



Land is Life

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



As Chair of the Board, I am honored to reflect on a year of meaningful progress, growth, and strength for Land is Life. In 2025, the organization continued to demonstrate its continued commitment to supporting Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, rights, and leadership around the world.

One of the accomplishments we are most proud of is our continued commitment to accountability and transparency. In 2025, 91% of our funding went directly to Indigenous Peoples, ensuring resources reached communities on the front lines of protecting their territories, cultures, and knowledge systems. This achievement reflects Land is Life's long-standing dedication to shifting power and resources to Indigenous-led solutions.

Throughout the year, Land is Life expanded its reach, supporting 135 Indigenous-led partner organizations across 28 countries, while strengthening internal systems and organizational capacity to better respond to emerging challenges. The organization demonstrated the ability to respond swiftly to crises while maintaining its focus on the long-term structural changes that Indigenous Peoples are working to achieve.

DEAR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS OF LAND IS LIFE

A particularly significant milestone in 2025 was the re-establishment of the Governing Council, an important step toward strengthening Indigenous Peoples' leadership within the organization's own governance and decision-making. This development reinforces Land is Life's commitment to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' voices remain at the center of strategic direction and accountability.

Land is Life enters 2026 guided by a new strategic plan developed collaboratively with 107 partners worldwide, the Governing Council, the Board of Directors and team members - a process that reflects the same participatory values that define our work in the field.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, I EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO THE STAFF, FUNDERS, AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WHOSE LEADERSHIP AND TRUST MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE. WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO LAND IS LIFE'S MISSION AND TO ENSURING THE ORGANIZATION CONTINUES TO GROW ITS IMPACT IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine
Chair, Board of Directors



In 2025, my first visit as Executive Director took me to a school in Naivasha, Kenya. There, I saw Indigenous girls striving to learn, and I confirmed how small actions, like providing latrines and sanitary towels, can keep hundreds of girls in school and open the door to education and opportunity.

That same year, we brought together Indigenous women defenders from the Amazon. Their stories of courage and persistence reminded us of the power of sisterhood. Together, they advanced a collective agenda and helped establish the Alliance of Indigenous Women of the Amazon (AMA), a new platform to amplify their voices in regional and international decision-making spaces.

2025 was also a year of urgent response. Thanks to our dedicated team, partners, and donors, Land is Life responded swiftly to protect thousands of Indigenous people facing threats to their lives, lands, and

DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS,

territories. We expanded rapid response mechanisms, advanced Indigenous women's leadership, and ensured Indigenous voices reached the highest levels of global decision-making.

As we look to 2026, our direction is clear: deepen impact in Indigenous Peoples' territories, strengthen collective action, and build on our 34 year legacy of working alongside Indigenous Peoples to advance self-determination.

**THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH US TO PROTECT
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' LIVES, LANDS, AND FUTURES.**

Luisa Castaneda-Quintana
Executive Director, Land is Life

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INTRODUCTION

Interconnected Crises

In 2025, Indigenous Peoples continued facing escalating, interconnected threats to their lands, cultures, and knowledge. Land dispossession, militarization, criminalization of defenders, and extractive projects imposed without Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) created volatile, high-risk environments across Africa, Asia, Mesoamerica, and South America.

Climate disasters, such as hurricanes, droughts, floods, and extreme weather, destroyed traditional food systems and forced displacement. At the same time, conservation schemes, carbon markets, and global biodiversity targets implemented without consent created new pressures, a phenomenon our partners call “green colonization.”

Systemic exclusion from decision-making, lack of legal recognition, weak legal protections, chronic underfunding, and shrinking political support left Indigenous Peoples highly vulnerable. Indigenous women, youth, elders, and defenders bore these pressures disproportionately, facing both visible threats (such as violence, surveillance, criminalization) and invisible ones (like erosion of languages, governance, and ancestral knowledges).

**“INDIGENOUS VOICES MUST
REACH THE TABLES WHERE
DECISIONS ABOUT OUR LANDS
ARE MADE.”**

Partner testimony





How Land is Life Responds

We act where others are absent, “when no one else appears in the territories”, providing flexible, Indigenous-led, non-bureaucratic support, grounded in long-term, trust-based relationships and guided by Indigenous Peoples’ own priorities.

As a global Indigenous Peoples’ coalition, we connect Indigenous Peoples’ realities to national, regional, and international advocacy spaces, enabling Indigenous Peoples to defend territories, strengthen organizations, and amplify their voices.

Rooted in trust, accountability, and respect, Land is Life supports Indigenous Peoples to address urgent threats, implement sustainable solutions, lead effectively, and safeguard their communities and territories for generations to come.

WHERE WE MOVED THE NEEDLE IN 2025

135 

Indigenous-led organizations across 28 countries are not working alone anymore: they have sustained support, resources, and a global network to advance their priorities.

91% 

of funds reached Indigenous Peoples directly, strengthening self-determined solutions instead of intermediated aid.

178,278 

Indigenous defenders and families are safer and able to stay on their lands, with rapid response support reaching 136 Indigenous Peoples in moments of urgent threat.

70+ 

Indigenous leaders are now influencing decisions that affect their territories, bringing community priorities into international and regional policy spaces.

800+ 

Indigenous women and leaders are leading advocacy and climate action, equipped with tools to defend rights, shape policy, and sustain their communities.

7 

socio-cultural regions are represented in our reestablished Governing Council, ensuring Indigenous leadership at the center of our organization's governance.

9 

Amazonian countries are represented by Indigenous women defenders who came together to form the Alliance of Indigenous Women of the Amazon (AMA).

9,000+ 

Indigenous persons from 12 Indigenous Peoples are better prepared for climate shocks, with rapid support helping communities respond and adapt in real time.

1 

global advocacy course, implemented in partnership with the University of Arizona, is enabling Indigenous women to access and navigate UN spaces with confidence.

4 

rapid response communications campaigns ensured that urgent crises from Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, Ecuador, Panama, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo gained international visibility and attention.

2.200+ 

Indigenous persons in Sub-Saharan Africa and Mesoamerica are strengthening food systems and restoring ecosystems, advancing agroecology, seed protection, and land and coastal regeneration.

75+ 

Indigenous women's organizations - through technical support in fundraising and budgeting- are securing and managing resources more efficiently, strengthening their autonomy.

A vibrant photograph of a Native Pride parade taking place on a city street. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt and a necklace with a large red feather, looks directly at the camera. Behind her, a large crowd of diverse participants is visible. A prominent white banner with the words 'NATIVE PRIDE' and a red triangle symbol is held up. To the right, a large flag features a portrait of a Native American man with a feathered headdress. The background is filled with tall, modern skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is one of celebration and community.

ADVOCACY, CAMPAIGNS, AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Since its founding in 1992, advocacy has been central to Land is Life's mission, from directly supporting Indigenous Peoples defending their land rights and standing with leaders under threat, to engaging international mechanisms and responding to urgent calls from Indigenous Peoples' organizations. Much of this work evolved organically across regions and initiatives. Yet as threats intensified and grew more complex, the need for a more coordinated and strategic approach became clear.

In June 2025, Land is Life, grounded in a process of institutional reflection, Land is Life launched an advocacy brief defining what advocacy means within its mission and establishing a foundational internal framework to guide this work. Since then, the team has implemented a broad range of actions: legal and policy interventions, long-term and rapid-response campaigns, engagement in both public and closed-door advocacy spaces, and supporting Indigenous Peoples' participation in key international mechanisms.



