

IF NOT US
THEN WHO?

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

AROUND THE FIRE

Image: Lucia Ixchú



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, *If Not Us Then Who?* did what it was built to do. It put the camera, the microphone, and the platform in the hands of the people whose territories hold the answers on how to protect our planet — and it carried their stories into the rooms where decisions are made.

The year turned on a single day. On Earth Day, 76 Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community filmmakers filmed their own territories across 27 countries, in their own languages, on their own terms. A Day on Earth was the clearest expression of a principle that runs through everything here: the communities living climate solutions should be the ones telling the story.

Behind that day stood years of deep work. In 2025 alone we trained 205 Indigenous, local, and Afro-descendant filmmakers and photographers, supported 364 creatives with grants, equipment, and mentorship, produced 78 films and photography projects across 391 communities and carried 108 of their calls to action into festivals, screenings, and policy forums.

Ten of our mentorship films are now traveling to festivals in more than 15 countries; one of them, Lucía Ixchiu's *Uq'axik b'e, Atravesar Caminos*, won Best Short Documentary at the Cannes Short Film Festival.

The work reached far beyond the territories. Our own films and campaigns reached 561,000 people organically and 2.9 million through Our Pledge, and at peak moments coverage of our stories reached a cumulative, non-unique audience, estimated at more than 11.5 billion. And it reached into policy itself.



Across the climate-finance commitments signed between 2011 and 2025, two things shifted in 2025: the word pledge appeared prominently in the negotiating language for the first time in that fifteen-year record, and the pledges signed that year placed Indigenous Peoples at the center of their promises, where for most of the period they had sat at the margins. We did not achieve this alone, but our hands were on the language.

The work moved through four stages across the year, the life of a fire - our metaphor for this year's report.



What carries forward is clear. The commitments on paper now have to become commitments in practice, and our storytelling will keep them in view. A Day on Earth moves toward its global launch on Earth Day 2027. And the network of storytellers at the heart of this work keeps growing, into seven new countries in 2025 alone, and further still in the year to come.

This report is the record of the fire that was tended in 2025, by many hands.

A B O U T

IF NOT US THEN WHO?

Since 2013, If Not Us Then Who? has walked alongside Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities defending their lands and rights, amplifying their visibility, voice, and influence in global environmental and climate discourse through storytelling, training, and events that carry their demands into the rooms where decisions are made.



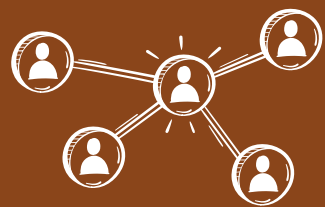
OUR VISION

We recognize ourselves as nature through diverse, authentic storytelling that inspires a culture of community action in a just, abundant world.



OUR MISSION

A global intercultural collective of storytellers diversifying climate voices for impact — working with communities living solutions to climate change, reframing narratives, and creating platforms for dialogue.



OUR VALUES

We are nature. Authenticity. Justice. Collaboration. Resilience. Creativity. Inclusion. Integrity.



T E N D I N G T H E F I R E

STORYTELLERS BECOMING LEADERS

*A letter from Paul Redman, Executive Director,
If Not Us Then Who?*

There are moments when you realize the work has become something bigger than you imagined.

For me, one of those moments came on Earth Day 2025.

As I sat in front of a screen, footage began arriving from 76 Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community filmmakers working across 27 countries. They were not documenting extraordinary events. They were filming the everyday acts of stewardship that have sustained forests, rivers, oceans, and cultures for generations.

It struck me that I wasn't simply watching stories being told. I was watching leadership take shape.

When I founded If Not Us Then Who?, twelve years ago, I believed the people closest to the solutions should also be the people shaping the narrative. Over time, I've come to understand that storytelling is not the destination. It is the infrastructure that allows leadership to emerge, communities to connect, and voices that have too often been excluded to help shape the decisions that affect us all.

In 2025, that vision became more tangible than ever. Across the territories where we work, storytellers became advocates, communicators became trusted leaders, and communities strengthened their ability to speak on their own terms. More than 200 Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local storytellers developed new skills, 391 communities shared their stories with the world, millions of people encountered perspectives too often absent from the climate conversation, and Indigenous leadership continued to move closer to the centre of global climate decision-making.

What gives me hope is not simply the number of films made or people reached. It is seeing communities build the confidence, relationships, and institutions to lead. When people tell their own stories, they do more than change the narrative. They change who is trusted, who belongs at the table, and who helps shape the future.

The climate crisis will not be solved by louder voices. It will be addressed by listening to those who have cared for the Earth for generations and by investing in the leadership that already exists within their communities.

That is the work of If Not Us Then Who?. And it is a future we are building together.

Paul A. Redman

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

This was a year of conviction. In a climate that tested every organization working for justice, the team at If Not Us Then Who? chose to build rather than retreat, and the work in these pages is the result: 205 storytellers trained, 391 communities featured, and the language of global climate finance reshaped to place Indigenous Peoples at its center.

None of it strayed from the purpose this organization was founded on. INUTW exists so that the people closest to the world's forests, rivers, and territories can tell their own stories, on their own terms, and be heard by those who decide. Everything the team did in 2025 served that single, clear goal. A Day on Earth showed what that purpose looks like at its most ambitious. Seventy-six filmmakers, twenty-seven countries, one day, and a film made by the communities it portrays. It is a remarkable achievement, and the work to carry it to the world by 2027 has only begun.

To the staff, the storytellers, the partners, and the communities who made this year: thank you. You have kept the fire burning through a difficult year, and you have done it with dignity, courage, and care. We are proud to stand with you, and we look to 2026 with confidence in the hands that hold this work.

The Board of If Not Us Then Who?





2025 IN NUMBERS

WHAT 2025 LOOKED LIKE

THE STORYTELLERS WE WALKED ALONGSIDE

205

storytellers trained

364

creatives supported

25.2%

of expenditure to Indigenous partners
for their work and leadership across the network

78

film & photography projects

THE COMMUNITIES THE WORK SERVED

391

communities featured
created in our programs and projects

108

community calls to action carried

155

partner organizations

17

funders connected directly

THE AUDIENCES THE WORK REACHED

561,000

reached organically

2.9M

reached by Our Pledge

85

screenings worldwide

38

festivals in 15+ countries
including Best Short Documentary at Cannes

THE CHANGE THE WORK LANDED

97

decision-makers engaged

11.5B

estimated earned-media audience
*peak moments

174

climate-finance pledges
analyzed (2011–2025)

