

Hero project

By Serenne Fox

“there is nothing better that I can do with my life then protecting the vital organ of planet earth”

In 1996 Atossa Soltani founded an organization called Amazon Watch: “a non profit organization that is internationally in support of indigenous people and local communities in the Amazon who are fighting to protect their territory from destructive activities.” According to Atossa, “the organization works to support them in getting recognized, respecting their forest and their rights.”

Atossa started working for the Rainforest Action Network, an environmental organization based in San Francisco. Atossa was passionate about the environment but didn't want to be stuck in an office. In her first week of college Atossa learned about the Gaia Hypothesis developed in the early 70s by a British chemist named James E. Lovelock. “The Gaia Hypothesis proposed by James Lovelock (1972) suggests that living organisms on the planet interact with their surrounding inorganic environment to form a synergetic and self-regulating system that created,” according to David E. Reichle, in *The Global Carbon Cycle and Climate Change*, 2020 “and now maintains the climate and biochemical conditions that make life on Earth possible.”

When she finally went to the Amazon, Atossa was amazed by all the plants and animals living there and decided to dedicate herself to working with native people directly to protect it. Atossa wasn't sure how she could turn her passion about the Amazon into action, until she attended a protest and found herself face to face with the president of Brazil. She decided to confront him and shouted out “I'm with Amazon Watch!” At that moment she knew she had to finish what she started and form an organization that will directly help the rainforest and the indigenous people in it.

Atossa has been to the Amazon over 100 times and works directly with the native tribes and meets with their chiefs and helps them plan for what their next step is against the oil and logging companies. Atossa works very hard to help preserve the rainforest but a hard thing about it is getting people to listen to her and stop trying to make a living and pay attention. “I think everyone when they're making a living... should be doing something that actually contributes to life flourishing on earth.”

Atossa didn't just choose to protect the amazon because of its cool plants and animals, she chose to protect it because the amazon is a vital organ of the earth. If we cut down the Amazon, nearly half of the world's plants and animals would be destroyed, it would cause an advancement in climate change and 5 to 6 times more greenhouse gasses will be released "You know there is so much life in the amazon. Just to give you an example, if you were to take an area of the rainforest that's the size of a football field... you would find more types of trees in that football field than you would in all of the U.S and Canada combined." Even though there is so much life in the amazon, it is depleting at an alarming rate. Because of deforestation we lose about 7 football fields a minute. I think being a true hero is committing your life to doing something for the greater good and even though it is hard, pushing through. Atossa dedicated her life to protect the Amazon and the creatures and natives who live there.