Oscar Daza

Koreguaje leader and Secretary General of
Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Ama-
zonia Colombiana - OPIAC

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As part of these collective efforts, key achievements in 2025 included:



- » **Legal and policy action:** Submitted an [*amicus curiae*](#) before the Constitutional Court of Ecuador on the consultation process for Oil Block 22, advocating for intercultural safeguards and the rights of the Waorani People, including those in voluntary isolation and initial contact.
-



- » **Rapid response and international advocacy:** Coordinated an [advocacy response](#) to violence against Indigenous Peoples in Panama, engaging UN mechanisms and the Inter-American human rights system alongside a strategic communications response.
-



- » **UN accountability processes:** Submitted two Universal Periodic Review (UPR) shadow reports for [Namibia](#) and [Paraguay](#) in partnership with Indigenous Peoples' organizations, elevating Indigenous Peoples' voices within UN accountability processes.
-





- » **UNPFII Engagement:** Strengthened Indigenous Peoples' advocacy at the 24th Session United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) by co-hosting a preparatory training with the University of Arizona Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program and organizing five side events on key priorities, including self-determination and Free, Prior and Informed Consent. Co-hosted a Cultural Night celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women, bringing together over 300 participants to honor Indigenous women's leadership.



- » **Climate justice leadership:** Led a [global campaign](#) on climate change advisory opinions, in partnership with the Center for International Environmental Law and Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change, positioning these opinions as practical advocacy tools for Indigenous Peoples.



- » **EMRIP engagement:** Advanced Indigenous Peoples' advocacy and visibility at the 18th Session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) by co-organizing two side events with partners including the University of Arizona Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organization's Forum, covering Indigenous data sovereignty and Indigenous Peoples' rights in protected areas.

Click to see the
campaign post and
KNOW MORE



FROM RECOGNITION TO ACTION

HOW INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAN USE
THE HISTORIC CLIMATE RULINGS

Click to see the
campaign post and

KNOW MORE





- » **Regional Indigenous women's leadership:** Hosted the First Meeting of Indigenous Women Defenders of the Amazon Basin, leading to the creation of the Alliance of Indigenous Women of the Amazon (AMA), a regional platform for territorial defense and advocacy. Provided political support for the launch of the Amazonian Mechanism of Indigenous Peoples (MAPI) during the Fifth Summit of Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) Presidents.
-



- » **Indigenous economies and self-determination:** Co-organized the Indigenous Tourism Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean (CTILAC) in Popayán, Colombia with *Red Indígena de Turismo de México* (RITA) and the *Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca* (CRIC) leading to the creation of a Regional Indigenous Tourism Network.
-



- » **Defending Free, Prior and Informed Consent globally:** Submitted a consolidated input to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights addressing urgent challenges related to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.
-



- » **Securing national commitments:** Secured a public commitment from Helambu Rural Municipality in Bagmati province, Nepal to introduce legislation recognizing and protecting the *Hyulthim* self-governance system of the Hyolmo Indigenous Peoples.
-



FROM COMMUNITY EVIDENCE TO THE UN FLOOR: NAMIBIA AT THE UPR

Through a joint shadow report submitted with Indigenous Communities for Self-Determination Organization, Indigenous Peoples' voices from Namibia gained direct access to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.

UPR is a peer-review mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council through which all UN Member States have their human rights records examined every four to five years. During this process, governments are reviewed by other States based on national reports, UN documentation, and crucially, shadow reports submitted by civil society and Indigenous Peoples.

The report highlighted key human rights concerns and elevated community-based evidence within UN accountability mechanisms, leading to the organization's founder being invited to the 52nd UPR pre-sessions on Namibia, a critical opportunity for Indigenous Peoples to engage with States and influence recommendations ahead of the official review.

STRENGTHENING AMAZONIAN INDIGENOUS DIPLOMACY AT THE ACTO SUMMIT

With support from Land is Life, Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon Basin secured effective and coordinated participation at the Fifth Summit of Presidents of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization. This support reinforced the regional leadership of the Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana (OPIAC) and advanced a joint agenda with Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Summit produced a historic result: the formal consolidation of the Amazonian Mechanism of Indigenous Peoples (MAPI) as a recognized body within ACTO's institutional framework. Indigenous Peoples' proposals were delivered directly to Heads of State, regional alliances were strengthened, and Indigenous Peoples' core priorities - self-determination, territorial protection, and knowledge systems - were positioned at the center of Amazonian diplomacy ahead of COP30.

Strategic Emergency Campaigns

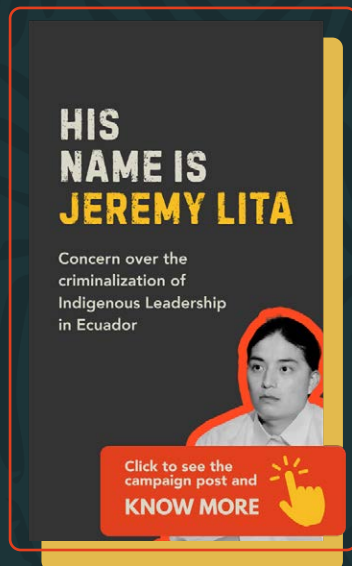
Nepal: Whose Voices Shape the Future?

Indigenous Tamang communities faced imposition of infrastructure projects on their ancestral lands amid broader national unrest, while youth-led protests demanded government accountability. Our campaign amplified Indigenous Peoples' land rights and calls for justice.



Ecuador: Indigenous Peoples in a National Crisis

As Ecuador's political crisis deepened, Indigenous Peoples' communities faced disproportionate repression and harm. Our campaign elevated their voices and human rights concerns on the international stage.



Panama: Crisis and Repression

Escalating social and political tensions fell disproportionately on Indigenous Peoples, particularly Ngäbe-Buglé, Emberá, and Kuna. We mobilized rapid communications response to ensure global visibility for their situation.



DRC: Emergency Solidarity in Goma

Armed clashes in Goma displaced thousands of Indigenous Peoples' families - particularly women and children. We launched an emergency fundraising campaign to support urgent humanitarian response on the ground.





INDIGENOUS-LED SECURITY FUNDS

Indigenous-led Security Funds (ILSF) is a global initiative designed to protect and empower Indigenous defenders facing threats because of their advocacy work. Established in 2019 in Sub-Saharan Africa and subsequently expanded to Colombia (2020) Ecuador, Peru (2025), Asia and Mesoamerica (2021), each regional fund is coordinated by Indigenous leaders to ensure culturally appropriate and rapid responses - within 48 hours - to emergencies. The ILSF provides essential services including legal assistance, medical, psychological, and spiritual support, relocation assistance, and social services.

AFRICA



In 2025, the ILSF reinforced safety, justice and territorial defense across Africa, protecting the lives of more than 15 Indigenous defenders from the Maasai in Kenya, the Ogoni in Nigeria, and the Batwa and Banyoro Indigenous Peoples in Uganda. This included legal support for 7,118 displaced Banyoro People in Uganda and international visibility for oil-affected Ogoni communities, whose situation impacts over 832,000 Indigenous Peoples across the region, reinforcing safety, justice, and territorial defense across Africa.



