

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

This case study is based on one of over 60 participatory assessments carried out with communities in 22 countries through the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI).

# Sungai Rumanau protecting forest biodiversity against commercial logging in Sabah, Malaysia

Community requires recognition of and support for its customary practices to continue to sustainably use and manage forests

## Organisations and individuals involved

PACOS Trust

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## Location

Mengkawago is a village in the District of Tongod in Sabah, Malaysia.



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**THE FOREST-DEPENDENT** Sungai Rumanau Indigenous People of Mengkawago are seeking to secure their community's forest for the continuity of their traditional practices and livelihoods, and against the threat of logging and oil palm operations. The village is entirely within the Mengkawago Forest Reserve, and can therefore be logged by the concession holder.

Socio-economic activities include agriculture, hunting and gathering forest products. "Use and Protect" (*Ingaladan*) is one of the main principles underpinning how the Mengkawago community manages its resources. Villagers view their relationship with the forest as close and reciprocal. If the forest is not cared for, they not only lose their source of food, water, materials and medicines, but also their knowledge and culture.

This principle is also embedded in the traditional practice of honey collection. Mengkawago is one of the few communities in Sabah that still maintains a knowledge of wild honey collection from bees that establish their hives in large flowering *mengaris* trees (*Koompassia excelsa*). *Mengaris* have several val-

ues including as dowry to a bride's family, as payment of debts (through the collection of honey), and as boundary markers. Harvesting is prohibited if the honey is deemed insufficient for the bees, and the area where the trees grow is maintained and protected by the community.

The community faces challenges due to the fact that since 1984 its land has been classed as a Forest Reserve. The community has no entitlement or claim to governing power over the forest area, and it may be logged for commercial purposes. Even if the forests are not logged, the Forest Enactment further prohibits human activities within the Reserve without a licence, which limits the community's access to forest resources and their traditional practices and knowledge related to forests and honey collection.

There are also challenges from oil palm plantations near their village, where large-scale land clearing and planting of monocultures significantly affects the habitat and biodiversity of the surrounding forest.

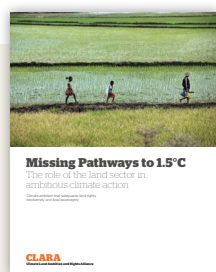
# Testimony

## Intim Saulig, Mengkawago community leader

"It is undeniable that our relationship with the forest is of mutual need. The forest is a very important place for us to earn our livelihoods, hunt for food, and gather medicines. I believe that it is very important for the practices of Indigenous Peoples to be documented, so that our natural resources in the area can still be preserved. I have personally seen how the forest area around our neighboring village has been severely destroyed, and how different life is there now compared to before, after their rich natural resources have been destroyed."

## 'Missing Pathways' to climate action

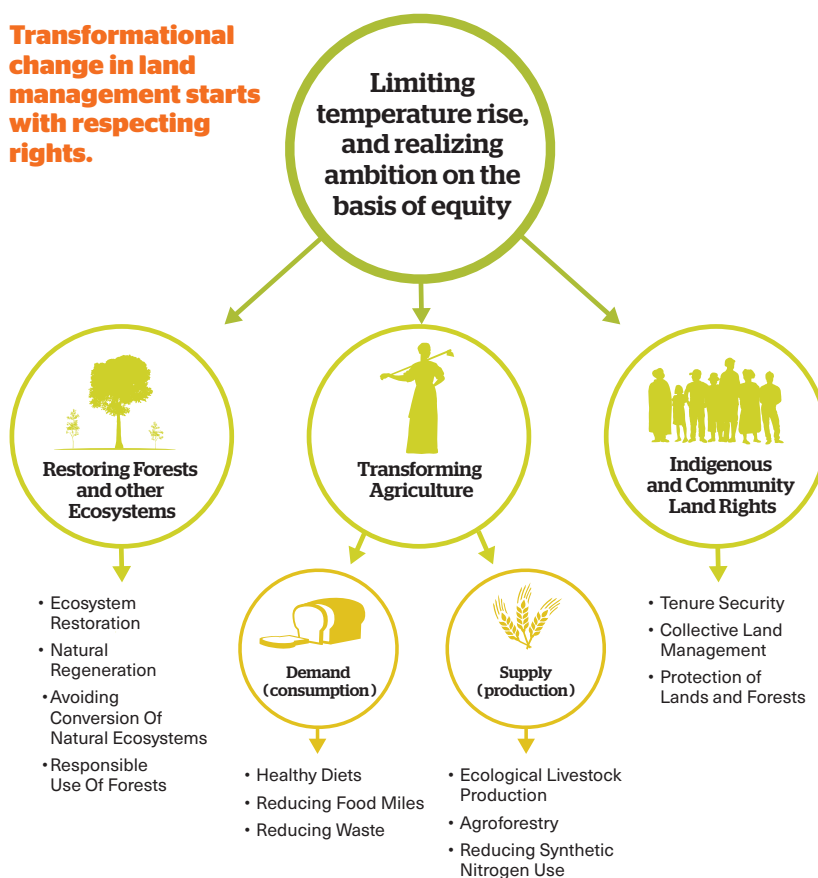
Last year, CLARA published the report 'Missing Pathways', identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



### The climate actions that are needed to support the efforts of this community are...

the legal recognition and protection of their customary practices, protocols and livelihoods, which are critical to facilitating forest stewardship and sustainable use. The community of Mengkawago hopes to show the importance and multiple values of the forest area, and should be embraced as an ally in forest stewardship. Supporting it to communicate how its practices and ways of life are mutually beneficial for the community and forest conservation would help to achieve this. The results of this CCRI assessment are also reflected in the Missing Pathways report.

**Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.**



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