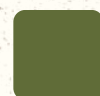
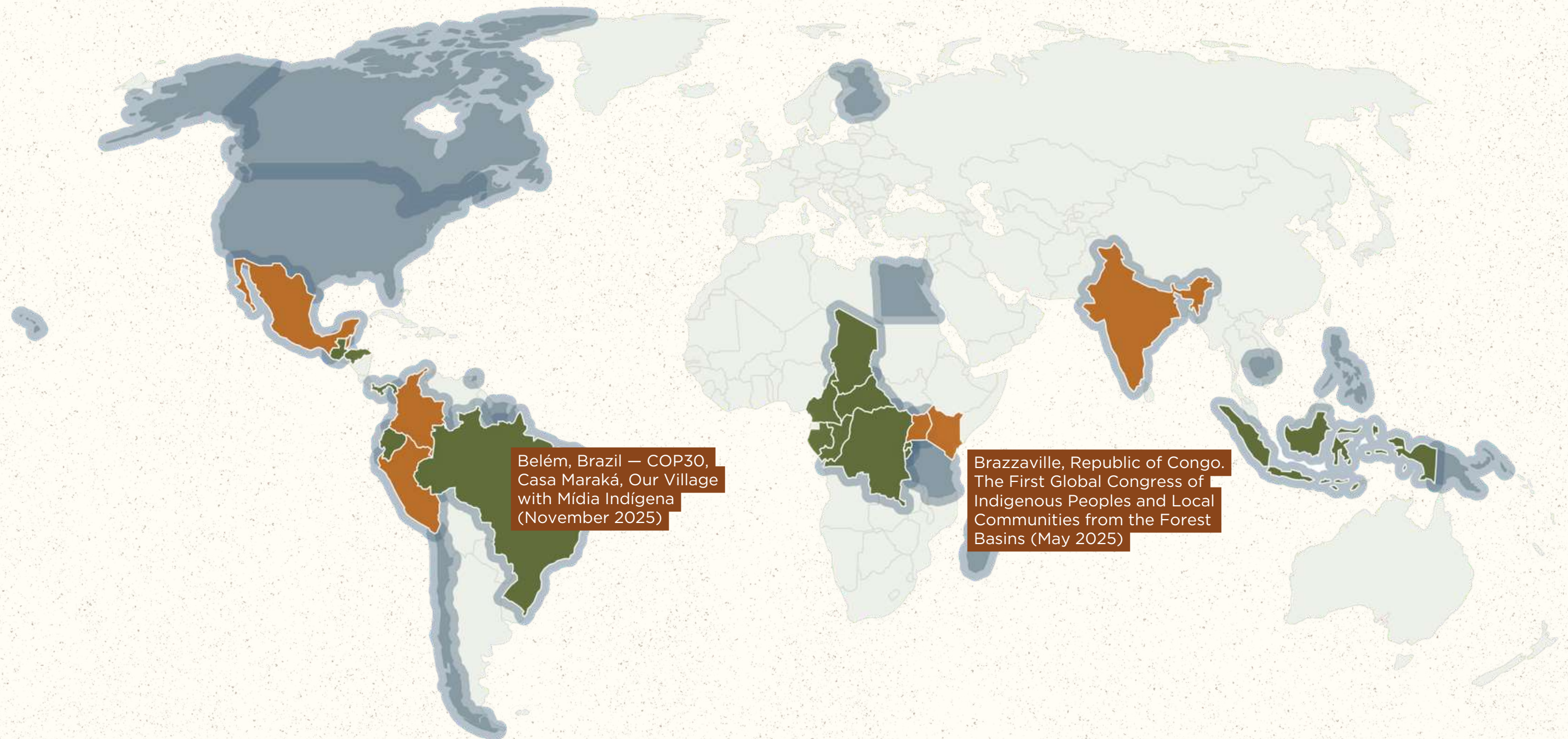
2025

the year the word pledge entered
the negotiating language

Indigenous Peoples at the centre of every climate-
finance pledge signed in 2025

WHERE THE WORK HAPPENED

On Earth Day, A Day on Earth was filmed across 27 countries. Across the year, our training and in-person programs reached communities in the Americas, the Congo Basin, and the Indo-Pacific, with seven new countries added in 2025: India, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Kenya, Uganda, and Belize.



**PROGRAMMATIC
COUNTRY, 2025**



**NEW PROGRAMMATIC
COUNTRY IN 2025**



**PARTICIPATING
COUNTRIES ON
A DAY ON EARTH**



**PROGRAMMATIC &
A DAY ON EARTH**

OUR WORK IN 2025

WHAT WE DID, WHERE

Three departments holding one fire.



STORYTELLING DEPARTMENT

Produces the films and media that carry community voices outward, including A Day on Earth.



TRAINING DEPARTMENT

Equips storytellers to lead their own narratives across our six programs.



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Shaped Our Pledge and the analysis tracing how climate-finance language shifted in 2025.



AROUND THE FIRE

**In nearly every tradition the network holds,
the most important conversations happen around a fire.**

This report follows five moments in its life.



PART ONE — STORYTELLERS

THE SPARK

We walk alongside storytellers as they tell their own stories, from first film to lifelong practice. Becoming a storyteller takes years and a network: mentors and peers, equipment, distribution, and a community to return to. In 2025, we strengthened those conditions across six programs.



THE EMERGING FILMMAKERS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

A one-year cycle of intensive, personalized support: mentor pairings, peer learning, masterclasses, and end-to-end production. The 2024-25 cycle was the largest the Mentorship has run, with 36 mentees (8 filmmakers and 9 collectives) across 15 ethnicities and three regions, completing eleven short films, ten now travelling festival circuits worldwide.



THE INDONESIA RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Immersive, locally led training for storytellers from across the Indonesian archipelago, in partnership with the Tenure Facility. The 2025 cycle deepened our work with Iban, Sasak, Minahasan, Bahau, and Dayak communicators, and laid the foundation for the next regional cohort.



COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM CENTRAL AFRICA

Delivered with REPALEAC, the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa, and supported by the Tenure Facility. Twenty-five leaders strengthened their communication and leadership skills across eight Central African countries. Twenty-two mobile journalism kits were delivered, workshops were held in Douala and Brazzaville, and eight short documentary projects are now in development.



MICROGRANTS PROGRAM

Launched in 2025 to extend support beyond the formal mentorship cycle. The first call drew 32 applications from across the network. Grants of \$2,000 to \$5,000 were awarded by the INUTW Pedagogical Council, based on community impact, viability, and alignment with climate justice narratives.



COMMUNITY THRIVING NARRATIVES HEALTH IN HARMONY, PANAMA

In-person training led by Alcibiades Rodríguez and Julieth Arias of Ulu Films, across three Guna territories of Panama. A direct extension of the Ulu Films alumni's move from mentees to mentors. This initiative gives 2-year employment to our leading creatives to deepen capacity in remote communities, developing locally based communications livelihoods.



COMMUNITY THRIVING NARRATIVES HEALTH IN HARMONY, BRAZIL

A new program in preparation for the Apyterewa Parakanã territory in Xingu, set to begin in 2026. A pre-visit in 2025, led by Renan Khisetje, established the relationships and consultations the program requires.

Across all six, the same principle holds: train deeply, return often, and keep the infrastructure in community hands.