Christopher Opiyo

Oil Refinery Resident Association

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- » **Emergency relocation and protection:** Supported the safe relocation of **15+ Indigenous defenders** from Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda - including Maasai land defenders safeguarding ancestral lands, more than 10 Ogoni activists threatened for opposing oil extraction, and a young Batwa woman targeted for denouncing violence against her community.
-



- » **Legal support for displaced communities:** Covered legal costs for Banyoro Indigenous defenders in Uganda pursuing a court case over the forced displacement of **7,118 community members** from their lands and farms to make way for oil projects.
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- » **Visibility and advocacy:** Amplified Indigenous voices through social media, including coverage of oil spills in Ogoni territory in Nigeria, raising international awareness of **impacts on over 832,000 Indigenous individuals instead of people.**
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ASIA



In 2025, the program reached 25,340 Indigenous defenders, organizational leaders, and community members from 33 Indigenous Peoples across six countries: **West Papua (Papuan, Berbai, Busami, Sentani, Depapre, Aplim-Apom, Nduga, Maibrat, Awer, Demisa); Northeast India (Meitei in Manipur; Idu Mishmi and Adi in Arunachal Pradesh; Karbi, Rengma Naga, Adivasi, and Mech Kachari in Assam); Nepal (Tamang, Tharu, Magar, Newar); Bangladesh (Jumma, Chakma, Santal, Marma); the Philippines (Lumad, Ati, Dumagat, Igorot); and Cambodia (Kui, Por, Chong, Bunong).** These Indigenous Peoples face armed conflict, militarization, extractive industry and development aggression, and ongoing attacks on their lives, lands, and territories.



- » **Defending ancestral lands in Bangladesh:** Supported sustained community protection and rights-based advocacy by the Santal Indigenous Peoples, contributing to the temporary suspension of the proposed Export Processing Zone project in the Shahebganj–Bagda Farm area.
-



- » **Strengthening defender capacity across the region:** Built the capacity of Indigenous defenders to lead advocacy and protect their lands and forests from corporate and State actors, through media advocacy, legal interventions and engagement with government bodies and human rights commissions in the Philippines, Nepal and North East India.
-



- » **Freeing criminalized defenders in the Philippines:** Legal support secured the dismissal of charges against two Indigenous defenders who had been imprisoned for four years. Countercharges were filed against police officers responsible for illegal arrest and evidence fabrication. The effort was amplified through civil society mobilization and briefings with United Nations offices and embassies, generating increased scrutiny and strengthening the broader protective environment for the defenders.



- » **Protecting communities from forced displacement in Nepal:** Lawyers supported Tamang and Newa communities opposing transmission line projects financed by the Asian Development Bank and the Fast Track Expressway. Legal action successfully challenged the detention of Indigenous leader Divesh Shakya, securing his release and enabling him to continue his advocacy.
-



- » **Halting Land Encroachment in Cambodia:** Legal defense and documentation support assisted 31 Indigenous community members in responding to land encroachment cases filed by the Forestry Administration on behalf of the MegaFirst company, allowing communities to continue using their ancestral lands and halting further project expansion.
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Ned Tuguinay

The Cordillera Peoples Alliance in the Philippines

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- » **Building legal capacity for defenders:** Trained 13 lawyers in Nepal on security protocols, improving coordination and response to threats. Legal education initiatives in West Papua also strengthened Indigenous Papuans' ability to navigate discriminatory law enforcement and defend their rights.



- » **Reinforcing Indigenous Peoples' Governance Through Peaceful Mediation:** Supported mediation processes among Indigenous leaders in West Papua to resolve boundary disputes between the Berbai and Busami peoples, contributing to peaceful conflict resolution and reinforced customary governance systems.



WHEN COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE PROTECTS ANCESTRAL LAND

With support from the Indigenous-Led Security Fund, the Sahebganj Bagdafarm Land Rights Movement coordinated the Santal Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh to sustain months of community mobilization, protests and coordinated advocacy - resulting in the government's temporary suspension of the proposed Export Processing Zone project in the Shahebganj–Bagda Farm area. As a result, 1,842.30 acres of land have been protected and continue to be stewarded by Indigenous Peoples and marginalized communities, safeguarding both territorial rights and community livelihoods

For the Santal, this outcome was highly significant: it protected ancestral land, reduced immediate threats of displacement and violence, and affirmed their collective right to refuse development imposed without their Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

As one Santal community member reflected:

“When we first heard about the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) project, many of us felt powerless and afraid because our land had been taken away from us before, without our consent. Through the program, we learned how to document threats, stay safe during protests, and support our legal cases. For the first time, we stood together in large numbers and spoke openly about our rights. When the authorities stopped the EPZ work, even temporarily, we felt that our struggle was not ignored. This gave us strength to continue protecting our land.”



AMAZON BASIN



In 2025, the Indigenous-Led Security Fund significantly expanded its reach and impact across the Amazon and Andean regions, strengthening Indigenous-led protection systems and rapid response mechanisms. The program delivered 88 rapid humanitarian and protection responses, strengthened partnerships with 69 Indigenous Peoples' organizations, and directly supported 35,646 Indigenous defenders, women, children, and leaders who were at risk. A regional database was established to improve monitoring, coordination, and strategic response.

Building on its established work in Colombia, the program expanded to Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia, strengthening

a coordinated Indigenous-led operational team across the region and securing sustainable funding to scale community protection efforts. Support reached Indigenous Peoples including the **Yukuna, Cocama, Nukak, Murui Muina, Inga, Siona, Korebaju, Awa, Pastos, Cubeo, Barasanos, Tatuyos, Tucanos, Carapanas, Nonuya, Matapi, Piratapuyo, Tuyuca, Desano, Carijona, Saliva, Muinane, Yuruty, Taiwana, Piapoco, Curripaco, Sarayaku, Waorani, Andwa, Nación Quijos, Kichwa (Cotacachi, Otavalo, Panzaleo, Kayambi), Tsimane, Itonama, Mojeño Trinitario, Tacana, Chacra, Kakataibo, Shipibo-Konibo, Arakbut, Ashéninka, Awajun, Quechua, Yanesha, Asháninka, Yagua, Wanpis, Yanomami, Piaroa, Baniva, Warekena, Jivi, and Baré.**



