

[FORESTS OF HOPE]

TV DOCUMENTARY (3X42 MIN.)

DEVELOPMENT: CHRISTIAN KÜCHLI AND WERNER SCHWEIZER



ABOUT THE FILM

«Forests of Hope» is a documentary series based on the book by the forest expert and publicist, Christian Küchli. The book *Forests of Hope* was published at the renowned publishing house Earthscan in London. The Swiss publishing house Neue Zürcher Zeitung published the book in German and in the year 2000 it was translated into Korean.

Each documentary is 42-50 minutes long and deals with its own topic, yet each film has a binding thread that combines one film to another, showing the destinies of trees and forests: The world of plants (flora) differs from region to region, however, the people always struggle with the same issues. They are torn between their individual short term goals and the long term needs of their communities, between quick profits and lasting revenues.

Themes and Locations

The book *Forests of Hope* consists of twelve chapters. For our TV documentary series we decided to shoot on three continents; Ecuador (South America), Kenia (Africa) and Indonesia (Asia).

The Yasuni Indians in Ecuador are not depicted in Christian Küchli's book. However, the two authors of this episode, Iris Drisse and David Höner, have been living in Ecuador for some time and have comprehensive experience with the subject. Additionally, they have already found interesting archival material and have contacted a variety of protagonists. Not only is «Ecuador» a great piece to start the series with, but it also has thematical and structural similarities with the *Costa Rica* section in the book. Moreover, they share practical and hopeful solutions (suggestions about medical plants, bio diversity, and alternative forms of tourism). The first film «Ecuador: Visions are the Source of Hope» should be a pilot that paves the way for our subsequent films.

The content of the following films (Kenia, Indonesia) have been updated: in the last three months, Christian Küchli contacted the protagonists that were portrayed in his book and informed them about potential filming. Revisiting the countries, it was interesting to see how they developed in the last six to eight years.

Should the first three documentaries generate further interest from additional TV stations, we would like to continue to develop the following documentaries;

China	Milions of people plant the Great Green Wall
Germany	Forest farmers in the Black Forest. Living from the trees
India	Solving problems for Shivas curls
USA	Tree monster in Los Angeles



«ECUADOR»

Visions are the Source of Hope

The Yasuni Indians, who live in the upper reaches of the Amazon in Ecuador provide an ideal model for the «Forests of Hope» series. The Yasuni Indians fight against large oil corporations whilst developing alternative ways to benefit from the region. The forest was discovered by American missionaries in the 1960's, closely followed by American oil firms and shortly after this one hundred year old, intact world, was seriously endangered by severe river pollution. With the help of tactful forms of resistance, international support in science and with the aid of development organisations, the indigenous people developed concepts that offered an existence which would not destroy the forests. In order to preserve the nature and the forest, they plan to support research groups, preserve bio diversity, develop and produce medical plants for commercial export and promote a subtle form of alternative tourism. It is of absolute necessity that oil corporations pull out without leaving the region in poverty and destruction.

Protagonists

-Don Otorino Conquinche, Kichwa Indian, herbs – medical practitioner on a journey to rearrange his future. In the film he will travel through the country and will meet other protagonists.

-Moi, representative of the Huarani, a rebellious ethnic group from the Amazon basin.

-Jose Miguel Goldara, a Chapuchin missionary of the „Theology of Freedom“ group, who has been living in Rio Napo for over 30 years.

Themes and Visual Realization

-Tropical forest, personalities, and the effects of civilization on nature and culture in the upper reaches of the Amazonia.

-Global issues, the binding thread

-The effects of the global market on the forest's development, cultivation of the secondary forest as a key for water balance, bio diversity, wood supply, medical plants and economic survival of the inhabitants.



KENIA

Women under the acacia tree

In Kitui the climate is predominately dry as it is throughout most of the African continent throughout the year. Therefore, life in Kitui has to be secured on many different levels. The contribution of the women is most impressive and would be unthinkable without their strong bond. 15 years ago, they formed the „Group under the Acacia Tree“ in order to cultivate tree nurseries together. Trees and drinking water are essential in that climate, not only because of the wood, but also because they preserve the fertility of the soil. Wangari Maathai, who in 2004 received the Nobel Peace Prize, had already addressed this issue in the early 1980's. The central topic of the documentary is what became of the reforestation in Kitui.

Protagonists

- Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2004
- Janet Mumo, Esther Mutavi or other women of the „Group under the Acacia tree“
- Kimani Muhia and/or Fred Kabare, an associate of Kengo, a non-governmental organization that deals with ecological and energy issues.

Themes and Visual Realization

- Landscapes with tree-savannas, fields, content, quick-witted and self-confident women. Colorful markets, classrooms, tree planting. The research station of the International Council for Agroforestry in Machakos
- Global issues, the binding thread
- In a region with a long dry season life has to be secured on many levels. Trees and drinking water are the women's main undertaking. The tree as a means to preserve the fertility of the soil. Cultivation of bio-diversity through domestic tree plantation. Agroforestry as «the green revolution for the poor.» Influence of the world market on the women under the acacia tree.
- Current aspects
- The importance of Wangari Maathai's dedication.



INDONESIA

Resin stands for money and a stable environment

In Krui on Sumatra's West coast, one single natural product shapes an entire cultural landscape: resin, extracted to be used for the production of varnish and batik fabrics. The resin trees are grown on the steep hills while the rice fields are situated in the valleys. This structure ensures remarkable stability, economically as well as ecologically. The resin is a steady income and the rivers stay clear even after heavy rain. The way of using this cultural landscape is an example for other rain forest regions, for instance, the huge forests in Sumatra and Borneo, which were destroyed and should get rebuilt.

Protagonists

- Muhammed Sukaemi, peasant
- Naserun Sukaemi, his son

Themes and Visual Realization

- Tropical lowland rain forest. Marvellous, subtly structured, manifold cultural landscape. Contrasts: Clear cut region in Sumatra, a large area of industrial plantations (caoutchouc, oil palm, acacia, eucalyptos plantations.) An area that is vulnerable to bush fires due to the Alang-Alang plant
- Global issues, the binding thread
- The effects of the global market on the development of the forest, cultivation of the secondary forest as a key for water balance, bio-diversity, wood supply, medical plants, economic survival of the inhabitants.
- Current aspects
- The difficulty of the Dayak rebellion in Borneo. The problem of forest fires.
- Future-oriented regulations of forest ownership through the central government in Krui

