



# AMAZON FRONTLINES

Annual Report 2021



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## LETTER FROM OUR ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR :

Dear Friends,

Our work at Amazon Frontlines is about building power with Indigenous peoples to confront the twin threats of both a cultural and ecological tipping point in the Amazon. In 2021, we faced one of our most challenging years. The COVID pandemic raged on. Governments around the region openly declared their intentions to extract every last drop of valuable natural resources from Indigenous territories. And yet, through it all we emerged successful, and more resilient than ever before, with many important victories and lessons learned.

It's a pleasure to share with you directly these learnings and reflections. As you know, usually our Founder and Executive Director shares these updates, though this year I am pleased to step in for him while he both takes a much needed break and works on some pretty exciting special projects (which we'll tell you about in due time!). Amidst the second year of a pandemic (that we all hoped would be over by now) it often felt like an endless grind. But now, with the advantage and I dare say wisdom of hindsight, I can appreciate the lessons, progress and opportunity for transformation that this last year had to offer.

Successful Indigenous stewardship rests on a thousands-year-old cultural foundation - a way of life - that is at risk of disappearing in the 21st century. COVID exacerbated that threat of a cultural tipping point. The adage that has become too painfully familiar over the years is never far from our minds: the death of every elder is equivalent to the loss of the most majestic library of information and knowledge. COVID also showed the importance of Indigenous wisdom at a time when traditional systems offered little hope. The pandemic has proven to be a major learning opportunity for young Indigenous people, who not only saw firsthand how the government and western medical systems failed Indigenous communities - between lack of information, supplies, and medical support in the face of the spiking virus - but more importantly, how the wisdom and healing of their elders stood the test of time when communities needed it most.



The choices made by the next generation of Indigenous leaders will determine the future of the forest and our climate, yet little has been invested to ensure that Indigenous youth can forge a sustainable path forward. Too often, young people feel forced to abandon their traditional livelihoods in search of educational and economic opportunities, but we're going to change that paradigm. This year we stepped up vital investments in Indigenous youth. We scaled our pivotal work on education, pioneering an Indigenous-led model of bi-lingual, bi-cultural education to teach curricula in schools that educate the whole experience – from academia to ancestral wisdom. And we're helping Indigenous leaders, particularly women, build a bridge from school to new opportunities, with trainings from cartography and land patrols, to entrepreneurship and storytelling. Indigenous youth are the future of the Amazon, it's critical we show up for them today.

The threats weren't just from the virus. Shortly after being elected in May 2021, President Lasso issued two Executive Decrees to massively expand new oil and mining extraction, threatening millions of hectares of pristine rainforest and the physical and cultural survival of Indigenous nations. The decrees are part of the new administration's public policy strategy to address the country's crippled economy and its colossal foreign debt by doubling down on extractivism and the exploitation of nature. Tropical forests already teeter on the precipice of a dangerous and irrevocable tipping point. If implemented, Executive Decrees 95 and 151 would radically expand extraction mostly in Indigenous lands and in rainforest territories.

For years, we have been supporting Indigenous leaders to know their rights and to effectively defend them in the face of such policies. Over the last several years, Indigenous peoples have created an unprecedented window of opportunity to make dramatic and long-lasting changes to policy frameworks that privilege natural resource extraction over Indigenous guardianship and climate protection. For much of the year, we waged a battle in the courts to ensure Indigenous peoples' right to decide what happens on their lands is recognized and upheld by the courts, and early in November, the unprecedented happened: five judges arrived by canoe to the community of Sinangoe to hold a Constitutional Court hearing in Indigenous territory. This marked the first time in the country's history that judges from the highest court have held a hearing in Indigenous territory. It was a breathtakingly powerful moment, as the systems of justice begin to tilt ever more in favor of Indigenous peoples' rights. In February of this year, we celebrated as the court recognized the right of Indigenous peoples to Free, Prior, Informed Consent at the highest level.

World leaders also made headlines in 2021 with new commitments to halt deforestation and invest resources in frontline Indigenous communities. We know clearly, unequivocally that any and all hope of reaching the Paris climate goals and averting worst-case climate scenarios requires safeguarding forests, but a track record of high profile pledges languishing unimplemented has given good reason for skepticism. At the very least, these recent commitments signal a growing understanding that the status quo is not sufficient, that greater action, political resolve and resources are needed. As much as past failures invite skepticism, the stakes have simply become too high to abandon hope.

We know that investing in Indigenous communities is what's needed, and we're proud to have supported the formation of our sister NGO, the Ceibo Alliance, an Indigenous-led NGO that gets resources to communities who are defending their lands and forests in real time. It is our hope that policy makers, philanthropists, and the global public at large will increasingly recognize, as our partnership model is proving, that frontline Indigenous communities are the most effective guardians of the ecosystems critical to keeping our planet's climate in check— and it is there where direct support and resources are needed most.

Our work is a global effort and wouldn't be possible without the ongoing support and commitment of our community. Thank you for your continuing encouragement, investment, and belief in the work we are doing. We're proud to share some of our work and look forward to what we can achieve together.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'kell' followed by a stylized arrow pointing to the right.