Image: Tirza Ixmucané

FEATURED STORY

FROM SUPPORTING THE WORK TO LEADING IT

Tirza Ixmucané came into our first Emerging Filmmakers cohort in 2024 from the supporting side of the work. She was on the production team that walks alongside storytellers, not yet behind the camera herself. The fear, she said later, was not technical. It was the deeper fear of permission, the sense that the camera was not hers to hold.

The cohort was designed to dissolve that fear slowly, in community, through mentorship, peer screenings, and masterclasses. Most of all it gave her time to develop a film about something she cared about more than her own doubt: Ati't, stories of grandmother lake, a love letter to Lake Atitlán and to the Maya cosmovision that holds the lake as a living grandmother.

Ati't is not about climate science. It is about how a community knows its own water, first-person, place-specific, ancestrally grounded, and whole. It is the kind of story the climate movement has been asking for and rarely receiving.

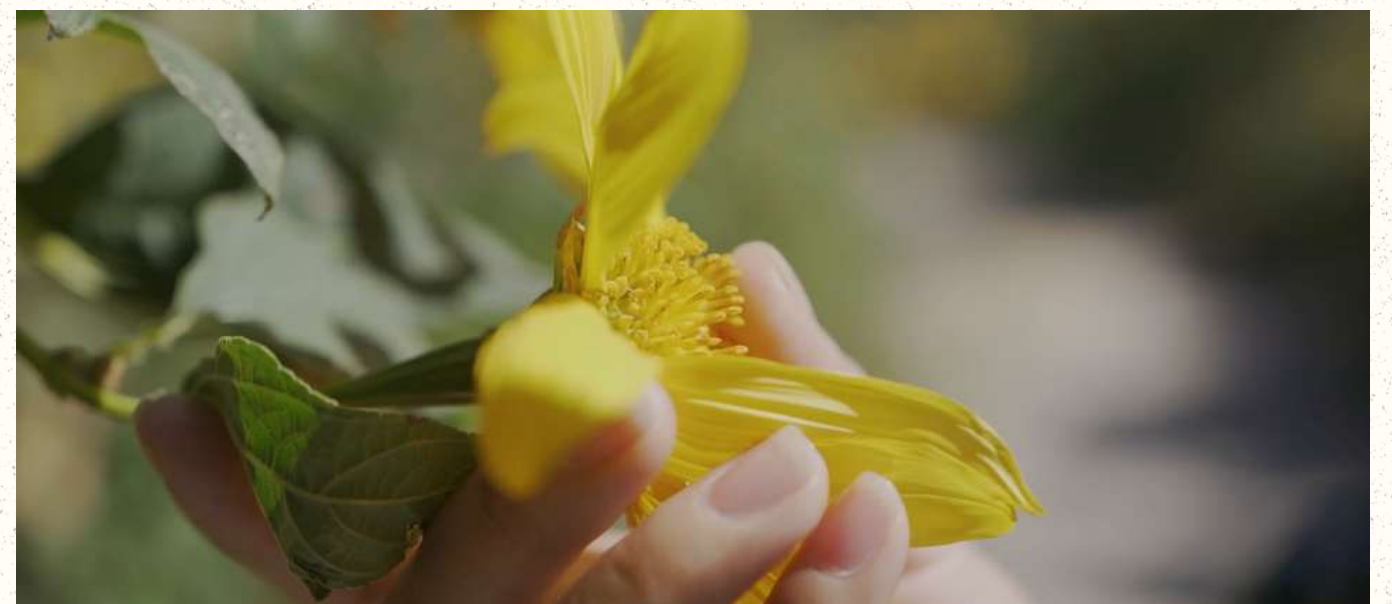
By the close of 2025, Ati't had screened in more than ten countries and won recognition at four festivals. Tirza had moved from the supporting team toward the leadership table: co-facilitating sessions for younger storytellers in the next cohort, joining the FinnCali Film Festival jury alongside our Head of Training, Yurshell Rodríguez, and beginning to shape curriculum from the storyteller's side of the room.

Her arc matters because it can be repeated. Our programs are built not to produce one Tirza but so that the conditions she needed, time and trust, technical support, a community to return to, and the patience to let a story ripen, exist for every storyteller in the network. In 2025, that existed for 205 of them.

"This experience meant a transformation. I learned that I can do filmmaking. I lost the fear to do it because I felt like I had support."

— Tirza Ixmucané, Maya K'iche, Guatemala

Ati't, stories of grandmother lake · Emerging Filmmakers Program · screened in ten countries, four festival awards





FEATURED STORY

NINE YEARS, AND STILL BEGINNING

Kalfein Wuisan has walked alongside us for nearly nine years, one of the longest relationships in the network. His journey shows what becomes possible when storytelling support lasts across a decade rather than a single project.

In 2025 his short film Rolly: A Story of My Father, a portrait of his 73-year-old father, a Minahasan elder, palm wine maker, and protector of the forests around his village, was officially selected by seven international festivals: the Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival in Indonesia, IndiFest Barcelona, the Antares Film Festival in Russia, the International Festival of Ethnological Film in Belgrade, the Sydney Film Festival as a finalist for the First Nations and Sustainable Future Award, the Ecoframes Environmental Film Festival, and The Climates International Climate Film Festival. The Sydney selection places his work, and the Minahasan forest he documents, before the festival circuit that shapes climate documentary across the Asia-Pacific.

Image: Kalfein Wuisan

Harder to capture is what Kalfein has built around himself. He founded an Indigenous Smartphone Film Festival in Indonesia, he mentors the next cohort, and he has done commission work for the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, AMAN, and others, his films now sitting in advocacy catalogues on Indigenous solutions to the climate crisis. As he puts it, films like his bring communities' voices to a global level, where they can influence not only decision-makers but funders. He now shares his experience in his smartphone-based training and micro film festivals across Sulawesi.

