

Arhuaco People

The Arhuaco community is one of the 4 Indigenous Community (Arhuaco, Kogui, Wiwa & Kankuamo) that live to the north of the Colombian snowy mountain (Sierra Nevada) of Santa Marta. We descend from the Tayronas. They left us in this space, caring for and harmonizing the Earth and Humanity. We live in harmony with all nature's beings: water, earth, fire, wind, the sun, humans and also animals and plants which are essence of the divine. The primary principles that we teach our children and community are to live with, look after and harmonize.

We live of agriculture and everything that we produce there: corn, coffee, avocado, oranges, tangerines, beans, bananas, etc. We also have minor species like: chickens, pigs and sheep. Nevertheless presently we have a problem with our lands. Due to the fact that the population growth of the lowlands, and the highlands are not suitable for farming, therefore we must move down to the lower lands of the mountain range that used to belong to us and that we are trying to reclaim.

These lands are also very important for our community because it is where the energies from the origin of everything that surrounds us dwell and it is there where our spiritual and ceremonial practices take place in order to balance the natural and human phenomena of the world.

For and because of this many times we set off to negotiate resources in order to buy these lands. We believe that our people are the righteous owners of these lands and that each and every one of us has the right to a small part of land to cultivate and care for: we believe in equality.

Within our community we organize ourselves into 45 hamlets. Each hamlet has a Mamo and a political chief.

Whom have different social responsibilities:

- Mamos are the spiritual scientists, they talk of life as one whole. They care for and watch over the community; they pass on nature's knowledge and harmonize the sacred places (energetic points) that are important for humanity.
- The Political Chiefs, such as Lobby Governor, Secretary and other internal and external community leaders are those who defend the community, they culture, they knowledge and their customs- manual, physical works and thought. Their tasks have to do with the general, political, social and cultural structure.

Everyone takes part in the community's decisions. Even the young girls and boys. Our tradition is that of meeting, talking, thinking and deciding together; we always try to be connected. This is

where our strength dwells and this is how we take and manage the conflicts that appear on or territory.