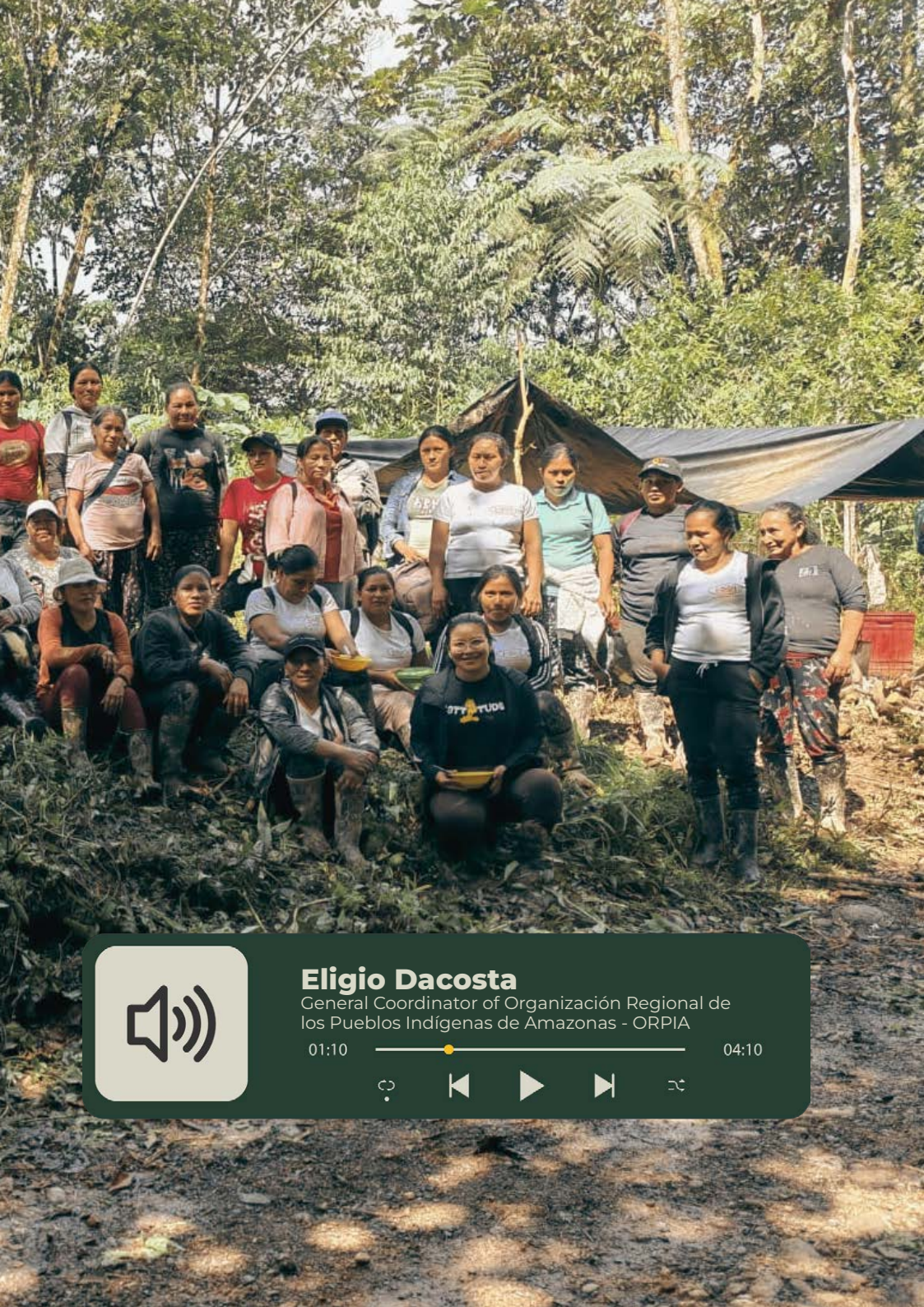
Lizardo Cauper

President of Consejo Shipibo-Konibo-Xetebo -
KOSHIKOX

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Eligio Dacosta

General Coordinator of Organización Regional de los Pueblos Indígenas de Amazonas - ORPIA

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- » **Prioritized rapid response:** Deployed humanitarian and protection support with a differentiated approach centering Indigenous women, children, and at-risk leaders. Five additional rapid responses in Colombia and Ecuador supported both Amazonian and non-Amazonian Indigenous Peoples, consolidating alliances with nine organizations across six Indigenous Peoples and directly benefiting 17,336 Indigenous defenders, women, children and leaders.



- » **Technology for territorial protection:** In Colombia and Peru, 2,963 Indigenous people strengthened their territorial protection capacities through strengthening the Indigenous guards, digital tools, virtual training, and community-based communication and early warning systems - improving risk management and local governance in contexts of armed violence and illicit economies.



- » **Protecting children and youth from forced recruitment:** In the Colombian Amazon, community-led strategies in Putumayo, Guaviare, Amazonas, and Caquetá reduced risk of forced recruitment of Indigenous children and youth, helping safeguard both their safety and cultural continuity.



- » **Territorial monitoring and forest protection in Yurúa (Perú):** the program strengthened territorial monitoring and defense against illicit economies across 23 Indigenous Peoples, through humanitarian, legal, and technological support. This intervention benefited 1,596 people and contributed to protecting over 40,000 hectares of forest, reinforcing Indigenous Peoples' governance and control over ancestral territories.
-



- » **Responding to Violence Against Waorani Territorial Defenders:** In Pastaza, Ecuador, the Program responded to an armed attack and arson targeting territorial monitors from the Obepare community of the Waorani People. Land is Life provided medical and psychological care, temporary humanitarian assistance, and protection measures for affected families and defenders.
-



- » **Strengthening Indigenous Access to Justice:** In Amazonas, Venezuela, the Program provided specialized legal support in the case of a Yanomami Indigenous man convicted without adequate legal defense or an intercultural approach. The intervention strengthened access to justice from an Indigenous Peoples' rights perspective and supported the protection of cultural and due process rights.
-



From action to impact:

WALKING TOGETHER: INDIGENOUS WOMEN STRENGTHEN PROTECTION IN GUAVIARE, COLOMBIA

Amid escalating violence in Centro Miraflores - including homicides, threats, and the forced recruitment of Indigenous girls and young women - the Association of Indigenous Traditional Authorities of Miraflores Asociación de Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas de Miraflores (ASA-TRIMIG) led a historic collective response.

In 2025, eighty women from 15 Indigenous Peoples gathered in the Maloca of Centro Miraflores for the encounter Senderos de Mujeres Indígenas (Paths of Indigenous Women). Over two days, guided by traditional knowledge holders, a community psychologist, and a specialized legal advisor, participants reflected on the risks they faced, engaged in emotional healing processes, and built concrete protection capacities. Together, they deepened their understanding of their rights and

developed practical tools to confront violence driven by the presence of armed groups in the region.

The gathering's impact extended well beyond those two days. ASATRIMIG received technological equipment to document cases, strengthen communications, advance protection initiatives, and submit reports to state institutions. The encounter reinforced Indigenous women's leadership in high-risk contexts, raised visibility of their situation among strategic allies, and marked a milestone for future territorial advocacy.

For many participants, it was the first safe space to speak openly about their experiences, rebuild trust, and collectively chart pathways toward protection, dignity, and life on their own terms.



MESOAMERICA

MESOAMERICA



In 2025, the Indigenous-Led Security Fund was critical in safeguarding the lives, health, and housing stability of Indigenous defenders targeted by state authorities, large-scale extractive projects, and politically affiliated actors. It enabled rapid responses in contexts of intense criminalization, persecution, and arbitrary detention - including in Panama, where legal defense for detained Indigenous leaders and coordinated international advocacy proved essential.

Through this support, defenders from the **Bribri, Brunka, Chol, Tzeltal, Totonaco, Emberá, Guna, Ikoots, Lenca (Honduras), Lenca (El Salvador), Maya, Maya Peninsular, Mixe, Mayangna, Mazahua, Miskitu (Honduran), Miskitu (Nicaraguan), Nahua, Yocotán, Ngäbe-Buglé, Wounaan, Chatino, Chontal, Tzotzil, Amuzgo, Cucapá, Zapoteco, Mixteco, Mazahua, Garífuna, Kaqchikel, and Purépecha** Peoples strengthened their ability to respond to threats, protect their territories, and continue their collective struggle for rights and self-determination.