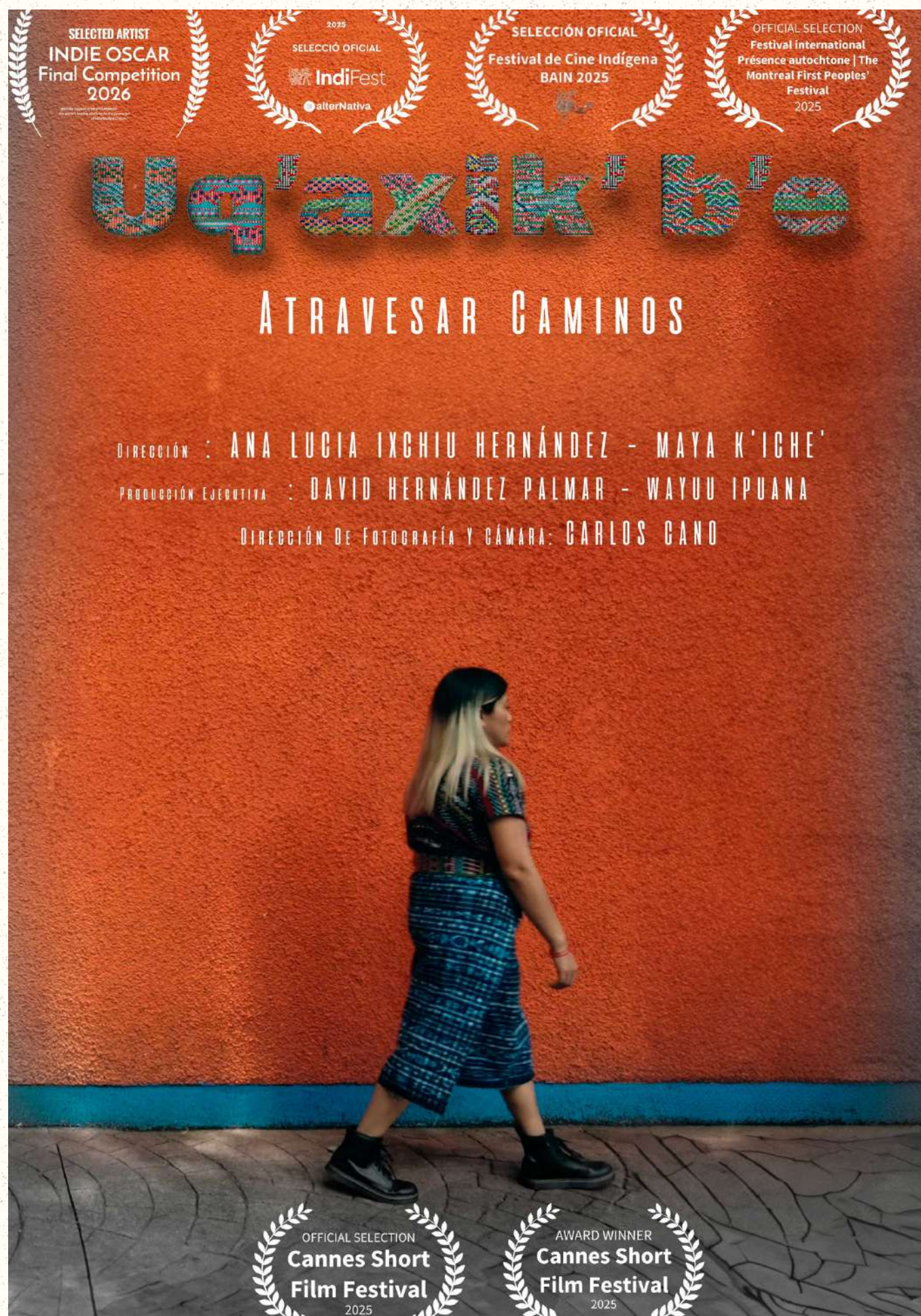
This is the part of training that does not appear in the first year's outputs. It appears in the ninth, when a storyteller has become both an author of his own work and an architect of the conditions under which others can make theirs.

"This program did not only train me as a filmmaker, but also on how to be more human."

— Kalfein Wuisan, Minahasa, Indonesia

Rolly: A Story of My Father · Mentorship · selected for seven international festivals including Sydney





FEATURED STORY

THE WALK ACROSS

Lucía Ixchiu's short documentary **Uq'axik b'e, Atravesar Caminos (Crossing Paths)** tells the story of her own exile. A Maya K'iche woman from Guatemala, an artist, journalist, and human rights defender, she was forced to leave her country after more than a decade of activism that exposed her to violence. The film is what she made of that leaving.

In 2025, it won **Best Short Documentary at the Cannes Short Film Festival** and screened at festivals across the Americas, Asia, and Europe. In the autumn, Lucía Ixchiu organized the Yaku Mama flotilla, a river journey of Indigenous women and allies in the lead-up to COP30, taking the film into community screenings through 12 Amazonian territories along the way.



Two things about this arc the festival list cannot say. The first is that Atravesar Caminos is a film about exile told by the person in exile, in her own language, on her own timeline. Our role was to walk alongside the work, not to author it. The film is hers, and that distinction is the principle the whole report rests on.

The second is that her 2025 was not only her film. She is the Impact Producer of A Day on Earth, one of its 76 filmmakers, and one of the people shaping its 2027 launch, holding three roles at once: author of her own work, producer of a global collaboration, and future mentor. Part Three returns to her in that second role.

"After more than a decade of activism through art, I was forced into exile. I wanted to document and tell about that journey."

— Lucía Ixchiu, Maya K'iche, Guatemala

Uq'axik b'e, Atravesar Caminos · Mentorship · Best Short Documentary, Cannes Short Film Festival 2025

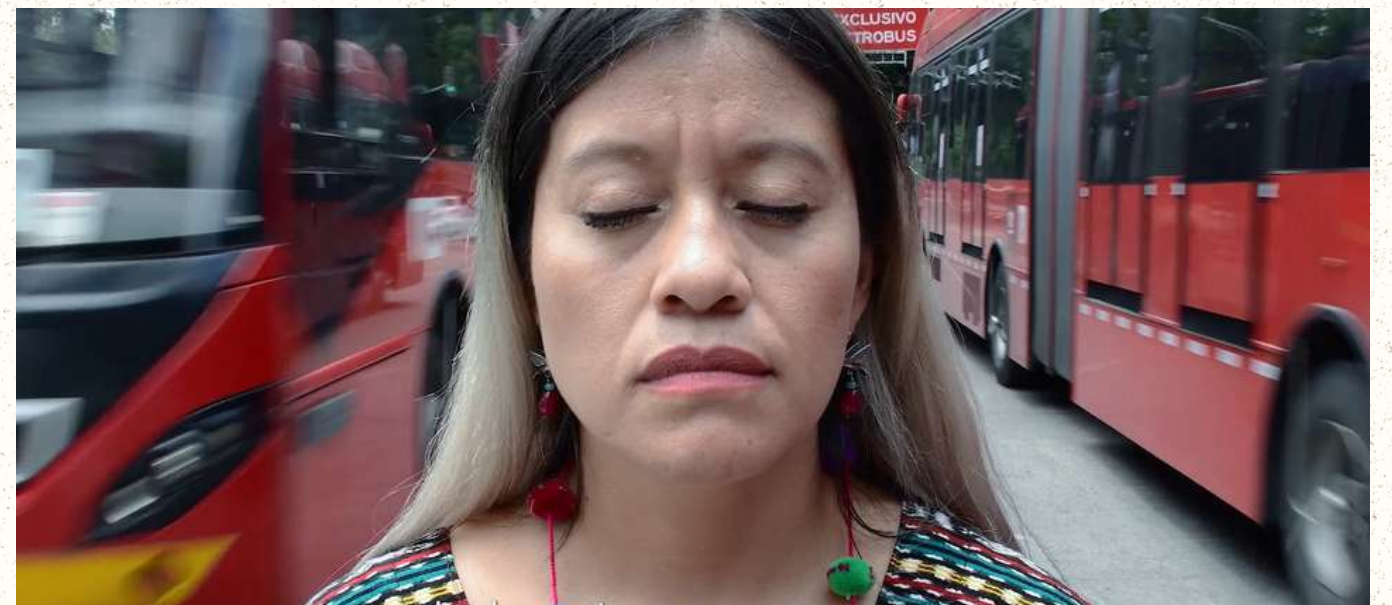




Image: GATC

WHAT THE STORYTELLERS TOLD US

From qualitative interviews with Mentorship and Emerging Filmmakers Program participants, 2025.

