so is very well aware of the changes that have happened there. She founded the 'Alianza Ceibo' an alliance between different Ecuadorian tribes to help monitor the destruction of the rainforest and fight against it.

The A'ikofan, Siekopai and Siona tribes join Nemonte's tribe in the alliance. They track different animal species through the rainforest and measure their population numbers, they look out for invasive plant species and record the damage



Some of the A'ikofan tribe
Image Credit: Alianza Ceibo

done to the rainforest by oil extraction and deforestation. The Alianza Ceibo is also keen to document the life of indigenous tribes in the rainforest, as many of the traditional ways of life are dying out. There are lots of videos on the Alianza Ceibo's website documenting everything from how to make traditional meals to hunting spears!



Image Credit: If Not Us Then Who

Check out [this amazing footage](#) captured by Alianza Ceibo of the local wildlife!

(Most of this website is written in Spanish, but there is a translation button for the English button at the top of the page if you need it!)

As well as setting up Alianza Ceibo, Nemonte has campaigned on a worldwide platform to ask world leaders to change the way they use the resources of the rainforest. Due to the mining and oil extraction taking place in the Ecuadorian rainforest, the streams and rivers have become severely polluted, leaving no clean water for people and animals to drink. Deforestation has destroyed massive areas of the rainforest so that access to food, shelter and natural medicines is also limited. Thanks to Nemonte's work, 32,000 hectares of land in the Amazon is now protected from illegal mining, as well as a further 180,000 hectares of 'mega-biodiverse' forest that is protected from oil extraction. New clean water systems have been installed for families living in the rainforest too!



Image Credit: Alianza Ceibo





Image Credit: Boudhayan Bardhan, Unsplash

Part of Nemonte’s success is because she tries to talk to as many people as possible about the threats to the planet, so that awareness is spread far and wide. In 2020 she wrote a passionate open letter to world leaders telling them about the damage to the rainforest that she witnesses every day and demanding that they do something about.

“When you say that the oil companies have marvellous new technologies that can sip the oil from beneath our lands like hummingbirds sip nectar from a flower, we know that you are lying because we live downriver from the spills. When you say that the Amazon is not burning, we do not need satellite images to prove you wrong; we are choking on the smoke of the fruit orchards that our ancestors planted centuries ago. When you say that you are urgently looking for climate solutions, yet continue to build a world economy based on extraction and pollution, we know you are lying because we are the closest to the land, and the first to hear her cries.”

Nemonte was named on the 2019 Time 100 list as one of the most influential people in the world that year and has since been awarded a Goldman Environmental prize money which she donated to defending the Amazon.



Oil polluting the rainforest from extraction sites

Image Credit: Alianza Ceibo



Now it is your turn!

Campaigning by speaking to world and local leaders is a very effective way of creating change, as Nemonte Nenquimo has shown. For this Dynamic Earth Online activity, we've set out a template for you to contact your local leader (like an MSP or a teacher) to tell them about an issue that affects your life. Often we can't change things by ourselves, and asking for support from others is a great place to start!

Step 1: Think about an issue that you care about, would like to change or make better.

For example:

- Maybe there is a lot of litter in your local park and you'd like more bins to be installed?
- Perhaps you'd like better play equipment in your local park
- Maybe you'd like your school to serve more vegetarian or Fair Trade options for lunch?
- You may have seen how sealife is being affected by all the plastic in the oceans and want to ask your local leader what is being done about it.
- Like Nemonte, maybe you are concerned about the deforestation of the rainforest and want to know what our country is doing about it?
- You might have seen how some species are becoming endangered due to trophy hunting and want world leaders to commit to protecting them.

Step 2: Decide who you need to talk to about your issue!

For example:

- If your issue is with something happening at school, try writing a letter to your class teacher or headteacher.
- If your issue is about something happening in your local area, the best person to contact is your local Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP). To find out who that is, visit [this website](#) and enter your postcode. This will tell you who your local leader is and how to get in touch!
- If your issue has a global impact, why not try writing to your country's leader? In Scotland, that is Nicola Sturgeon and her contact details are found [here](#).

Step 3: Write!

- Write 2-3 sentences about the issue and what the impact is
- Write 1-2 sentences about why this is important to you and you care about it
- If you have an idea about how to help with the issue, write 2-3 sentences about it and ask how your leader can help with your idea. Or, ask what your leader is already doing to help.
- Be sure to leave an address for your leader to reply to, so you can see what they can do to help!

Good luck with your letter-writing! If you need inspiration, this is a fantastic book with examples of lots of children around the world who have campaigned to solve environmental issues in their local area!

