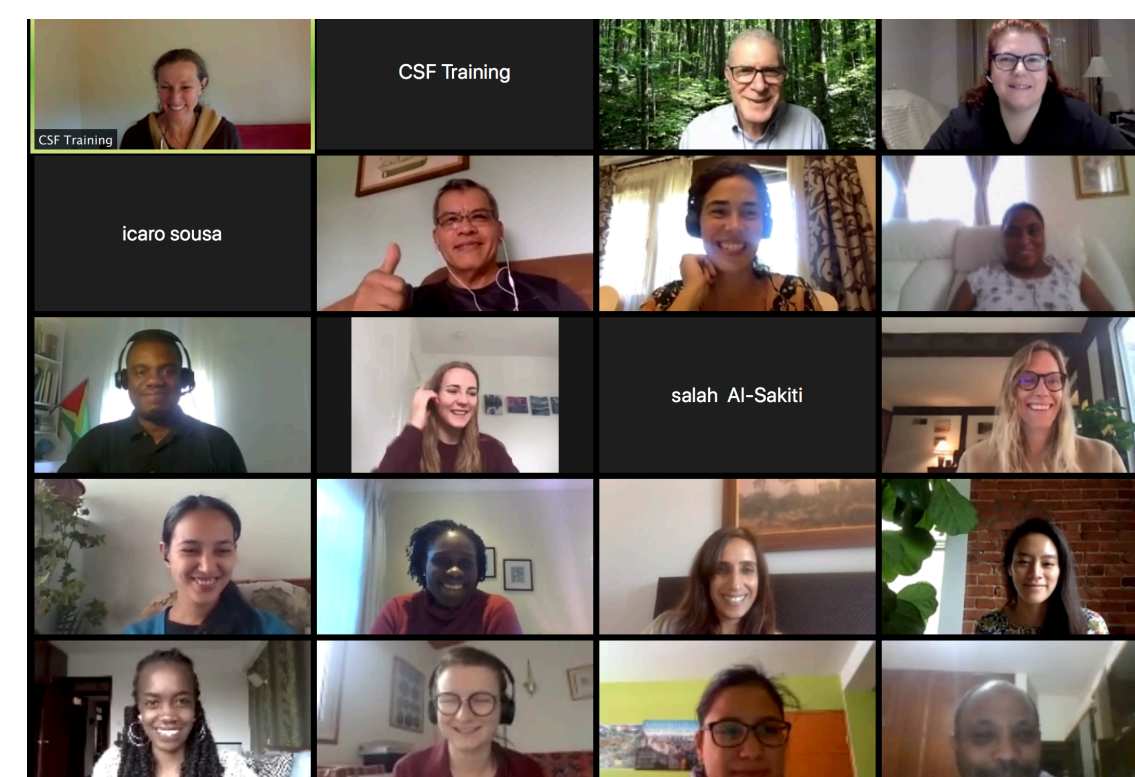


Introduction to Conservation Strategy Fund

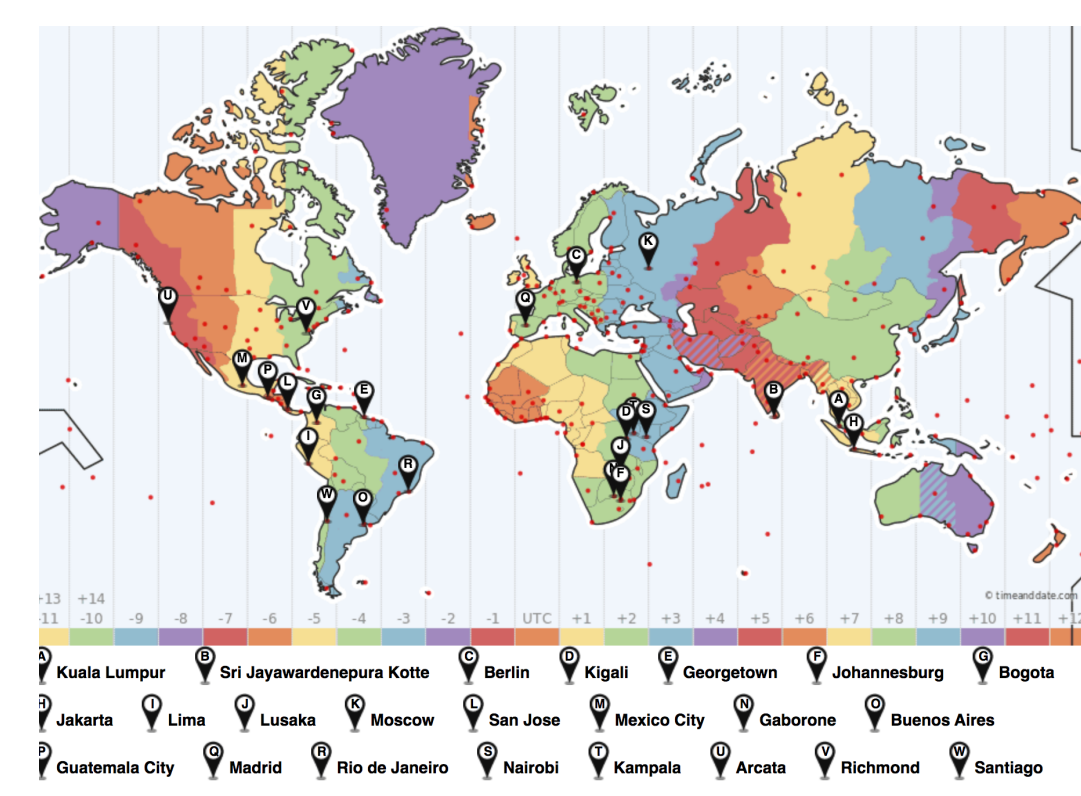
Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF) is an environmental non-profit that uses conservation economics to preserve natural ecosystems and promote sustainable development. In the past 20 years, CSF has influenced more than 21 billion USD in development investments, resulting in the protection of 50 million acres of ecosystems across the globe. A recent example of their work is a study evaluating a prospective highway construction project in the Amazon, dependent on a 27 billion USD investment and the deforestation of 5.9 million acres. The final study concluded that selecting a subset of roads would deliver 77% of the economic benefits at 10% of the socio-environmental cost, prevent 1.1 million hectares of deforestation, and save \$7.6 billion to fund future development projects.

Project 1: Creating a Virtual Course to teach Environmental Leadership through Conservation Finance and Economics

Every year, CSF produces a course called Numbers for Nature to teach people from development agencies worldwide environmental economics and finance skills to become leaders in their field. Course instructors this year included David Johnson, senior economics lecturer at University of Wisconsin, John Lynham, associate professor of economics at University of Hawaii, Kim Bonine, Training Director at CSF, and David Meyers, Executive Director at Conservation Finance Alliance. The topics covered in the course ranged from introductory economics concepts to ecosystem valuation, to risk management strategies. Due to the pandemic, this usually-in-person course needed to be converted into an online format, necessitating the creation of a course website and instructional materials on how to use the software, research on how to best accommodate participants learning from 19 different time zones, and a rapid turnaround of editing and posting lectures and course readings to a virtual platform.