100%

reported a transformation in self-confidence and creative voice

Participants described losing the fear of permission, and learning to trust their own authorship.

80%

built peer and mentor networks they expect to draw on for future projects

The relationships formed inside the cohorts keep working as creative and professional infrastructure long after the training ends.

60%

saw narratives told from within their territories, by storytellers from those territories, for the first time

For three in five participants, seeing their own region represented by its own people was a new experience.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2026, the network continues to grow. Seven new countries, India, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Kenya, Uganda, and Belize, join the next mentorship cohort. The Microgrants Program enters its second cycle, the Pedagogical Council deepens its curriculum work, and a new residency begins in the Apyterewa Parakanã territory in Xingu, prepared through Renan Khisetje's 2025 visit.



PART TWO — COMMUNITIES

THE CIRCLE

In 2025 our films and campaigns featured 391 communities.
Part Two is about what that work looked like.

THE COMMUNITY WORK IN 2025

In 2025 the work featured 391 communities and carried 108 of their calls to action, held with 155 partner organisations on the ground and connecting 17 funders directly to community projects.

The work spanned three regions and dozens of countries: in the Americas with the Guna in Panama, Afro-descendant communities along the Atrato in Colombia, the Mundurucu in Brazil, Maya K'iche in Guatemala, the Lenca in Honduras, the Siona, Kichwa, and Waorani in Ecuador,

and the Maya in Belize; in the Congo Basin across eight countries with REPALEAC; and in the Indo-Pacific with Iban, Sasak, Minahasan, Bahau, and Dayak communicators in Indonesia, and new partners in India. The map in the year-at-a-glance spread holds the geography; the pages that follow hold the work.

One principle ran through all of it: the community decides the story, a storyteller from the community tells it, and we walk alongside the work, under free, prior, and informed consent.

391

Communities Featured

108

Calls to Action Carried

155

Partner Organizations

17

Funders Connected Directly



THREE MOMENTS THAT CARRIED THE YEAR

Of the 108 community calls to action carried out in 2025, three moments concentrated the most visible work.



OUR VILLAGE AT COP30, BELÉM.

In November 2025, we co-curated Our Village with Mídia Indígena, the programming at Casa Maraká, Mídia Indígena's venue at COP30. Six mentorship films screened across five days, to more than 100 attendees per session, and 70 of the year's 108 calls to action were held in that space. The films included Uq'axik b'e, Atravesar Caminos, Rolly: A Story of My Father, Honã: A Origem do Povo Khisetje, and others from the 2025 cohort.



PIACI EVENT AT COP30.

With GTI-PIACI, the international working group on Peoples in Initial Contact and Isolation, we co-organised Stories of Resistance and Autonomy at COP30 in Belém, a programme of short and feature films from across South America, each introduced by a representative of the Indigenous organisation whose story it carried, from FENAMAD in Peru to OPIT in Paraguay and CONAIE in Ecuador, followed by dialogue with the filmmakers and community leaders in the room. The event carried PIACI stories and demands into a policy conversation that has long been held without them.



95 COMMUNITIES IN OUR OWN PROGRAMMING.

Across the year, 95 communities were highlighted directly through our films, photography, and campaigns: a measure of representation rather than reach, of communities that saw their own story told by their own people in a form that travelled beyond the territory.



FEATURED STORY

FROM MENTEES TO MENTORS

In 2022, in our first Mentorship cohort, a collective of four Gunadule filmmakers from Guna Yala, Panama, then known as CENDAH, made their first short film in the program. Over the following years, they made a second, deepened their training, and consolidated under a new name: Ulu Films.

By 2025, the collective was no longer a participant in the network. Alcibiades Rodríguez and Karen Rodríguez had moved from mentees to mentors, training more than 40 communicators from their territories that year and guiding them through the production of five short films built for advocacy, community strengthening, and narrative transformation.

In the same year, with Health in Harmony, Ulu Films led the in-person delivery of Community Thriving Narratives across three Guna territories of Panama, co-facilitated by Alcibiades Rodríguez and Julieth Arias. The five films from the year's work have already screened more than ten times in key decision-making spaces, among them New York Climate Week and COP30, and will keep building impact through 2026 in Guna Yala, across Latin America, and beyond.

Mentees who came through the original 2022 cohort have since moved into the Imaginarium, our bridge to the Hollywood industry, and into roles at major Indigenous-rights organizations and philanthropies, including NGO's like Health In Harmony and the Consejo de Juventudes Guna Yala of Panama. The throughline is that the support did not stop with the films. It traveled with the people, into the territories they now train and the organizations now shaping Indigenous rights.

Alcibiades puts it plainly. What the work does, he says, is strengthen the community and organizational identity. He agrees, with 84% of our mentorship students, that the mentorship grew their capacity for narrative construction and self-representation.

"What we are doing is strengthening the community and organizational identity."

— Alcibiades Rodríguez, Ulu Films, Guna Yala, Panama

Ulu Films (formerly CENDAH) · Guna Yala, Panama · Mentorship 2022, now mentors 40+ communicators, has developed 5 films and done 10+ screenings in the Guna Yala and Embera Indigenous communities in Panama.





FEATURED STORY

REMEMBERING AS RESISTANCE

Aura Balanta joined the Emerging Filmmakers Mentorship Program in 2024 to make the first short film in a series on water preservation in Afro-descendant communities. Her story, the declaration of the Atrato River as a subject of rights, was a foundational victory for the tenure and land-protection movement in Colombia and across Latin America. She arrived with five years' experience as an actress and filmmaker and a frustration carried from earlier courses that had never centered on storytellers and their view of the world.

The mentorship changed that. For the first time, she felt she could tell Afro-centered stories and use them to make change, and her vision of Afro-futuristic stories that shape ecosystem conservation and a network of Afro-descendant communities woven together globally has been taking shape for two years now.

In 2025, her work moved on several fronts at once. She took the starring role in a fiction mini-series launched on AfrolandTV. She joined the ethnic component of the Bogotá Audiovisual Market. She brought the pilot of her Afro-futuristic series to festivals and markets, and is now developing it as a full series.

Image: Aura Balanta

The year's most significant outcome, though, was not in her portfolio. Since the program ended, her clan has held its first-ever gathering for political action, and Aura led it, having never imagined before the mentorship that she could stand in a communal space of such power, let alone lead it. That is what training is finally for: the moment a storyteller is asked to lead her own community's political convening, and says yes. Our Emerging Filmmakers Mentorship Program exists to make exactly that possible, seeding new leaders who inspire and are certain in their own story.

