

The author begins chapter four by discussing two different organizations, Fundación Natura and Acción Ecológica, that were crucial to Ecuador's development. Fundación Natura, also called "Natura", was started in Quito, the country's capital, in 1978. The people who created this type of organization were noted to be a small group of university-educated scientists and other nature lovers. The goal of this organization was to focus on conserving species and ecosystems. One of the first notable projects of this organization was a television program in which educated the public about the natural world. This organization was willing to work with anyone that had an interest in the goal of conservation, more specifically the private sectors. They had believed that the majority of the damage caused to the environment was rooted from both ignorance and a lack of knowledge from the private sector. Natura used a variety of tactics to seek cooperation, negotiation, and compromise. The organization believed that change could be best made from within by creating strong relationships with institutions of power. When Natura entered a contract with the United States Agency for International Development, this allowed for an increase in reliable and passionate staff.

The other organization, Acción Ecológica, was formally registered with the state in the year 1989, despite being a group of individuals since 1985. This group was considered to be the most radical green group that occupied Ecuador. The majority of the issues that this organization focused on would be conflicts surrounding mining, oil, mangroves, and forests. This organization had started the program called Campaign Amazonía por la vida which advocated for the protection of the Amazonian environment, the protection of the Amazonian people, and assisting the problem solving capabilities of the local communities.

A main difference between the two organizations that the author points out is that Acción Ecológica never sought funding from the United States Agency for International Development which highlights the difference in Ecuadorian environmentalism. On one hand, Natura was more concerned with biological diversity as well as conservation which seemed to be caused by the concern surrounding the founders' natural science approach for the environment. Also, Natura looked for solutions within the infrastructure and is to be considered a conservative organization in terms of their methods of action. In contrast, Acción Ecológica focused on the human-environmental interactions that took place. This organization was known to take a more ethical stance against the economic systems that were in place.

The Global 500 Environmental Forum's webpage, "Fundacion Natura," describes that this is a non-profit and non-governmental organization that is located in Ecuador. The mission of this organization is to promote a national conscience that is dedicated to improving just and the integration of an increased quality of life for the population as well as the conservation of the environment. In order to accomplish the goal, the organization openly promoted policies that would focus on human needs such as environmental education, communications, as well as conservation of biodiversity and environmental law.

If I were given the opportunity to support one of these organizations, I would have supported Natura. The author noted how they support better policies and from reviewing her comments on both of the organizations, I agree with Natura's methods of implementing change. The article, "UN experts condemn string of Ecuador clampdowns on human rights organizations," had discussed a more recently in 2016 the government of Ecuador was under accusation of unfair ruling when they had issued an order to dismantle an NGO, Accion Ecologica, that had supported environmental and indigenous rights. On December 18th, this organization had called for a Peace and Truth Commission in order to investigate the truth and

knowledge behind the attacks on both indigenous and environmental rights. A few days later on December 20th, the Ministry of the Environment had initiate the dissolution process which have the group a day to respond and then ten days to produce their defense against the claims that the government had made to dismantle them. Human rights experts had believed that the government was violating the international human rights standards, more specifically the legitimate exercise of freedom of association. Since many foreign entities had spoken up against the decisions of Ecuadorian government regarding how they handled the environmental movement once the environmentalists started protesting.

A debt for nature swap is a program in which a country works towards having its debts reduced while working to protect the environment. While the debts are in the process of being forgiven, the country in debt must use the allocated funds that were intended on being used to recover from its debt to work towards conservation and reducing warming of the climate. There are three main aspects that the author delves into when explaining why Ecuador was a target for such a program. The first being that the government was in major debt. The second, Ecuador was on international conservationists' radar due to the high degree of biodiversity that was present. The final reason was that there had been proof of national concern about the environment with the different environmental organizations being formed and becoming successful.

This stage ends in 1987 for a few reasons that the author discusses. Some of those reasons being that there was an economic crisis in 1968, public disapproval of the new conditions of the International Money Fund, and a major earthquake that had resulted in fatalities as well as destroying the main pipeline for oil.

Overall, it was interesting to see how the author depicted the two organizations and how they functioned. Also, I had no prior knowledge of a debt for nature swap. I had not believed that this sort of program would ever be implemented, but I was pleasantly surprised that it had. I can understand how the situation turned sour in the sense that Ecuador was in a mass amount of debt and was basically serving to fulfill conditions that they had to agree to in order to be a part of the program. I do wonder what exactly caused the economic crisis considering that the country was working hard to pay off the debts that it owed. I am curious about whether that was a result of the stress the government dealt with in order to pay back the debt, or possibly a government who was unable to lessen the financial hardships of its people.

#### Resources:

“Debt for Nature Swaps.” UNDP.org, UNDP, 17 Jan. 2017,

[www.undp.org/content/dam/sdfinance/doc/Debt for Nature Swaps \\_ UNDP.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/sdfinance/doc/Debt%20for%20Nature%20Swaps_%20UNDP.pdf)

(n.d.) Fundacion Natura. Retrieved from

<https://www.global500.org/index.php/thelaureates/online-directory/item/707-fundacion-natura>

(n.d.) UN experts condemn string of Ecuador clampdowns on human rights organizations.

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<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21065&LangID=E>