**Kate Horner**  
**Acting Executive Director**



## OUR MISSION

**AMAZON FRONTLINES BUILDS POWER  
WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO  
PROTECT THE AMAZON RAINFOREST AND  
OUR CLIMATE.**



## WHO WE ARE

**WE ARE A GLOBALLY-BACKED,  
INDIGENOUS-LED PARTNERSHIP THAT  
BUILDS POWER WITH INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES TO PROTECT THEIR LANDS  
AND WAY OF LIFE IN THE AMAZON.**





## OUR MODEL IS SIMPLE: PARTNERSHIP

Indigenous leaders, communities and Nations are fighting to protect their lands and their cultures.

### CEIBO ALLIANCE

Ceibo Alliance is an unprecedented alliance of Indigenous nationalities working together to create strong leaders, strong communities and strong organizations.

### AMAZON FRONTLINES

Amazon Frontlines is an interdisciplinary team of human rights lawyers, journalists, filmmakers, scientists and activists who live and work in the Amazon rainforest alongside our indigenous partners.

**Together, Amazon Frontlines and the Ceibo Alliance ensure they have the tools, resources and networks needed to win these battles.**



# SIX YEARS OF IMPACT

## A BLUEPRINT

Our single greatest impact is the creation of a pioneering new model of globally backed, Indigenous led conservation. With awards from TIME100, the United Nations, the Goldman Prize, Bioneers, and the Leonardo Dicaprio Foundation, this model is showing unprecedented results for the greatest rainforest on Earth and the cultural survival of Indigenous peoples.



**400**

**INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Trained nearly 400 Indigenous community leaders to map and monitor over 1,000,000 hectares of threatened rainforest, communicate and tell their stories, defend their land through legal avenues, uplift their cultures and lead their people.



**300.000**

**HECTARES OF LAND PROTECTED FROM OIL AND MINING OPERATIONS**

Safeguarded another 2,800,000 million hectares of rainforest from planned oil and mining through legal precedent. Secured title over 100,000 hectares of Indigenous land, with an open pathway to secure over 500,000 hectares of ancestral territories across the Upper Amazon.

### SOLUTIONS INNOVATED



**1.164**

**RAINWATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS**

**146**

**SOLAR-ENERGY SYSTEMS**

Enabled community installation of rainwater filtration systems serving every Kofan, Siekopai, Siona and Waorani household affected by oil contamination, solar-energy systems in 16 roadless communities and 9 land patrol stations.



**OVER \$9 MILLION**

**CHANNELED TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

Generated over 500,000 online advocacy actions from the global community.



**03**

**PRECEDENT-SETTING LEGAL VICTORIES PROTECTING KOFAN, WAORANI, AND SIONA TERRITORY**

Won 3 precedent-setting legal victories protecting Kofán, Waorani and Siona territory. One of these cases now sits at the Constitutional Court of Ecuador, while the other won an historic ruling in early 2022 which we will be reporting on in our 2022 annual report.



**02**

**CRITICAL WATERSHEDS PROTECTED FROM FURTHER EXTRACTION**

Protected Aguarico watershed from mining and the Cururay watershed from oil extraction through strategic litigation. Safeguarded the Napo and Pastaza watersheds from future oil operations through legal precedent.



**05**

**WOMEN-LED ECONOMIC COOPERATIVES INCUBATED**

Worked with women-led associations across the Upper Amazon that collectively benefit more than 300 women across four Indigenous nations.

# COVID 19 UPDATE



**“IN THE FOREST, WHEN THE STORM IS AT ITS PEAK YOU WAIT UNDER A TREE FOR THE RAIN TO CALM DOWN. WHEN THE RAIN COMES TO A STEADY DRIZZLE, YOU WALK WITH A LARGE LEAF TO COVER YOURSELF FROM GETTING WET. MUCH LIKE A STORM, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS GONE FROM A HEAVY RAIN TO A STEADY DRIZZLE. THE THREATS AGAINST OUR LANDS AREN’T ABATING, AND SO IT’S TIME WE LEARN TO WALK IN THE RAIN SO WE CAN KEEP OUR WORK MOVING FORWARD.”**

**Justino Piaguaje,**  
Siekopai Coordinator







In the Amazon, the ongoing spread of COVID-19 has represented an existential threat to Indigenous peoples, in particular to Indigenous elders, the keepers of thousands of years of ancestral knowledge of the forest. As the Amazon's oldest and most effective guardians, Indigenous people's ability to continue protecting the rainforest is contingent on their immediate physical safety during this pandemic.

In 2021, Ecuador continued to face some of the worst outbreaks of COVID-19 in the world due to the rapid spread of the Delta and Omicron variants across the country. Due to geographic isolation and systemic racism, Indigenous peoples continued to find themselves among the last recipients of medical treatment and vaccines in the region. They remained vulnerable to both the coronavirus and misinformation spread across digital media channels, as well as an uptick extractive threats against their forests.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of Indigenous autonomy for long term survival and rainforest protection in the face of near complete absence of the state.. Over the past two years of the pandemic, we have witnessed how communities located in healthy forests, with strong connections to their ancestral cultures and greater access to local foods and medicines remained safer and healthier, and better equipped to protect forests against threats. Ancestral knowledge of the forest and medicinal plants, as well as years of forging unity between Indigenous nations (some with a history as rivals), ended up being one of our movement's greatest strengths during this crisis. The Siekopai, in particular, led an effort to produce and distribute ancestral medicines across communities of neighboring Indigenous nations — helping keep the death toll down from the virus. Additionally, Indigenous women's associations in the region have been producing face masks that Amazon Frontlines and Alianza Ceibo purchased and distributed to Indigenous-run health centers across the region.