"I feel that the film has allowed us to remember, and in remembering our land, to also remember our elder's wisdom about it, to remember what gold is to us, how it comes to life, how it is not an inanimate object, but a live part of our community's life through the rituals involved in it."

— Aura Balanta, Afro-descendant filmmaker, Colombia

Aura Balanta · Afro-descendant community, Atrato, Colombia · Emerging Filmmakers Mentorship Program





FEATURED STORY

THE CONGO BASIN COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

With REPALEAC, the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa, and with the support of the Tenure Facility, we delivered the Communication and Leadership Program across eight Central African countries between January 2024 and June 2025.

Twenty-five Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders, eight of them women and twelve under thirty-five, strengthened their communication and leadership skills across eight Central African countries. They met for in-person workshops in Douala and Brazzaville, each received a mobile journalism kit, and all took part in a virtual mentoring cycle of twenty-five sessions between September 2024 and June 2025.

The program produced more than five hundred photographs, sixty videos, and eight short documentary projects now in development. In May 2025, members of the cohort covered the First Global Congress of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from the Forest Basins in Brazzaville.

image: Norlando Meza

For Earth Day 2025, REPALEAC communicators filmed within their communities for A Day on Earth, and one filmmaker from the network appears in the final documentary.

REPALEAC now has at least one trained and equipped communicator in each of its eight member countries, and participants in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Burundi, and Rwanda intend to run their own internal workshops, led by the communicators we trained. Participants describe the confidence their training gave them as fundamental to their advocacy work.

“I see that training in communication is very important for me. Before, when I was doing communication, I didn’t know how to use strategies, and I didn’t know how we could make a story in a concrete way. But today, with this training, I’m starting to learn. I have a lot of capacity to reinforce in terms of what to do in a story and in the different stages, but before that, I didn’t know how to start, what happens, and what ends. But now, I’m starting to learn how I can tell a story, and also edit a video through training. And now we know how we can balance the ideas of the community and to build the framework for our rights,”

— Alcibiades Rodríguez, Ulu Films, Guna Yala, Panama

— Ildefonse Niyomugabo, The Communication and Leadership Program, Congo Basin





WHAT THE STORYTELLERS TOLD US

From the audience response survey applied at A Day on Earth screenings, 2025.

100%

of audience members felt connected to the communities through the films

At every A Day on Earth screening surveyed in 2025, every attendee reported feeling connected to the communities on screen.

97.4%

of attendees felt emotionally impacted by the stories

Of the feelings audiences named, nostalgia and joy came up most often.

PART THREE — AUDIENCES

THE SMOKE THAT TRAVELS

In 2025 our films and campaigns reached 561,000 people organically and 2.9 million through Our Pledge.

Image: Ana Maria Jessie



PARTICIPATORY DOCUMENTARY

A DAY ON EARTH

On Earth Day, April 22, 2025, we launched the most ambitious project in our history: a global participatory documentary filmed in a single day by 76 Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local community storytellers across 27 countries. Its premise was that the climate story would be told not about frontline communities but by them, in their own territories, on a shared day, in their own visual languages.

The filmmakers ranged from seasoned directors to first-timers who had just picked up a camera. Nine came directly from our Mentorship and Emerging Filmmakers networks; others arrived through partners including Mídia Indígena, the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, AMAN, REPALEAC, AIK Produções, Yawe Film, UNDP, Nia Tero and ONISE.

A small team, led by Director Paul Redman, our indigenous Editor Nanang Sujana, Producer Aram Vidal and with indigenous Producers Isabela Santana and Ana Lucía Ixchíu, held the production architecture so that each filmmaker could shoot their own territory, on their own terms.

76

Indigenous, Afro-
descendant, and local
community storytellers

27

Countries

What the day produced was unusual in both scale and intimacy: footage from the rivers of the Madre de Dios, the Iban longhouses of Sungai Utik, the Sámi wilderness of Inari, the Gitksan homelands of British Columbia, and the Kukama region of Loreto, capturing the ordinary acts of care that hold each territory together.

Funding partners including Earth Alliance, Rainforest Action Network, One Small Planet, the Skyscape Foundation and the Skoll Foundation supported the production, and a wide network of allies will carry the film outward toward its global launch.



WHAT THE FILM HAS DONE, AND WHERE IT IS GOING

Through 2025, the film test-screened at private events in Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon, Oxford, and at partner events at London and New York Climate Weeks and COP30, ahead of its global launch on Earth Day, April 22, 2027. **At every screening, we surveyed audiences: all felt connected to the communities on screen, and almost all were emotionally moved, most often toward nostalgia and joy.**

FEATURED STORY

FROM TWELVE YEARS OLD TO COP29

Through filmmaking, activism, and policy engagement, Kynan amplifies the voices of Indigenous communities and articulates the challenges they face, while exploring what it means to be Indigenous today.

Kynan Tegar is an Indigenous storyteller from the Iban people of present-day West Borneo, Indonesia. She lives in and around the longhouse of Sungai Utik, learning directly from the elders, listening to and capturing their stories of resistance in the face of encroaching deforestation and the lasting scars of colonialism. She picked up her first camera as an inquisitive twelve-year-old after seeing our team film in her community, and was making short films soon after. They were never student exercises. From the start they were advocacy tools, made to amplify the voices of Iban communities and articulate the specific challenges those communities face. We have supported her since her journey began.



She is now an undergraduate in anthropology at Universitas Indonesia, and she has presented her work and led discussions at Columbia University, New York Climate Week, the American Museum of Natural History, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's COP29. She is one of the 76 filmmakers of A Day on Earth.

What makes her trajectory matter is its architecture, not its speed. The same young storyteller who picked up a camera at twelve in Sungai Utik now sits in the rooms where global climate decisions are made, and she is there as an authoritative voice from her own territory, not a symbol or a guest.

Kynan Tegar · Iban, Sungai Utik, Indonesia · A Day on Earth · COP29, NY Climate Week, Columbia University



FEATURED STORY

THE BLACKFEET, IN THEIR OWN LIGHT

Whitney Snow is a documentary photographer whose work captures the emotional connection between people and their environment. She focuses on Indigenous communities and their effort to preserve a way of life, through environmental and cultural conservation and the slow work of language revitalization.

Her primary focus is the Blackfeet Nation, where she works alongside local filmmakers, environmental groups, community members, and state and national organizations to document the Blackfeet people's preservation initiatives. Her contribution to *A Day on Earth* grew out of that work: the same relationships, the same territory, the same intention.

When she describes the footage, she names what is true about the storytelling we exist to support: filming it was not about capturing a day but about showing how the Blackfeet live with intention. That is the difference between a documentary made about a community and one made by a member of it, and Whitney's footage is one of seventy-six demonstrations of what that difference looks like on screen.

images: Whitney Snow



‘ I want my fellow filmmakers out there to understand: our stories are precious! There are dedicated individuals within INUTW and the broader community who want nothing more than to see us succeed and share our narratives with the world.’