Randy Gonzales

Field Technician in Panama of Red de Mujeres
Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad de América Latina
y el Caribe - RMIB-LAC

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- » **Emergency support for 1,200 Indigenous defenders supported during state repression in Panama:** In response to widespread protests, Land is Life partnered with Indigenous Peoples' organizations - including the *Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad de Latinoamérica y el Caribe* (RMIB - LAC), the *Coordinadora Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas de Panamá* (COONAPIP), and traditional authorities of the Ngäbe-Buglé and Emberá Peoples - to deliver medical care, medicines, and food supplies, and to evacuate individuals in situations of vulnerability, including children, women, and elders, to safe areas.
-



- » **Strengthening Indigenous women's political leadership and advocacy in Mexico:** In collaboration with the *Red Indígena de Turismo de México* (RITA), we convened more than 60 Indigenous women leaders from territories including Xochitlán, Teotihuacán, Sierra Nororiental de Puebla, Selva Lacandona, Palenque, and San Cristóbal de las Casas. Women from the Ch'ol, Tseltal, Tsotsil, Nahuatl, Maya, Totonaku, and Amuzgo Indigenous Peoples participated in interterritorial workshops focused on Indigenous women's rights, climate resilience, and territorial defense.
-



- » **Medical and psychosocial support for defenders in Central America:** Emergency health assistance was provided to Lenca defenders in El Salvador and Brunca defenders in Costa Rica, while psychosocial care supported Miskitu defenders in Honduras. These defenders face ongoing threats, harassment, and persecution while conducting community patrols to protect their territories from extractive projects and illegal incursions - often operating in extreme conditions across forest and coastal areas.
-



LENCA INDIGENOUS WOMEN STRENGTHENING PROTECTION AND HEALING

Honduras

For generations, Lenca Indigenous women have endured physical and emotional violence within their homes. Those who step forward to defend their territories and collective rights face an additional layer of risk - persecution, harassment, and criminalization for their leadership.

With support from Land is Life, Lenca women defenders launched community-based initiatives to provide emotional care and accompaniment to women experiencing domestic violence and persecution linked to their advocacy. Through workshops and direct psycho-emotional support, participants built resilience and deepened their collective solidarity.

The process led to a profound shift. Lenca women gained clarity on institutional pathways to seek protection and pursue advocacy, strengthened their digital security practices, and developed safer ways to navigate their territories. Self-care sessions gave them practical tools to manage stress, fear, fatigue, and anxiety - through breathing exercises, open dialogue, and the sharing of personal testimonies of trauma and resistance. For many participants, the experience marked a turning point: transforming fear into empowerment and isolation into solidarity.



INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Designed and led by Indigenous women, the program supports Indigenous women and their organisations to assert their individual and collective rights to access, use, and control land and natural resources; to improve their livelihoods; and to and promote and protect the rights and interests of their peoples.

The program partners with Indigenous Peoples across regions, including: **the Inga, Sikuani, and Hitnū Peoples in Colombia; Aymara in Bolivia; Quechua in Peru; and Kichwa in Ecuador. In Mesoamerica: the Miskitu in Nicaragua; the Cho'ol, Tseltal, Tsotsil, Nahua, Totonaku, Amuzgo, Maya Yucateco, and Me'phaa in Mexico; the Brunka in Costa Rica; the Maya K'iche' in Guatemala; and the Ngäbe-Buglé in Panama. In Asia: the Majhi, Ghimire, Subedi, Bankariya, Tharu, Tamang, and Newa in Nepal; the Altai Uriankhai in Mongolia; and the Oraon in India. In Africa: the Maasai in Kenya; the Twa/Nyindu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and the Ogoni in Nigeria. In Eastern Europe: the Sakha in Russia. In the Pacific: the Motu Koita and Kairuku in Papua New Guinea and the Nyangbul in Australia. In North America: the Ninilchik Village Tribe and the Navajo Nation in the United States.**





In 2025, the program expanded to eight Indigenous women-led organizations across four regions: Africa, Asia, Mesoamerica, and South America:



Majhi Women Upliftment Association

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- » **Economic empowerment In Nepal, Honduras, and Costa Rica:** 129 Indigenous women from the Majhi, Ghimire, Subedi, Miskito, and Brunca Peoples strengthened their economic capacities. Materials and supplies were provided to enhance the production of their traditional clothing and other culturally significant items. At least 60% of the Indigenous women are now selling their products, generating independent income, and providing meaningful financial support to their families.
-



- » **Leadership and decision-making in Mexico and Colombia:** 90 Indigenous women from the Maya and Inga Peoples strengthened their leadership and increased their participation in local decision-making. Through training and organizational support, they built climate resilience, preserved traditional knowledge, and secured legal recognition of the Warmikuna Tarpui Women's Association.
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- » **Health and education for girls in Kenya:** Provision of sanitary pads and construction of latrines improved the health, hygiene, and educational access of 400 Maasai girls, while reducing risks associated with inadequate sanitation.
-



Five fellows from Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Nepal, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo completed the 12-month fellowship program. Their community projects benefited more than 500 Indigenous women from 11 Indigenous Peoples: Nyindu, Majhi, Bankariya, Newa, Tharu, Tamang, Maya, Aymara, Sikuani, Hitnu, and Inga.



FROM THE AMAZON TO THE ARCTIC, INDIGENOUS WOMEN ARE DEFENDING TERRITORIES, CULTURES, AND THE PLANET.



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- » **Building rights awareness and land defense in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nepal:** 90 Indigenous women strengthened their confidence and gained practical skills to facilitate the resolution of family land disputes, deepen their understanding of their rights, and document cases affecting their territorial rights - applying Free, Prior and Informed Consent principles in their communities.
-



- » **Strengthening economic autonomy in Colombia:** 125 Indigenous women advanced their economic independence through initiatives combining productive activity with ancestral knowledge. Community workshops on marketing and financial management helped them improve the quality of their products and access new markets both within and beyond their territories.
-



- » **Agroecology and food sovereignty in Mexico and Bolivia:** 285 Indigenous women increased their incomes while protecting biodiversity and preserving ancestral knowledge. Through agroecological practices, they learned to transform and preserve food using traditional and sustainable techniques, ensuring food security for their families and generating income. They also restored degraded lands by planting native and medicinal plants, creating community learning spaces in the process.
-



Maria Fernanda Gonzáles

Facilitator of traditional Brunka weaving courses

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- » **Fellowship training outcomes across all regions:** Fellows strengthened their leadership, technical, and advocacy skills in defense of Indigenous women's rights. They deepened their understanding of individual and collective rights, built their capacity to design community projects, and increased their participation in decision-making spaces.



- » **UNPFII representation:** Fellows from the Maya Yucateco and Aymara Peoples participated in the 24th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, delivering statements and recommendations on behalf of their Peoples. Beyond their formal interventions, the fellows gained firsthand experience navigating UN processes - knowledge that will strengthen their advocacy for years to come. The session also offered a rare opportunity to build connections with Indigenous women from around the world, deepening the networks of solidarity that underpin effective international advocacy.

» **UN advocacy training:** Through a partnership with the University of Arizona, 20 Indigenous women from all 7 sociocultural regions completed an online certificate course on UN advocacy. They learned how the UN system can be used to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and developed practical skills, including drafting statements and reports for UN mechanisms.

» **Special training sessions:** All of the Indigenous women who applied for Land is Life's 2025 fellowship received dedicated trainings to strengthen their project proposal writing and budgeting skills.



BATWA/BANYINDU WOMEN ADVANCING INCLUSIVE LAND GOVERNANCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Batwa/Banyindu women's participation in land-related matters is frequently treated as a threat to tradition, excluding them from mediation and decision-making processes. To address this, a 2025 Fellow implemented a training program through which 26 Indigenous women strengthened their knowledge of agrarian law and land tenure security.

These women then engaged local and traditional authorities to advocate for Indigenous women's active participation in land governance. As a result, Batwa/Banyindu women are now using their new skills to facilitate the resolution of family land disputes, asserting their rights with greater confidence, and documenting cases affecting their territorial rights. This initiative both empowered the participants and fostered broader community dialogue around inclusive land governance - with Batwa Banyindu women at the center.



INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & SECURITY

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Security Program supports Indigenous Peoples to revitalize traditional food systems and resist pressures from the climate crisis, industrial agriculture and extractive industries. The program is coordinated by a team of Indigenous Peoples' food systems experts and Land is Life's Africa and Mesoamerica Program Directors.

In 2025, program initiatives increased access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods and traditional medicine, while promoting self-sufficient food production systems that reduce reliance on external food sources. They reinforced traditional knowledge systems and supported intergenerational knowledge exchange, helping preserve and transmit cultural practices. At the same time, these efforts enhanced communities' resilience to climate challenges and strengthened economic opportunities through community entrepreneurship and income-generation activities, contributing to more sustainable and locally rooted livelihoods.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

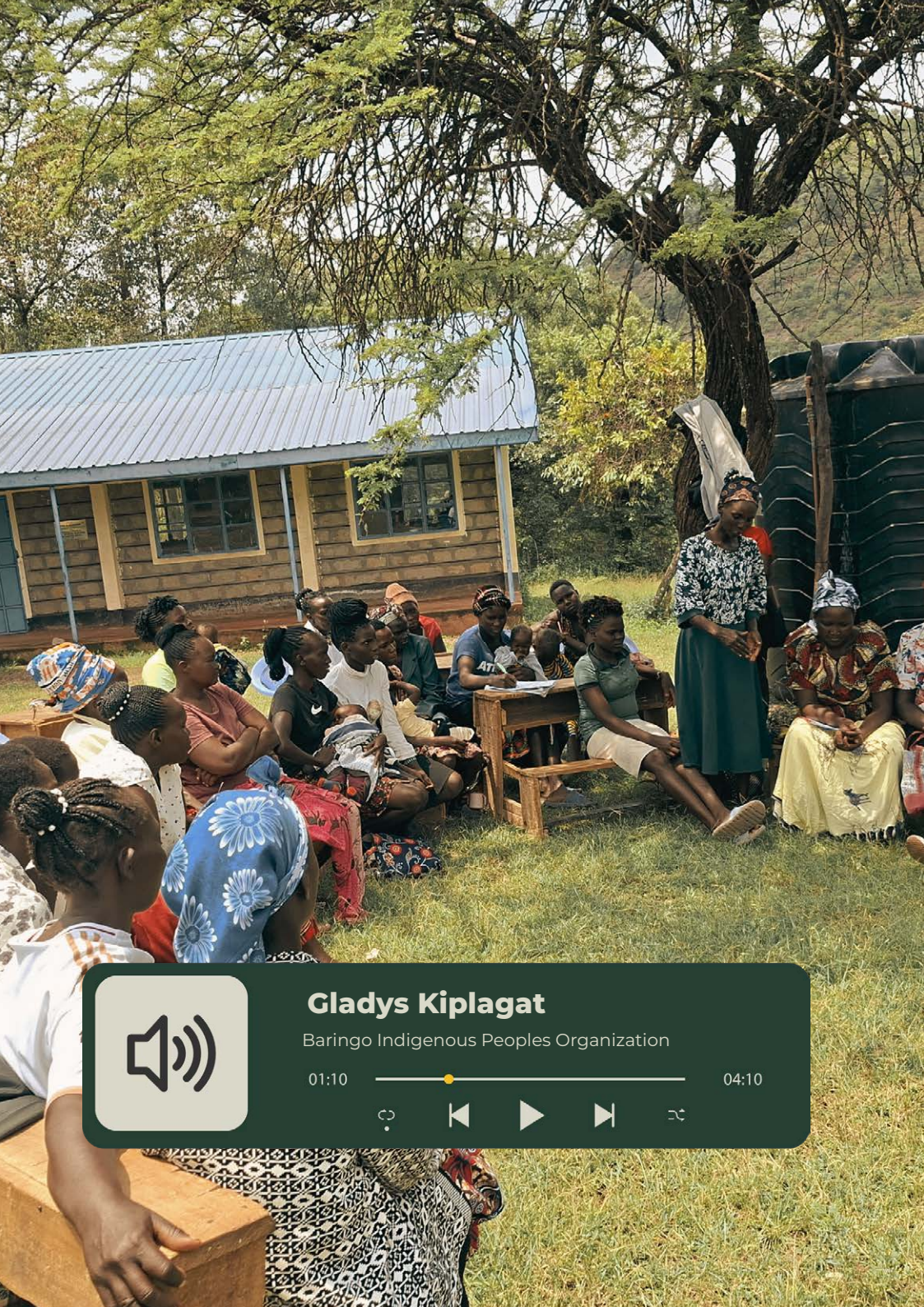
Support was provided to **Maasai, Batwa, Endorois and Bedzang Indigenous Peoples in Kenya, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).**



- » **Kitchen Gardens Advance Indigenous Food Sovereignty:** More than 400 Indigenous individuals in Kenya are now growing their own food through kitchen gardens, strengthening household nutrition and reducing dependence on external food systems.



- » **Traditional Seed Systems Strengthen Biodiversity and Resilience:** 150 Indigenous farmers in Kenya are preserving and exchanging traditional seeds, ensuring biodiversity is protected and farming systems remain adapted to local ecosystems.



Gladys Kiplagat

Baringo Indigenous Peoples Organization

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SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



- » **Beekeeping Strengthens Sustainable Livelihoods:** 100 Indigenous individuals in Kenya are generating sustainable livelihoods through environmentally responsible beekeeping, increasing income while supporting ecosystem health.



- » **Climate-Resilient Farming Builds Food Security:** 125 Indigenous individuals in Cameroon are now practicing climate-resilient agriculture,



improving soil health, diversifying crops, and strengthening food security in the face of environmental change.



- » **Livelihood Diversification Through Rabbit Farming:** 190 Indigenous individuals in the DRC are building sustainable income streams through rabbit farming, reducing economic vulnerability and increasing community resilience.





Doris Rojas

Indígena Brunka Costa Rica

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MESOAMERICA

In **Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua, Boruca and Miskitu** Indigenous Peoples are strengthening cultural and territorial continuity through restored food systems, revived traditional knowledge, and intergenerational learning.



- » **Traditional knowledge on seed-saving:** soil health, water management, and crop systems is being actively revived and shared across generations, strengthening communities' resilience and long-term food security.



- » **Restoration of Traditional Crops and Medicinal Plants:** Seven hectares of traditional food crops and medicinal plants have been restored in the Lainasta territory (Honduran Moskitia), strengthening food sovereignty and improving ecosystem health for 450 Indigenous individuals.



- » **Ancestral Knowledge Transmission:** 470 Indigenous women in Costa Rica are strengthening cultural transmission and craft-based livelihoods through revived knowledge of weaving and natural dye production, strengthening intergenerational continuity of traditional skills and economic autonomy.
-



- » **Coastal Art Livelihoods:** 200 Indigenous young women in Tuapi, Nicaragua are developing cultural expression and livelihoods through coastal art practices, reinforcing identity while creating new opportunities for youth engagement and economic independence.
-

SEEDS OF RESILIENCE: LAINASTA WOMEN STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION IN HONDURAN MOSKITIA

Our territory is estimated to be one of the most disadvantaged areas of the Honduran Moskitia. The majority of Indigenous women who live here are single mothers, and others have disabled husbands due to diving-related illnesses. Food production and daily sustenance depend on us, and institutional support from the State is very scarce. Therefore, we greatly appreciate the training and technical assistance to support us as women. We are thankful for the trust. Here, we managed to improve the health of our crops, where we carried out drainage works, weed management, and pest control. We learned to organize our plantings, taking climate change effects into account. Now we understand how and why the climate is changing, and we also have food and traditional seeds that we had lost due to recent natural disasters.