In 2021, Amazon Frontlines focused on uplifting Indigenous-led solutions to strengthen community resilience by promoting food and medicine sovereignty and amplifying Indigenous experiences of resilience against COVID, as well as fostering economic alternatives that break dependence on the extractive sector while boosting self-sufficiency. With a focus on long term Indigenous survival, we pivoted our strategies from providing urgent humanitarian assistance to supporting enduring and sustainable Indigenous-led responses to the pandemic based on strengthening the resilience of rainforest communities in the face of extractive and health threats.



Last year, we funded community-led initiatives in Siona, Siekopai and Kofán territory to produce and distribute over 1,000 ancestral medicines to community health centers in communities without access to health clinics. Alongside the Indigenous federation CONFENIAE, we produced 400 informational pamphlets about COVID-19 and broadcasted a COVID-19 awareness and prevention campaign across eight radio stations in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

More recently, we provided scholarships to Indigenous youth and women communicators from 10 different Indigenous nations in the Upper Amazon to produce multimedia products on Indigenous experiences of resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.



We also supported the development of a diagnostic on Indigenous resistance and solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Upper Amazon. The diagnostic provides a holistic account of the Siekopai, Waorani, Siona, and Ai'Kofan Indigenous peoples' fight against the virus and the diverse responses developed to keep communities safe, ranging from food sovereignty initiatives to the reliance on traditional healing practices. Together with our partners at the Ceibo Alliance and a team of experts, we are compiling experiences from elders, women, and youth from the four nations that make up our core partners. Upon completion of the diagnostic in 2022, we will share the information with a wide

range of communities, Indigenous federations and international organizations to foster reflection on the lessons of this challenging time to prepare for future crises.

Against heightened health risks and persistent state absence, installation of satellite internet and High Frequency radios in partner Indigenous communities has been vital to share life-saving information, communicate out about territorial threats, and enforce biosecurity measures in real time. Over the course of the pandemic, Amazon Frontlines and our partners have invested in and relied upon communications infrastructure to maintain consistent communication with partners. In 2021, we maintained communications infrastructure (satellite internet, HF radios) that were installed in 13 remote communities during the first wave of COVID in 2020. Communities include Siekopai communities in Peru, the Siona communities of Cuyabeno, Putumayo and along the Aguarico River, and the Kofán communities of Sinangoe, Dovuno, Avie and Dureno. It also allowed us to advance our time sensitive work by carrying out digital meetings and community assemblies, avoiding delays in project implementation.

In 2021, Amazon Frontlines worked closely with community partners to manage operational and health risks related to COVID and provide support, including access to medical treatment and testing for staff, implementing strict biosecurity measures including observing social distance and wearing safety masks during meetings and trips to the field, and installing communications infrastructure in geographically isolated communities to support remote coordination. With the implementation of biosecurity measures to mitigate health and safety risks, we returned to some in-person meetings at our organizing center with strict protocols in place.



# SECURING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS THROUGH STRATEGIC LITIGATION AND RECLAIMING ANCESTRAL TERRITORIES THROUGH LAND TENURE





Indigenous peoples throughout the Upper Amazon enjoy internationally and constitutionally protected rights that often languish unimplemented. Strengthening the rights of the Amazon's most effective defenders is a core component of our strategy to protect the rainforest. We have developed pioneering legal strategies to upend bad laws that violate Indigenous rights and close loopholes that incentivize forest destruction, all while training Indigenous lawyers to lead it all. A key strategy to stopping resource extraction in the Amazon and protecting forests is strengthening the right of frontline Indigenous peoples to decide what happens on their lands. At the same time, studies show that when Indigenous peoples enjoy legal recognition of forested territories, they are better able to protect them from deforestation.



Indigenous peoples' lands and way of life are under constant threat from the expansion of oil extraction and mining across the Upper Amazon. The 2020 oil spill into the Napo and Coca Rivers, contaminating the crops, drinking water and livelihoods of dozens of Kichwa Indigenous communities, is a tragic example of the ongoing harm to rainforests and Indigenous peoples across the region. In 2021, Ecuador's president Guillermo Lasso issued two executive decrees to double oil production in the nation, by 500,000 barrels per day—80% of untapped reserves in Ecuador are located in Indigenous territories in the Amazon— and to massively expand mining projects across the region. We know what this means, so we are putting our proven legal strategies and partnership model to work to fight back against the expanding extractive frontier.



Strengthening the right of frontline Indigenous peoples to decide what happens on their lands is a key strategy to stopping resource extraction and protecting the Amazon rainforest, while holding rights violators accountable is critical to ensuring justice applies to Indigenous peoples. Last year, we worked hand-in-hand with Indigenous communities to bring landmark legal cases before regional and national courts to advance and defend Indigenous rights regionally.

## ADVANCE THE RIGHT TO FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC) IN ECUADOR



In 2021, we built a high profile international campaign to establish new precedent at the Constitutional Court recognizing Indigenous peoples rights to decide what happens on their lands. For too long, governments around the world, have tried to water down this internationally recognized right, known as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) to a far weaker standard of consultation. Being consulted is not the same as giving consent. The Ecuadorian Constitutional Court selected for review, out of thousands of cases, two landmark legal victories that our team supported alongside the Kofán and Waorani nations, protecting 31,000 hectares of Kofán ancestral territory from gold mining in 2018 and 200,000

hectares of Waorani territory from an oil auction in 2019, respectively. Both cases were successful at the lower court and hinged on the government's failure to comply with even the weaker standard of consultation.