**— Whitney Snow · Pikuni/Blackfeet Nation,
United States · A Day on Earth**

VOICES FROM A DAY ON EARTH



JUSTICE MOORE

Gitxsan/Tsimshian · Gitwangak, British Columbia, Canada

A Gitxsan and Tsimshian man from Gitwangak, British Columbia, and the founder of Mist Valley Agriculture. He works to combine his traditional and Western training in horticulture so he can build a sustainable food network for rural communities. For Justice, true sovereignty starts with how we eat, and future generations will need nutrient-rich food if they are to grow beyond us.



LIVIA SILVANO PACAYA

Kukama · Iquitos region, Loreto, Peru

An emerging director, producer, and actress from the Iquitos region of Loreto, in the Peruvian Amazon. She began working in film production at nineteen and directed her first short soon after. She co-directs MUYUNA FEST, the International Floating Jungle Film Festival, born in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon in Iquitos, the largest city in the world that cannot be reached by road.



RENAN KOKOYAMARATXI SUYÁ

Khisêdjê · Khikatxhi Village, Wawi Indigenous Land, Mato Grosso, Brazil

Known as Renan Khisetje, is an Indigenous filmmaker, director, photographer, and communicator from the Khisêdjê people. He joined the audiovisual workshop run by Vídeo nas Aldeias and the Khisetje Indigenous Association in 2008, and took part in our Professional Development Programme for Emerging Filmmakers from 2021 to 2024. In 2023 he joined the Indigenous Imaginarium in Los Angeles. He now coordinates AIK Produções and is a member of Mídia Indígena within the Xingu+ network, and he treats his camera as a tool of resistance, carrying the voices of Indigenous leaders to the world.



OLO VILLALAZ

Guna Yala · Panama

Originally from Usdub, in the Gunayala Comarca of Panama. He holds a degree in Business Administration and is the founder of TV Indígena, a platform that highlights the voices and realities of Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala. With over ten years of experience in Indigenous rights and climate change, he has collaborated with the FAO, IAITPTF, and Fundación Cuatro Mundos. He currently serves as an alternate representative on the boards of the AMPB (Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests) and the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, as well as an alternate representative for the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities.

Alongside Tirza, Kalfain, Lucía, Aura, Ulu Films, Kynan, and Whitney, these storytellers carry community narratives across the territories. Sixty-nine more carried A Day on Earth with them.

THE ELEVEN MENTORSHIP FILMS OF 2025

Completed by the 2024-25 cohort. Ten are now traveling the festival circuits worldwide.



MAI AIRO NAJĚ BAÑUU AIRO ACUAIRE

Limber Payaguaje and Lizbeth
Piaguaje · ONISE collective
Siona, Ecuador



EL ATRAVEZADO

Jonathan Suarez, Jeshica
Pulupa (Kitu Kara) and
Velasque Sillo Walter (Kichwa
Panzaleo) · CONAIE collective
Ecuador



GODNA: PIERCED INTO THE IDENTITY

Atul Purti (Munda) and
Sushmita Dutta (Bengali)
Shodhvahini Media Collective
India



HONÃ: A ORIGEM DO POVO KHISETJE

The Khisetje Collective · AIK
Produções
Khisetje, Brazil



YENDO A CACERÍA

Yawe Film Collective
Woorani, Ecuador



ROLLY: A STORY OF MY FATHER

Kalfein Wuisan
Minahasa, Indonesia



UQ'AXIK B'E, ATRAVESAR CAMINOS

Lucía Ixchiu
Maya K'iche, Guatemala



TONGUES OF HERITAGE

Emmanuel Nasawali
Mumasaba, Uganda



MULHERES-PEIXES

The Munduruku Collective
Munduruku, Brazil



RÍOS DE VIDA (RIVERS OF LIFE)

Aura Balanta
Afro-descendant filmmaker,
Colombia



THE STRUGGLE OF THE MAYA PEOPLE IN SECURING LAND RIGHTS

The Julian Cho Society
Maya, Belize

Festival recognition is on the next page. In keeping with the filmmakers' wishes and with free, prior, and informed consent, not every completed film has been released for public viewing. Several filmmakers are holding their own community screenings before wider publication.

FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

The mentorship films traveled widely in 2025, screening at 38 festivals across more than 15 countries. Lucía Ixchiu's Uq'axik b'e, Atravesar Caminos won Best Short Documentary at the Cannes Short Film Festival; Kalfein Wuisan's Rolly: A Story of My Father was selected for seven international festivals; and the Shodhvahini Media Collective screened Godna at three festivals across India. Yurshell Rodríguez, our Head of Training, sat on the jury of the FinnCali Film Festival.

Beyond the festivals, mentorship films traveled on community screening tours in India, Guatemala, Chile, Mexico, and Indonesia, reaching the audiences they were made for.



DIGITAL REACH AND OUR PLEDGE

Our digital work reached audiences at three scales in 2025: steady content, the Our Pledge campaign for direct community funding, and aligned campaigns at peak moments.

Our communications reached 561,000 people organically and generated more than 3 million interactions. Our Pledge reached 2.9 million people, peaking on November 16, with 37 million Instagram engagements on a minimal paid budget. Of every nine stories about land rights in 2025, five connected to Our Pledge, up from two in 2024, and engagement on these conversations tripled.

3M+

interactions generated

37M

Instagram engagements,
peak day

560k+

reached organically

2.9M

reached by Our Pledge





PART FOUR — SYSTEMS

THE WARMTH THAT REACHES

In 2025, we engaged 97 decision-makers, partnered with 155 organizations, connected 17 funders directly to community projects, and tracked the year that the pledge moved to the center of the climate finance narrative. Part Four is about how the work landed in the rooms.

WHERE NARRATIVE MEETS POLICY.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Our Strategic Communications work sits at exactly this meeting point. Much of it is deliberately invisible: shaping the language that lands in negotiating rooms, equipping trusted voices, and moving community-led messages into the conversations that decide how climate finance flows. The measure of this work is not visibility but influence. In 2025 it contributed to one of the year's most significant shifts, in how the world's climate-finance commitments are written, traced in the analysis that follows.

THE PLEDGE ANALYSIS

174 climate finance pledges, 2011-2025. The year the language shifted.

Our most significant systemic finding came from a longitudinal analysis of every climate-finance pledge signed between 2011 and 2025, 174 in all, tracking how their language changed alongside the digital conversation our campaigns had shaped.

For fifteen years, the word pledge sat at the margins of these commitments, and references to Indigenous Peoples sat at the margins of the text. In 2025, with Our Pledge in full motion, both moved to the center: the word pledge appeared prominently for the first time, and the pledges signed that year placed Indigenous Peoples at the heart of their promises, the first such year in the record we analyzed.

Coverage of the campaign reached a cumulative audience estimated at more than 11.5 billion at its peak. This shift rests on decades of Indigenous-led advocacy; we did not produce it alone. What our analysis tracks is the year the language landed.



COP30 AND THE BELÉM MOMENT

The rooms where the language was being written.