Bruselas Richard, member of the Organization of Women Lainasta Honduras (October 22, 2025).

CLIMATE CRISIS RESPONSE PROGRAM

Land is Life stands in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples facing intensifying climate change impacts - including extreme weather events like hurricanes, floods, and droughts, and biodiversity loss. Our Climate Crisis Response Program delivers rapid support to communities affected by these threats, with each regional response coordinated by Indigenous leaders who ensure due diligence, accountability, and flexible support tailored directly to local needs.

The program builds community awareness of the root causes of the climate crisis and their disproportionate effects on Indigenous women and food systems, while strengthening disaster preparedness, coordinated response, and territorial stewardship. Over the long-term, the program enhances communities' capacity to challenge false climate solutions, shape policy recommendations that recognize the critical role of Indigenous Peoples, and build the unity and solidarity needed to advance climate justice and genuine sustainable development.



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Cecilio Librado

Presidente of Federación Indígena Empresarial y de Comunidades Locales de México - CIELO

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MESOAMERICA

MESOAMERICA

A major climate emergency in Veracruz, Mexico was contained through a coordinated Indigenous-led response, reducing longer-term displacement and enabling community recovery for the **Nahua People**.



- » **Food System Restoration:** 100 Indigenous Nahua families (780 individuals) in Veracruz, Mexico stabilized food access and began recovery after severe flooding, receiving emergency food kits and seeds that restarted household food production.



- » **Beekeeping Recovery:** 300 beehives lost in the floods were replaced, allowing affected families to restart beekeeping - their primary source of income.



- » **Food sovereignty and agricultural systems:** were restored in El Mangal and El Pescador, with households rebuilding both immediate food security and longer-term production capacity.



AMAZON BASIN

Three major climate emergencies across Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela were contained through coordinated Indigenous-led responses, reducing longer-term displacement and enabling community recovery across multiple territories. Affected Peoples, included the **Inga, Kichwa, Boveras, Baniva, Warekena, Jivi, Piaroa, Baré, Curripaco, Yanomami, and Piapoco** Indigenous Peoples.



- » **Basic Services Restoration:** 10 Indigenous Peoples' communities regained basic safety and continuity of life, with recovery and mitigation support restoring access to land, homes, water systems, and food production.



- » **Territorial Recovery Efforts:** 6,000 Indigenous individuals across the Amazon Basin were supported to recover from climate shocks - including landslides and floods - restoring essential infrastructure, livelihoods, and territorial stability.



Luz Erminde Mutumbajoy

Inga Indigenous leader from Colombia

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- » **Territorial Access Recovery:** 2,000 Inga families in Colombia regained access to their territory after debris removal and road reopening restored access to the Yunguillo Indigenous Reserve.



- » **Safe Water Access:** 120 Kichwa Boveras families in Ecuador regained access to safe water through restored wells and purification systems in the Bobonaza River micro-basin.



- » **Emergency Humanitarian Support:** 100 families from the Baniva, Warekena, Jivi, Piaroa, Baré, Curripaco, Yanomami, Piapoco peoples in Venezuela received emergency food, water, clothing, and medicines to stabilize survival conditions during emergency displacement.

WHEN THE ROAD CLOSES, THE COMMUNITY LEADS: EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN THE YUNGUILLO INDIGENOUS RESERVE, COLOMBIA

Landslides blocking 80% of the Mocoa-Yunguillo road left more than 5,000 Indigenous individuals in the Yunguillo Reserve and surrounding communities isolated for 12 days. The disaster caused loss of life, damaged traditional agricultural plots (*chagras*), and severely restricted access to food, healthcare, water, and education. When state authorities failed to respond adequately - and communal work parties (*mingas*) proved insufficient given the scale of the damage - Land is Life secured urgent support to hire heavy machinery, including a backhoe and dump truck, for debris removal, slope stabilization, and restoration of the road corridor.

The road was reopened in time to reduce further health risks and restore access to essential services. Crucially, the response was led by the Warmikunapa Tarpui Amazonian Women's Association (Asociación de Mujeres Amazónicas Warmikunapa Tarpui - AMAWAKI), who coordinated both the technical and community dimensions of the effort. Their leadership was recognized by both the community and local authorities, establishing AMAWAKI as a model of Indigenous governance and women's effective participation in territorial management and emergency response.



ASIA

ASIA

Three major climate emergencies in India, Thailand, and the Philippines were addressed through rapid Indigenous-led response, preventing deeper humanitarian deterioration in the affected territories of the **Ati, Dumagat, Hmong, Thin, Mien and Meitei** Indigenous Peoples.



- » **Emergency relief in the Philippines and Thailand:** 1,430 Indigenous individuals (251 households) regained basic stability after typhoons and flooding, receiving emergency food, hygiene kits, shelter materials, and essential supplies for home recovery.



- » **Trauma support for children in the Philippines:** 130 Indigenous children received support to process climate-related trauma following severe flooding, strengthening their emotional recovery and resilience.



» **Collective political action in Northeast India:**

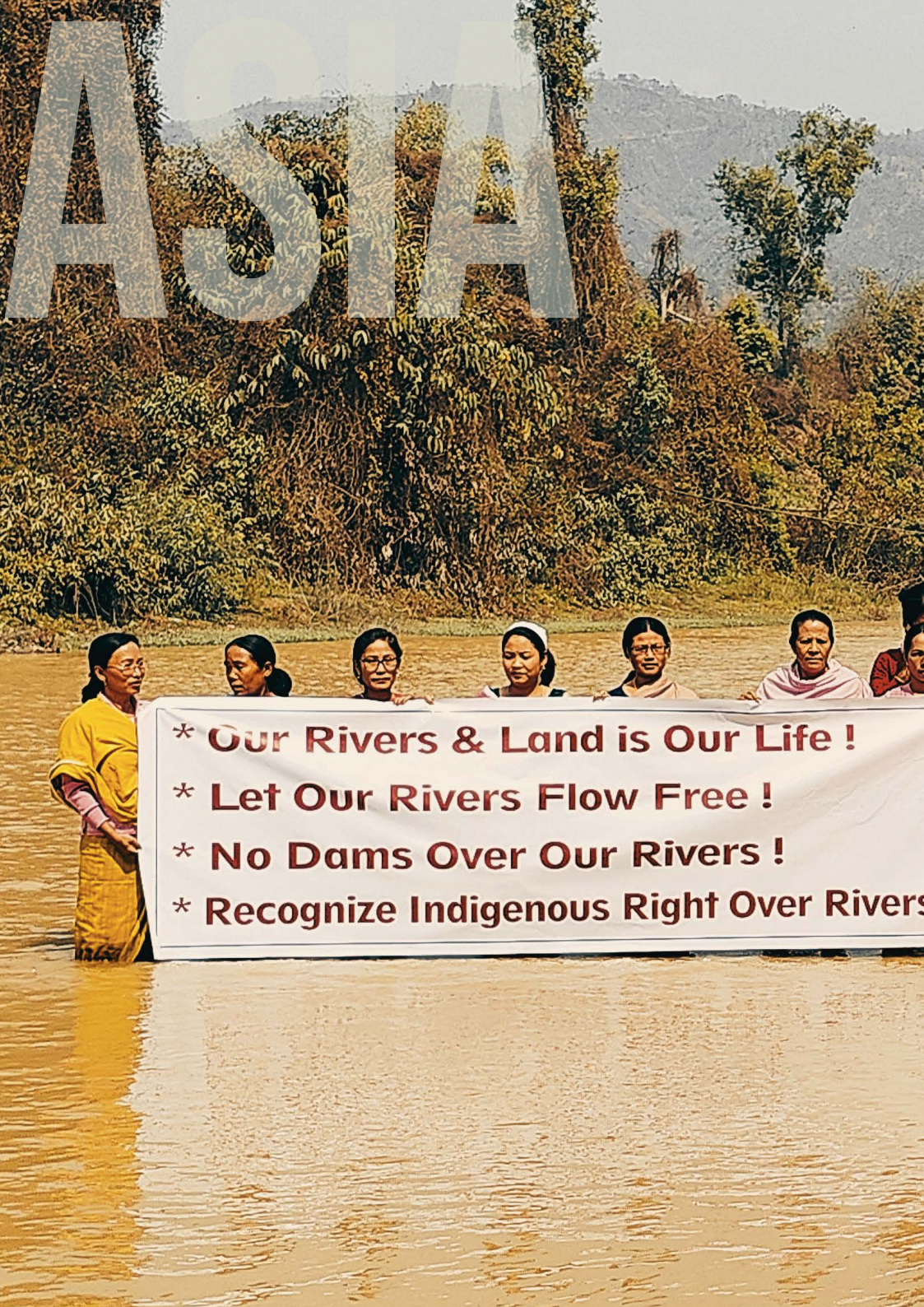
More than 350 Indigenous leaders strengthened collective political action on climate and development, resulting in community resolutions asserting territorial rights and rejecting harmful “false solutions”, including the proposed Zeilad and Bunning Wildlife Sanctuaries, and the expansion of palm oil cultivation.