We knew that the Constitutional Court's decision to review these cases presented the best opportunity in a decade to secure meaningful constitutional protections for Indigenous peoples rights to decide what happens on their lands. Over the course of the year, we implemented a multi-tier strategy of public demonstrations, legal and human rights advocacy, and global communications to build momentum for this unprecedented opportunity. We galvanized our supporters and the international community to put pressure on the court. We secured *amicus curiae* briefs from some of the world's foremost experts. The campaign petition to date has collected more than 350,000 signatures, which were then handed to the Constitutional Court in January to build pressure to obtain new jurisprudence.

At the end of 2021, through hard-fought legal campaigning, we secured the first-ever Constitutional Court hearing in Indigenous territory. Judges traveled to Sinangoe, deep in Kofán territory, to hear powerful Indigenous testimonies, *amicus curiae* from anthropologists, biologists, and human rights experts, and arguments from Amazon Frontlines lawyers. In early 2022, the Court handed down its ruling, recognizing the right to consent, providing some of the world's most advanced jurisprudence FPIC. This case stands to be truly historical, potentially providing legal frameworks critical to freeing up more than 7 million hectares of rainforest from mining and oil threats across all of Ecuador.

## LEVERAGE THE INTER AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IACHR) TO SECURE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS TRANSBORDER PEOPLE

The Siona people of Ecuador and Colombia, like many Indigenous peoples whose territory extends between the borders of modern-day nation states, find themselves in a precarious position vis a vis the recognition and respect for their human, collective and territorial rights. For decades, the Siona have endured the additional challenge of being caught in the literal crossfire of the Colombian civil conflict, expanding oil frontier, and a brutal narco-trafficking corridor. We have been working closely with the Siona to secure the protection of their rights, lands and way of life while leveraging their struggle to advance the rights of transborder Indigenous peoples across the region.

Last year, Amazon Frontlines filed a resolution to establish greater protections for transborder Indigenous nations before the IACHR and applied pressure on the Colombian government to comply with IACHR protective measures in Siona territory. We presented an enforcement action against military presence in Siona territory and the lack of state response to the Siona's demand for land restitution as part of a broader reparation process that started in 2020. We conducted an anthropological investigation with Colombia's Victims Reparation Unit and published 5 reports, including two in partnership with the IACHR, that shed light on the risks the Siona and other transborder Indigenous nations face along borders. We have already seen results with both Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace visiting Buenavista territory in March, followed by meetings in April held by the IACHR in Colombia, with state authorities in attendance. Ultimately, the goal of this strategy is to increase visibility of the case and ensure that protective measures (which were granted in 2018) are enforced, amidst the ongoing violence from armed conflict and illegal extraction that continues in Siona territory.

## SEEKING JUSTICE FOR KICHWA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AFFECTED BY OIL SPILLS

In 2020, Amazon Frontlines worked alongside Kichwa communities to file a lawsuit seeking justice for more than 27,000 Indigenous peoples living along the banks of the Coca and Napo rivers impacted by the worst oil spill in Ecuador in 15 years. Following the dismissal of the case at the provincial level, in April 2021, Ecuador's Constitutional Court took the case up for review, opening up a historic opportunity for justice and to establish important legal precedent nationally on Indigenous rights. This victory was the result of long-standing legal and advocacy work carried out jointly with the Kichwa plaintiffs, the Ceibo Alliance and member organizations from Ecuador's Human Rights Alliance, of which Amazon Frontlines is a founding member.





In June, we held a meeting with the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the Environment and on Toxics and Human Rights and secured a commitment from the Special Rapporteur on Toxics to provide *amicus curiae* in the Constitutional Court case in support of the Kichwa.

In partnership with Amnesty International, we carried out a thorough analysis of the socio-environmental impacts of the 2020 oil spill to be used as evidence before Ecuador's highest court. With Amnesty International, and alongside the Indigenous federation FCUNAE, we also held a three-day workshop to carry out a risk analysis, context update, and support plaintiffs in the preparation of legal documents to demand a public hearing to release the final verdict around the oil spill case. In October we helped organize an Indigenous march in Quito, in which hundreds of Kichwa community members mobilized to demand a hearing. Kichwa plaintiffs also demanded that the public hearing

## SECURING INDIGENOUS LAND TENURE OVER RAINFOREST TERRITORIES IN ECUADOR AND PERU

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Supporting the efforts of Indigenous peoples to reclaim ancestral territories is a core component of our strategy to defend the Amazon. Studies show that when Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) enjoy legal recognition of forested territories, they are better able to protect them from deforestation. In 2021, we made strides in our work to secure Indigenous land tenure over thousands of hectares of rainforest territories across the region, particularly in Ecuador and Peru, where Indigenous leaders are leading negotiation and building pressure on state authorities to spur legal reform to facilitate the granting of land titles in contested areas.

In Ecuador, in an important milestone in the Kofán of Sinangoe's efforts to regain legal title over ancestral lands taken from them during the creation of a national park in the 1970s, in October Sinangoe submitted a claim to secure title over 63,000 hectares to the Ministry of Environment. If their claim is successful, it will establish an important precedent in regional efforts to reclaim Indigenous ownership over more than 1.5 million hectares of Ecuadorian rainforest within national parks.