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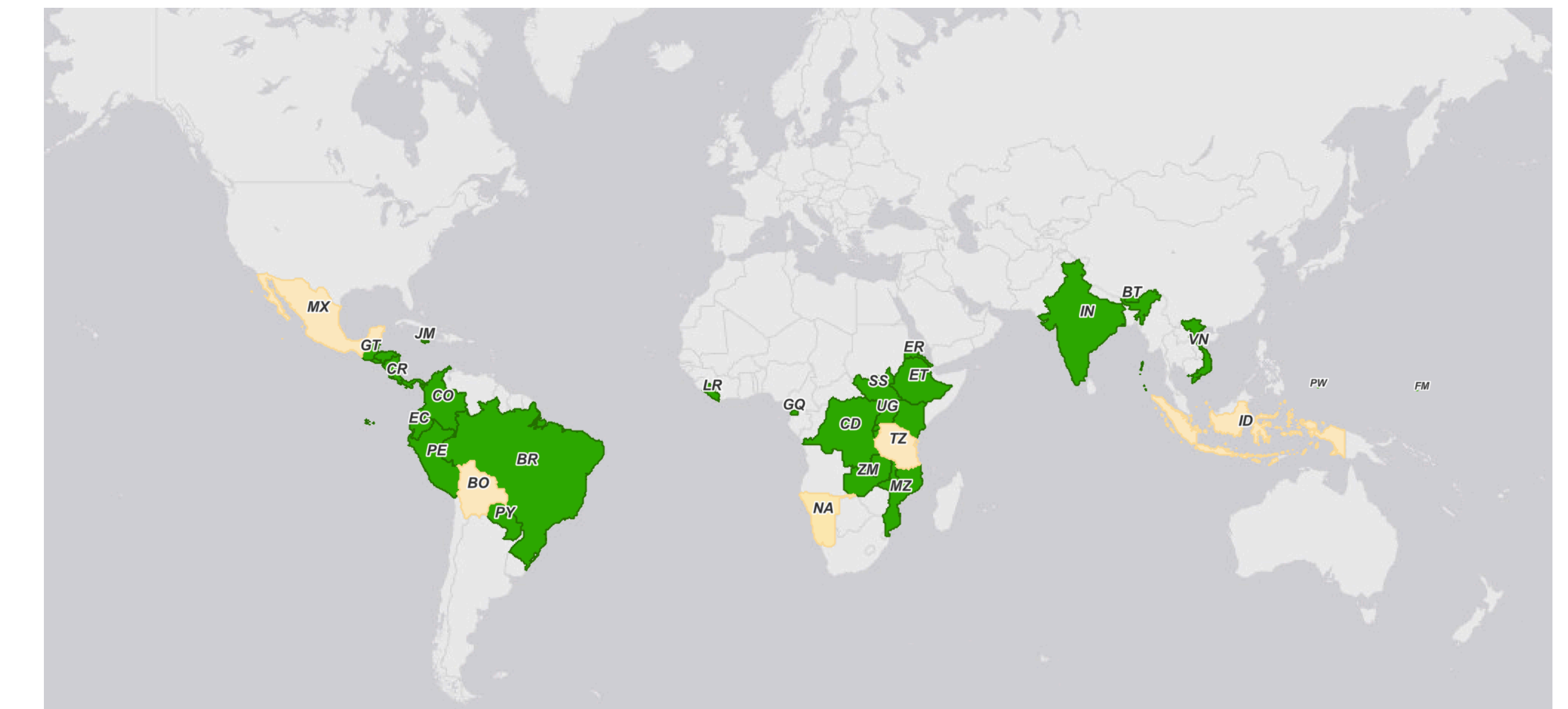
Project 2: Facilitating an Organization-Wide Discussion on Black Lives Matter



In light of Black Lives Matter protests in response to the murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, CSF released a statement in solidarity. Unfortunately, the statement lacked actionable steps and an unwavering commitment to anti-racism, which is paramount considering the vast intersections between environmentalism and racial justice. In an attempt to push the organization toward a stronger commitment to combatting systemic racism both internally and in the greater field of conservation, a [staff-wide discussion](#) about Black Lives Matter was held, incorporating protests happening in each of the countries in which CSF has offices – the US, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, and Indonesia. CSF has a long way to go on the road to becoming an anti-racist institution, but a few good steps were taken as a result of this meeting, such as compiling a list of resources for CSF staffs' further learning, and proposing plans for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training and an internship program to provide marginalized groups access to jobs in the environmental field.

Project 3: Creating a GIS Map to be Displayed on CSF's Website

Many environmental non-profits comparable to CSF, like the World Resources Institute, have maps on their website detailing their work abroad. Since CSF did not have one, GIS was used to create the map below, which outlines all the countries in which CSF has implemented projects, with yellow countries indicating that more information is available upon clicking. This map will prospectively be displayed on the "about" page of the website. In the meantime, [here](#) is a link to the ArcGIS website the map is posted on.



Project 4: Determining South American Forest Restoration Projects with Promising Potential for Investment



Since 2000, 60 million acres of natural biomes in Latin America have been deforested due to agriculture and forestry activities. To counteract this devastating loss of habitat, Initiative 20x20 seeks to transition 50 million acres of land into restoration by the end of 2020, with 2.6 billion USD to invest with, from 50 technical organizations, a coalition of impact investors, and private funders. CSF's role in this project is to recommend South American reforestation initiatives that have large potential to scale up with the support of 1.8 million USD in investment over the next three years. On behalf of CSF, the researcher uncovered ten interesting projects with potential to receive this grant. One example of such a project is Guyra Paraguay's Shade Grown Yerba Mate Initiative, which intends to employ 45 producers from the local area, including indigenous communities, to manage 100 hectares of land without artificial chemicals, and sell their tea for a premium price.

Future Work

In the future, I hope to use all that I learned about conservation economics, and the skills I gained by conducting grant research, building a course, facilitating a conversation about Black Lives Matter, and creating a GIS map to continue pursuing my interests in environmental justice, specifically in the field of sustainable agriculture.

Acknowledgements and References

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