» **Climate governance dialogue in Manipur:**

Indigenous Peoples advanced direct dialogue with government authorities on climate and disaster governance, strengthening accountability mechanisms and securing follow-up on policy commitments.

ASIA

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- A group of women are standing in a river, holding a long white banner. The water is a muddy yellowish-brown. In the background, there is a dense forest of green and brown trees, and a mountain range is visible in the distance under a clear sky. The women are dressed in traditional Asian clothing, including saris and a headscarf. The banner they are holding contains four lines of text, each preceded by an asterisk.
- * **Our Rivers & Land is Our Life !**
 - * **Let Our Rivers Flow Free !**
 - * **No Dams Over Our Rivers !**
 - * **Recognize Indigenous Right Over Rivers**



Ned Tuguinay

The Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Philippines

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PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION AND INITIAL CONTACT

Land is Life reinforced protections for the Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation and initial contact (PIACI) - among the most vulnerable Peoples in the world, facing existential threats to their lives, territories, and ways of life.



- » **Territorial protection in Paraguay:** Land is Life supported territorial patrols led by the Ayoreo Totobiegosode People to prevent illegal logging and fires set by outsiders in the virgin forest of the Alto Paraguay, protecting approximately 140,000 hectares of forest and safeguarding the territory of Peoples living in Voluntary Isolation.



- » **Humanitarian response in Ecuador:** Seven Waorani families in the Yasuni territory lost their banana and cassava crops following incursions by the Taromenane - an Indigenous People living in voluntary isolation. Land is Life provided urgent food assistance to the affected families and activated an immediate response to prevent confrontations between the Waorani and Taromenane Peoples, protecting both communities' safety and rights.



WHAT WE LEARNED

This past year reinforced a core conviction: when Indigenous Peoples are informed of their rights, equipped with skills in documentation, safety, and security, and actively engaged in strategic mobilization, they shape decisions that affect their lives, at the local, national, and international levels. Centering Indigenous Peoples' perspectives is not only a principle, but a practice. It is what ensures responses are grounded in that knowledge, and that partnerships are built on respect, nuance, and genuine accountability to the communities they serve

Across regions - from Africa and Asia to Mesoamerica and South America - our experience has confirmed that timely, flexible, and community-centered support makes a decisive difference. Simplified application processes and rapid-response funding remove barriers that often delay assistance, allowing Indigenous Peoples to act decisively in moments of urgency. Territorial presence, trusted relationships with Indigenous authorities, and culturally grounded communication strengthen transparency and legitimacy, ensuring that support is experienced not as external assistance but as a genuine partnership. Importantly, building the

leadership and technical capacities of Indigenous women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples' organizations enhances resilience, enabling communities to sustain protection mechanisms and governance systems long after a project or initiative ends.

Our work in food sovereignty, climate resilience, and ecosystem stewardship has reinforced a core truth: Indigenous Peoples' knowledge is at the heart of sustainable and resilient solutions. From traditional food systems to climate adaptation strategies, the most lasting and transformative outcomes come from Indigenous-led strategies that honor spiritual, ecological, and territorial relationships. Collaborative networks, participatory monitoring, and early warning systems extend the reach and impact of these initiatives while reducing vulnerability.

These lessons shape how Land is Life moves forward - grounded in local realities, connected to global advocacy, and committed to a future where Indigenous Peoples' autonomy, rights, and leadership continue to flourish.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The challenges Indigenous Peoples face today demand more than reflection; they require strategic action. In 2025, Land is Life and its coalition members collectively developed the [2026–2029 Strategic Plan](#), marking a shift from responsive programming toward systemic transformation and positioning Indigenous-led solutions as central to climate resilience, conservation, and development.

The plan was shaped by insights from 107 coalition members representing 86 Indigenous Peoples across 27 countries. It prioritizes territorial protection, defender security, strengthened governance (especially for Indigenous women and youth), and greater influence over climate finance and resource decisions.

The strategy rests on three interconnected pillars that function as a reinforcing system, where each strengthens the others: **i) Territorial Defense and Crisis Response, ii) Governance & Leadership Support, and iii) Advocacy & Policy Influence.**

Together, these pillars aim to shift power away from emergency response cycles and toward Indigenous-controlled governance backed by enforceable rights and independent resources.

The strategy advances two complementary goals:

1. **Strengthen Collective Action & Strategic Advocacy**, enabling Indigenous Peoples to act together, share lessons, and amplify influence for greater policy impact.
2. **Enhance Strategic Positioning, ensuring Indigenous Peoples** are recognized as decision-makers and rights holders, shaping local, regional, and global agendas while reducing dependency on external actors.

Land is Life occupies a distinctive position in the Indigenous Peoples' movement: bridging urgent protection needs and long-term systemic change, connecting grassroots territorial defense and leadership strengthening with high-level advocacy. Grounded in decades of experience, deep partnerships, and a clear vision, we are ready to expand our impact and support Indigenous-led solutions into their next chapter.

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- Asociación de Mujeres Ashiñwaka
- Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP)
- Asia Young Indigenous Peoples Network (AYIPN)
- Center for Research and Advocacy (CRAM) Manipur
- Comitê Intertribal Memória e Ciência Indígena (ITC)
- Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA)
- Dignité Pygmée
- Maleya Foundation
- Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP)
- Pastoralist Women's Council (PWC)
- Payipie Ichadie Totobiegosode (OPIT)

- Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad (RMIB)
- Red Indígena de Turismo de México (RITA)
- Tin Hinan
- Yadupa

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