In Peru, in 2021 we made significant inroads in our efforts to overcome the multiple legal and administrative barriers that prevent Indigenous peoples in the country from gaining fully registered titles over their ancestral lands. In December, after years of negotiations with the state, we secured a commitment from Peru's forestry authorities to recategorize existing logging allocations (known as Permanent Production Forests in English and in Spanish by the acronym BPP, *Bosques de Producción Permanente*) conceded across Siekopai's historically owned lands, opening a path for the Siekopai to finally claim full legal ownership over their territories. Simultaneously, in partnership with Peru-based Legal Defense Institute (*Instituto de Defensa Legal*, or IDL) and Amazon Frontlines, three Siekopai communities in Peru – San Martín, Mashunta and Wajoya – filed a lawsuit against the Peruvian government to recover ownership over 120,000 hectares of Siekopai ancestral land, in efforts to challenge the existing government practice of granting temporary land concessions that can be revoked, rather than fully recognized ownership, to Indigenous communities for forests considered by the state to be apt for extraction and logging across these territories. If successful, the lawsuit will catalyze much-needed national reforms to secure formal Indigenous ownership with the historic potential to positively impact over 4 million hectares of Peruvian rainforest.

## WINNING NEW PRECEDENT SETTING LEGAL CASES

In 2021, Amazon Frontlines engaged in additional legal actions around human and environmental rights across all of Ecuador with the purpose of securing further protections for Indigenous communities threatened by oil. We strengthened crucial partnerships with international and human rights bodies to amplify our advocacy work and shape public policies. The following achievements are the result of our collaborations:

In collaboration with the Ecuadorian organizations UDAPT, Clínica Ambiental and Accion Ecologica, we achieved a historic court victory that orders the shutdown of all gas flaring (347 flares belching toxins 24-hours a day in the rainforest) and prohibits the construction of new gas flares in the Ecuadorian Amazon. This win represents an important milestone in our efforts to protect community health. We will work to ensure that this ruling is effectively enforced in the coming years.

In response to the violent government repression of Ecuador's Indigenous mobilization in 2019, Amazon Frontlines helped form the Ecuadorian Alliance for Human Rights to support victims of human rights abuses during the protests. In 2021, alongside the Alliance, we filed a case before Ecuador's Constitutional Court, arguing against the unconstitutional use of force against unarmed protesters. The case culminated in a landmark legal win that restricts disproportionate use of force against civilians and upholds the constitutional right to protest, a clear victory in our efforts to support Indigenous and other marginalized groups across the country.



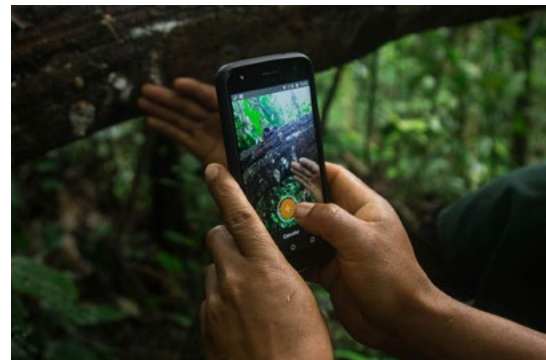
In October, Amazon Frontlines sued Ecuador's government over two new decrees pledging to expand oil extraction by nearly 500,000 barrels per day and to double mining operations as part of the country's "post-COVID economic recovery". One month later, the Constitutional Court accepted our lawsuit for review, opening up the real opportunity to halt this major threat to more than 7 million hectares of Indigenous rainforest territories across Ecuador.

# DEFENDING INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES IN REAL TIME THROUGH MAPPING AND MONITORING





Across the Upper Amazon, Indigenous peoples have witnessed the disastrous arc of oil exploration, mining, logging and agribusiness expansion for decades. Alongside formal recognition of Indigenous rights to their lands, territories, and resources, community-led territorial protection strategies are crucial to protecting ancestral lands and forests. Real-time community-based monitoring ensures that laws are enforced in practice and that communities can identify rights violations as they occur.



Studies have shown that Indigenous peoples are not only the best stewards of their land, but investing in securing land for Indigenous peoples is critical for slowing deforestation and reducing emissions. In 2021, we achieved important milestones in our years-long work to secure legal ownership over Indigenous lands by scaling territorial mapping processes to create maps that serve as core tools in titling claims and by developing legal strategies to abolish structural obstacles to land tenure. With the Kofán community of Sinangoe, we presented a new claim for land title that seeks to overcome existing administrative hurdles to titling of Indigenous peoples land within national parks. In Peru, we scaled up mapping of Siekopai territory and targeted policies that were hampering claims to Indigenous land titles in favor of government logging concessions, paving the road for Siekopai communities to gain legal ownership over their ancestral territories.

In 2021, we trained 160 monitors and mappers over a series of more than 50 trainings to patrol a 1-million-hectare area of at-risk rainforest. We have also carried out mapping processes in the Siekopai and Kofán nations, launching Sinangoe's first-ever territorial map that has served as a backbone to their land titling claim.



By combining new technology with community organizing, we help Indigenous nations get control of their lands against mounting colonization and resource extraction. In 2021, we continued our efforts to train and equip community land patrols with high-tech tools to detect and gather evidence of new threats to their lands while providing ongoing medical and conflict resolution training to keep patrols safe in volatile field conditions. The information generated has been key to inform collective decision making and legal cases, and also serves as the base for the creation of territorial maps.

