

July 2026 — Project Update

The Kayapo Project, Brazilian Amazon

Field Partners: *Associação Floresta Protegida (AFP), Instituto Kabu (IK), Instituto Raoni (IR), and Associação Indígena Pykôre (AIP)*

We wanted to give you a mid-year update and express our thanks for your support for the Kayapo Project. As a reminder, this project protects over nine million hectares of contiguous tropical forest in the highly threatened southeastern Amazon—by area the largest tropical forest conservation and indigenous territorial management project in the world.

Key Achievements (first half of 2026)

- **Territorial Monitoring and Surveillance:** Nineteen border guard posts monitor access along much of the 2200-km Kayapo border. Guard post surveillance is complemented with satellite imagery and targeted overflight surveillance to detect signs of illegal goldmining, logging, and rancher encroachment. They will remain open until the end of the calendar year.
- **Kayapo Forest School Expansion:** The Kayapo Forest School operated for eight weeks from April to June 2026, expanding operations from the Xingu to serve communities along the Riozinho. In total about 300 people participated as students or staff (instructors, boat drivers, cooks, etc.). The forest school offers educational programming for Kayapo youth, blending ancestral knowledge passed down by elders with modern conservation technologies such as drone monitoring, camera traps, and GPS mapping.
- **Indigenous Media and Storytelling:** Supported by the Kayapo-led Beture Media Collective, the Kayapo NGOs are documenting territorial protection patrols, cultural traditions, fire prevention and community workshops to strengthen intra-territorial communication and public advocacy. Films are used at the guard posts and within the forest school.
- **Sustainable Livelihoods:** Scaled community-led sustainable harvest initiatives—focused on Brazil nuts and cumaru seeds—providing equitable cash income to remote villages while keeping primary forests intact. Other major income generating activities include the sales of artisan crafts and community tourism initiatives.

Territorial Patrols & Border Security

During the first half of 2026, Kayapo patrol teams across the three key sectors (Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest) completed several **terrestrial and river patrols**, covering thousands of kilometers along vulnerable border and interior areas.

The continuous presence of Kayapo surveillance teams and operational guard posts serves as a critical deterrent against illegal incursions within the 9.4 million hectares of Kayapo lands. While pressures remain high along the external deforestation frontier, territory under active protection continues to maintain near-zero rates of illegal logging and deforestation compared to surrounding landscapes.

Summary of data gathered from monitoring & patrols:

- **Hundreds of Guardians:** Each year more than 1800 Kayapo guardians earn a wage working part-time at a guard post. Guard duty forms the most significant and equitable form of income generation for Kayapo communities
- **Deforestation/Encroachment:** No illegal logging within monitored NGO-allied territories.
- **Guard Post Activity:** 19 primary guard posts fully operational and resupplied across *TI Kayapó*, *TI Baú*, *TI Menkragnoti*, and *TI Capoto/Jarina*.

Indigenous Empowerment & Sustainable Income Generation

Biome's investments strengthen community autonomy and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Through initiatives like the Kayapo Forest School and sustainable non-timber forest harvesting, communities are empowered to maintain their culture and generate livelihoods while reinforcing traditional stewardship. Progress is being made this year with:

- **Women's Departments:** AFP, IK, and IR have all formalized and begun formal women's departments ensuring that Kayapo women are included in decision-making at the association level.
- **Non-Timber Harvesting:** More than 500 Kayapo families participated in Brazil nut and cumaru seed collection, generating direct, equitable income for hundreds of families across dozens of remote villages.
- **Artisanal Craftsmanship:** Association-led artisan cooperatives continue to finance and sell traditional beadwork and artisanal goods, building financial independence across participating communities.
- **Community-led Tourism:** Sportfishing with partner Untamed Angling continues to generate tourism revenue among Xingu and Iriri River communities. Other tourism operations piloted with the villages of KubenKranKen (AFP) and Pykany (IK).

Looking Forward

During the second half of 2026, the Kayapo-NGO alliance will prioritize strengthening territorial monitoring and surveillance. Three new guard posts will be established at yet undefended sections of the border. The Kayapo Forest school will continue its expansion, inviting delegations from IK and IR to participate in forest school activities along the Xingu River with their full participation expected in the first half of 2027. In addition, the NGO will resume workshops along strategic areas including fire prevention, solid waste management, media and communications, and capacity-building workshops for youth leaders. Finally, look out for Kayapo Project participation in national and global events such as the UN General Assembly and NY Climate Week.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions, suggestions, or just want to chat about this project.

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