In November 2025 the work converged on Belém, where COP30 was held in the Amazon.

We co-curated Our Village with Mídia Indígena at Casa Maraká, screening six mentorship films, and supported the Indigenous March with the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities. Across the year we engaged 97 decision-makers, and more than a thousand people called for direct community support at COP30 and New York Climate Week.



THE IMPLEMENTATION YEARS.

The language has shifted; the years ahead are for implementation. The pledges that named Indigenous Peoples centrally must now deliver, the funders must follow through, and the decision-makers must act. Our role stays the same, scaled differently: walking alongside the communities who will hold institutions to the words they signed, and continuing the pledge analysis year on year as a record of whether the language holds. We aim to build community based storytelling infrastructure to hold the pledgers accountable and support new leaders adept at the language of climate finance



PART FIVE — STRUCTURE THAT HOLDS THE WORK

TENDING THE FIRE

The final part turns to how we hold the work together: our governance, our finances, and what we carry into 2026.

GOVERNANCE

Who holds the work, and how decisions are made.

If Not Us Then Who? is guided by a board that brings together Indigenous leadership, filmmaking, and philanthropy. Their backgrounds span Indigenous rights advocacy, documentary film, strategic philanthropy, and storytelling, reflecting the breadth of the work they oversee.

OUR BOARD



MINA SUSANA SETRA

Indonesian Indigenous Dayak, INUTW President & Deputy Secretary General of AMAN



PAUL REDMAN

South African-born Founder & non-voting board member



BUKOLA JEJE LOYE

Managing Director, Offline Diplomat



JOAN CARLING

Co-founder the Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI)



HUGO METZ

Partnership and Development Producer, Europe & Africa



CASEY BOX

Philanthropy Officer, Climate and Land Use Alliance



BILL PULLMAN

US based Hollywood Actor and fruit advocate, Secretary



DANA LEDOUX MILLER

Writer, producer, director, and showrunner



LEADERSHIP AND TEAM

Our team reflects the communities at the center of our work: roughly half are Indigenous, and we draw on an extended network of consultants who come from the communities themselves. This keeps decisions, curriculum, and the work itself in the hands of people from the territories.

HOW WE ARE STRUCTURED

The Executive Director, Paul Redman, leads the organization, advised by a Strategic Circle of team members chosen for their experience and expertise. The work runs through three departments, Training, Strategic Communications, and Storytelling, held together by three cross-cutting areas: Strategy and Operations; Administration and Finance; and Communications. If Not Us Then Who? is a US-registered 501(c)(3) charity, based in Los Angeles.

This diagram shows how INUTW’s governance, leadership, learning systems, and programs interact—combining collective leadership with strong operational stewardship and continuous learning.



FINANCE

Where the support came from, and where it went.

Every part of this report was made possible by the people and institutions who chose to fund the work. Here is the shape of what they gave, and how it was spent.



\$1,753,648

total income in 2025, up from \$1,329,647 the year before

\$183,828

net income; reserves grew from \$100,000 to \$250,000

\$1,569,820

total expenditure in 2025

25.2%

of expenditure went directly to Indigenous partners

WHAT CAME IN

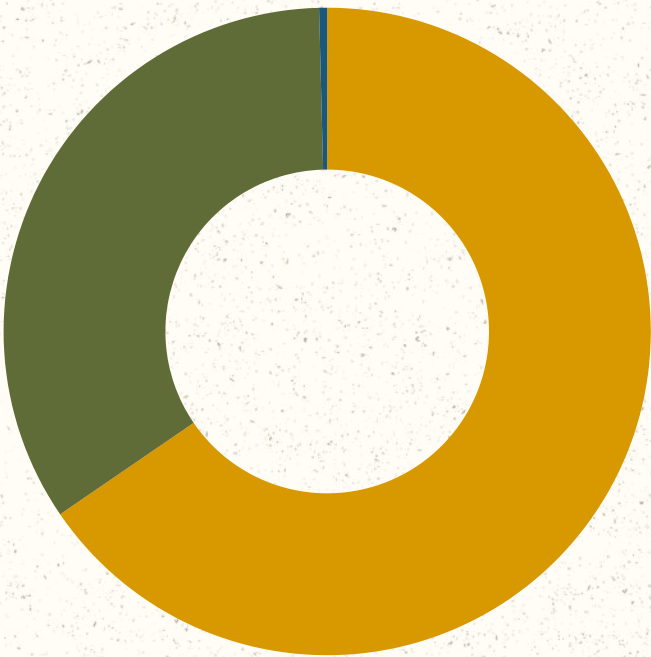
Total income for 2025 was \$1,753,648, up from \$1,329,647 the year before. That support came from a mix of philanthropic foundations and funders, multi-donor initiatives and pooled funds, mission-aligned NGO partners, and one private sector partner. That breadth keeps the work resilient across funding sources.

34.15%

NGO partners and mission-aligned organizations

97.4%
0.40%

Others



65.45 %

Philanthropic foundations and funders

HOW IT WAS SPENT

Total expenditure was \$1,569,820, leaving net income of \$183,828. Reserves grew from \$100,000 at the start of the year to \$250,000 by the close, giving us more room to invest in the systems that hold the work.

Of the year's expenditure, 49.1% went to the team who kept the work running, and 50.9% went into programs: community initiatives, partnerships, productions, and INUTW's presence at key events and international meetings.

Across those two categories, 25.2% of total expenditure went directly to Indigenous partners and consultants, both in support of Indigenous-led initiatives within our programs and as salaries for the Indigenous members of our team. This share reflects how INUTW works and intends to keep working: resources reaching Indigenous-led hands rather than passing over them. Indigenous leadership sits inside our team as well as within the communities we walk alongside.

50.9%

of total expenditure went directly to Indigenous partners and consultants

25.2%

Across those two categories, of total expenditure went directly to Indigenous partners and consultants

A NOTE ON THE YEAR

Against a difficult broader funding climate, one that saw significant retrenchment across climate philanthropy, INUTW's own position strengthened in 2025. Income rose, expenditure stayed in balance, and reserves grew steadily alongside, giving us room to develop further in the years ahead.

Three commitments carry us into 2026: to keep following our storytellers' journeys well beyond their training; to begin delivering Narrative as Nature: Roots and Rivers of Change, our 2026-2030 Strategic Plan; and to carry A Day on Earth toward its global launch on Earth Day 2027.

In 2026 the work passes to more hands, in more territories, than ever before.





PARTNERS, DONORS, SUPPORTERS

The fire is tended by many hands.

Behind every film, every training, every event in these pages sits a network: 155 partner organizations on the ground, from Indigenous federations to filmmakers' collectives to intergovernmental bodies, and 17 funders connected directly to community projects. Some are named in these pages; many are not. To all of them, our gratitude, and our commitment to carry these links forward into the years ahead.



IF NOT US THEN WHO?
IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

JOIN US · ifnotusthenwho.me | info@ifnotusthenwho.me