## MAPPING AND LAND PATROLS

### SINANGOE

In 2021, the Kofán community of Sinangoe's land patrol stayed strong in their efforts to maintain control of their mountainous territory. Sinangoe's success demonstrates what our model is all about, and proves how building grassroots power with Indigenous peoples to defend their lands and ways of life can lead to major climate victories and shape the future for millions of Indigenous people around the world. Despite their 2018 victory shutting down gold mining operations along the Aguarico, new mining threats emerged in 2021. In response, Amazon Frontlines accompanied Sinangoe's land patrol on over 15 field trips throughout the year, during which they detected new mining activities and confiscated several dredges used for gold mining. Members of the patrol also co-led training sessions alongside AF staff.



Additionally, after gathering a total of 5,000 GPS points during numerous field trips and conducting over 20 video interviews with elders from Sinangoe about their ancestral knowledge of the land, the Sinangoe mapping team completed their years-long mapping project and published the community's first-ever territorial map. Representing a huge milestone in the Kofán of Sinangoe's efforts to regain legal title over ancestral lands taken from them during the creation of a national park, in October, Sinangoe used their newly created map as a core component in a land titling claim over 63,000 hectares that they submitted before the Ministry of Environment. If their claim is successful, it will establish important precedent in efforts to secure Indigenous ownership over more than 1.5 million hectares of Ecuadorian rainforest within national parks.

### SIEKOPAI

Following a successful land titling claim by the Siekopai over 40,000 hectares of their ancestral territory in Peru, we accompanied the Siekopai land patrol from the community of Wajoya on monthly monitoring field trips to collect evidence necessary to complete their own territorial map that will back their land titling claim to gain control of an additional 150,000 hectares of ancestral territory. Between October and November, we held two rights training sessions to inform communities about their legal rights to expel illegal actors in their territories. In Ecuador, we accompanied the Siekopai land patrol of San Pablo on 15 monitoring trips in the ancestral territory of Cocaya, where there is a 10-year history of illegal non-Indigenous settlement and a documented 70 hectares of deforestation. Over these trips, we installed 10 camera traps across the territory to collect evidence that was used to pressure the Ministry of Environment to evict illegal settlers across their territory. In a major turn of events, the Ministry approved the demand, handing formal power to the community to escort all illegal actors out of Siekopai land.



## WAORANI

The Waorani of Pastaza protect a nearly 200,000 acre territory of some of the most biodiverse forest on Earth. In recent years, an uptick in illegal gold mining, poaching and logging has required an urgent response from Waorani communities in Pastaza. Following the establishment of the Waorani of Pastaza's first inter-community land patrol in 2020 in response to mounting illegal mining, poaching and logging in their territory, the Waorani land patrol carried out more than 12 trips into the field, detecting new mining activities along their territorial border. To support their territorial monitoring activities, we built a land patrol station that will serve as a meeting space, as well as storage for monitoring equipment and first aid gear. In 2022, we will invest in scaling the Waorani land patrols efforts through additional trainings, providing equipment, and offering ongoing accompaniment to ensure the Waorani's effective control over their mega biodiverse territory.



## SIONA OF CUYABENO

In support of the ongoing protection of Siona territory in the highly biodiverse Cuyabeno reserve, we carried out a series of trainings in monitoring and rights for Cuyabeno communities and built new headquarters to serve as a meeting, data organizing and storage space for monitoring and mapping equipment. The Siona of Cuyabeno held more than 15 community meetings to consolidate strategies and community positions around land management and to establish boundary lines with the neighboring Indigenous communities. In support, Amazon Frontlines carried out a series of technology trainings and accompanied the Siona land patrol during several monitoring outings.



## SCHOOL OF CARTOGRAPHY

As a next step in our mission to strengthen leadership capacity and self-governance at the community level, and owing to the need to build a regional bulwark of resistance against threats to Indigenous territories in the Upper Amazon, in 2021, we launched a pilot School of Cartography that trained 15 Siona youth – first participants of the School in its pilot year – on the use of innovative and accessible mapping tools. The School promotes the implementation of mapping processes directly by Indigenous communities and builds power with Indigenous partners to develop their own territorial defense strategies autonomously. The School is designed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to implement their own mapping projects, with accompaniment by experienced Indigenous mappers, and seeks to scale our proven model for community participatory mapping across the region. Through accessible hands-on training methodologies that focus on capacity building for young leaders, the school aims to fortify stakeholder communities' autonomy to develop their own territorial defense strategies.



# PROTECTING INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE





In the midst of an economic and health crisis around the globe, strengthening Indigenous autonomy and resilience by investing in traditional practices, knowledge, and livelihoods is essential to Indigenous cultural survival and their ability to continue protecting rainforest territories that are vital to our climate. Communities throughout the Amazon are facing not only the threat of an ecological tipping point, as forests are cut down and burned, so too are communities facing a cultural tipping point, with the looming loss of their languages, their ancestral knowledge and their ways of life.

In 2021, we worked to rehabilitate Indigenous lands and create bountiful food production systems that provide for Indigenous families. We have also been building capacity for youth and women to lead innovative livelihood strategies that foster local community-based economies. All the while, we promoted projects that facilitate knowledge sharing between generations and help build the skills and provide the tools for Indigenous youth to tell powerful stories and document their peoples' cultures and struggles through inspiring media told from an Indigenous perspective.

## RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

In the midst of an economic and health crisis around the globe, strengthening Indigenous The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced what we have always believed: resilient, self-reliant communities are the best prepared to survive a global health crisis and to remain strong in the fight against extractive industries. And access to traditional food and medicine is one of the most effective ways to strengthen community resilience.

This year, we completed the first stage of our pilot food and medicine sovereignty initiative across 22 communities in the Upper Amazon. Alongside our partners at the Waorani organization CONCONAWEP, we trained 25 community-based food sovereignty promoters to lead a project to diversify 20 *chacras*, or traditional family gardens, with ancestral food crops and medicinal plants across 12 Waorani communities. These gardens help reduce families' dependency on mass produced food products from towns and cities, where the threat of COVID transmission is rampant, while also improving families' diets and revitalizing access to local and sustainable food and medicine.







At the same time, energized and inspired by the effective use of traditional medicines to treat COVID-19, we designed a plan together with the Siekopai community of San Pablo to integrate medicinal plant knowledge into the official education curriculum by establishing a community medicinal plant garden and bringing in elders as teachers to educate Siekopai youth about traditional medicinal plants and their uses. During the second semester of funding the Siekopai established their first community medicinal garden in the community of San Pablo.

Additionally, we worked with our partners to build and recover spaces that promote the intergenerational exchange of ancestral knowledge and cultural practices. We completed the construction of two brand new *casas de conocimiento*, or traditional learning spaces, in the Kofán community of Avie and the Siona community of Buenavista, where many elders are still practicing healing and spiritual rituals with millenary roots. These practices are vital to keeping communities healthy and unified, and Indigenous cultures alive and thriving in the face of new waves of invasion and neocolonial assimilation.

## LEADERSHIP AND LIVELIHOODS

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Traditionally, women have played a role as visionary leaders within Indigenous communities, who make decisions that prioritize the future of the family and community. Through the colonization of Indigenous peoples and the expansion of resource extraction into their lands, the leadership role of women has been cast to the side. We are working to reverse this trend by providing leadership opportunities for women across our partner communities.

In 2021, we invested resources and support for women-led economic projects that work to shift dependency away from destructive industries, incorporate and revitalize Indigenous cultures and practices, and as such, reposition Indigenous women as leaders within their communities. We continued hands-on accompaniment for five women's associations: the Waorani association *AMWAE*, the Kofan associations *Sukû* and *Shame éco*, the Siona's *Ziobain Romi Cuaro* cooperative, and the Siekopai *Nomi Wa 'iya*, or Multi-colored Women's Association. We spent the first part of the year working with these associations on a robust diagnostic to identify core needs and challenges. Through this assessment we worked with the women to develop plans to improve productivity, expand the commercialization of community-made products, and develop business administration skills to support the long term health of these micro-enterprises. In the second half of the year, we began to implement these plans to help women entrepreneurs improve their income-generating activities.



Owing to the urgent need to scale our work to reach new communities and new women leaders, this year we launched a Women's Leadership School that provides training for Indigenous women in leadership skills, business administration, healthcare, and cultural practices. In its first year, the School provided training for a total of 31 Indigenous women, including 15 representatives of the 5 associations mentioned above and 16 Indigenous women who plan to start their own cooperatives in their communities. As such, the School is establishing a network of support in the Upper Amazon where women who run enterprises in their communities share their knowledge and experience to encourage the formation of new women-led businesses across other communities. In



## EDUCATION AND CULTURAL REVIVAL INITIATIVES

Over the last half-century in the Upper Ecuador's northern Amazon, schools have deprived Indigenous youth of their ancestral cultures throughout the entirety of their education. In the attempt to assimilate the next generation of Indigenous young people into mainstream society, classes fail to include any Indigenous heritage or generational wisdom in the curricula – even in schools that primarily serve Indigenous youth from one nation. As a result, youth are losing the strong sense of cultural identity that their grandparents have. With the loss of the elder generation, cultures are at risk of disappearing. Therefore, a top priority for Indigenous nations in the Upper Amazon is to create Indigenous-driven, community managed educational programs that provide teachers and students with more culturally appropriate curriculum, new teaching methods, learning strategies, educational content and improved infrastructure.

Taking our cues from the priorities of our Indigenous partners to counter the cultural tipping point imminent across the Amazon basin, we share a vision of a truly intercultural education system that balances Western technical knowledge with the revitalization of Indigenous ancestral knowledge and respect for Indigenous peoples' worldview and ways of learning. In 2021, we designed and began implementation of revolutionary educational pilot programs in three Indigenous nations in the Upper Amazon by working together with families and teachers to identify community-led educational objectives and co-create new teaching methods, learning strategies, and educational content, and providing Indigenous youth with the values and skills critical to build capacity for new generations of Indigenous leaders to protect the Amazon rainforest and Indigenous ways of life for the decades to come.

## → IMPLEMENTING A NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL WITH THE WAORANI NATION

In Waorani territory, we led community diagnostics involving over 100 community members that resulted in the development of novel intercultural curricula, a core component of the new Waorani educational model. We also built two traditional Waorani schoolhouses and began running classes for Waorani youth. We also took action to require the Ecuadorian State to respect Waorani teachers' rights and to include Waorani culture in curricula and teacher competency exams as an important step to advance the right to education for Indigenous peoples and to provide more culturally inclusive educational opportunities for the Waorani.

## → IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN SIEKOPAI TERRITORY

In 2021, we implemented a diagnostic for the development of a new education system for the Siekopai nation alongside 60 community members from 7 Siekopai communities, including elders, community teachers, young students, and family members, to assess community needs for the implementation of a new intercultural education model. We facilitated knowledge sharing between elders and youth through a series of workshops on Indigenous cultures, history, art and gastronomy. As a result, we developed a plan alongside Siekopai communities to guide the implementation of a new education model and helped form a community council to oversee the implementation process.

## → LAUNCHING A NEW INTERCULTURAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE KOFÁN NATION

In late 2021, we held assemblies with Kofán representatives and local authorities to discuss community needs around the launch of a new intercultural model. Upon reaching consensus, we will replicate the model used with the Waorani and Siekopai nations to develop culturally-informed curricula and build schools in Kofán communities as we move forward.

# AMPLIFYING INDIGENOUS VOICES





We believe that Indigenous wisdom and perspectives can help transform the world for the better, which is only possible if Indigenous voices are heard. Unfortunately, Indigenous peoples are too often excluded from the media, international communications, and international fora that have the potential to determine solutions to global issues, including climate change.

Amazon Frontlines' goal is to share the stories of Indigenous stewardship and struggles nationally and internationally. As we share Indigenous perspectives on culture, economic recovery, biodiversity and solutions to climate change, we help ideas and innovation spread, driving awareness and transformation globally. We do this by leveraging strategic communications through traditional and social media, as well as powerful video and photographic content, while supporting Indigenous leaders and spokespeople to connect with new audiences and share their messages via Indigenous-made content. Our field-tested, multi-tiered approach to galvanize global consciousness includes far reaching public awareness campaigns, leveraging a global network of influencers to capitalize on major opportunities, and implementing creative and high-profile multi-nation campaign actions in Indigenous communities and cities across Ecuador, Colombia and Peru.



We complement this strategy by building capacity and reach for Indigenous filmmakers and storytellers to share their perspectives on resource extraction, conservation, and resistance. This includes an intentional focus on training Indigenous youth in traditional storytelling and mixed media so that they can document their personal stories and the stories of their communities.

Additionally, it's important that we shine a light on the global stakes—and implications—of resource extraction in the Amazon. Through effective multi-language communications campaigning and earned media in major global outlets, we are raising visibility around the urgent effort to protect the most biodiverse forests on Earth from destruction and in doing so, growing a global movement of support for indigenous struggles.

## STORYTELLING

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Investing in Indigenous-led communication helps grassroots Indigenous movements to coordinate effectively during complex territorial defense processes, helps communities document cultural practices to keep cultures alive—facilitating knowledge sharing between elders and youth—and brings Indigenous voices and stories to a global audience to raise awareness about struggles for rights and autonomy. In 2021, we expanded our storytelling training program with Indigenous youth to amplify Indigenous perspectives on extraction, oil spills, and the pandemic. We promoted projects that facilitate knowledge sharing between generations and help build the skills and provide the tools for Indigenous youth to tell powerful stories and document their peoples' cultures and struggles through inspiring media told from an Indigenous perspective.

We worked to amplify Indigenous stories of resistance against resource extraction by developing three different radio series, on the Waorani's fight to secure effective application of the Indigenous right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent; on the long-lasting battle of the Kofan community of Sinangoe against mining, which just set national legal precedent to create clear jurisprudence on FPIC in Ecuador; and on the Shuar Arutam Indigenous people's fight against the mining industry and efforts to gain legal ownership over their ancestral territories in Ecuador's central-southern Amazon.

## THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN STORYTELLERS IN THE AMAZON

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As a new phase of our work to train and mentor Indigenous youth storytellers over the past five years, we launched a brand new Women's Communication School to build capacity for Indigenous women to become filmmakers, photographers, and journalists of their nations. Lifting up women's voices and stories is critical to strengthening Indigenous women's leadership and struggles in the Amazon. Indigenous women have always played a critical role in their people's resistance movements, and yet their voices and perspectives have been historically less visible, and they continue to be disproportionately affected by violence, racism, and discrimination. In this fight, storytelling becomes a powerful weapon to shape women's narratives and advance their people's struggles for survival in our world's most important rainforest.

This new school aims to equip young Indigenous women with the tools and techniques to share their perspectives, stories, wisdom, and experiences with their communities and the world. In its first year, the school provided training for 16 young women in photography and filmmaking. As a result, a new collective of Indigenous women storytellers is now coming together for the first time in their people's history in the Ecuadorian and Colombian Amazon, made up of seventeen young women from the Kofan, Siona, Siekopai and Waorani peoples. In 2022, we will accompany and support the women storytellers who have been trained through the School as they develop powerful media on gender, resource extraction, Indigenous life and Indigenous resistance, all while training a new group of women storytellers through the School.

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Henry Kimbell	Edward Whiteaker	Kirsten Fleischhauer	
Andrew Ferguson	Gabriel Hall	Kim Pierce	
Daniel Bennett	John Kelley	Martin Wagner	
Ole Andersen	Cyrus Mayer	Anne Sandwith	
Hannah Rudd	Helen Rivera	Judith Dutfield	
Giang NGO	Sarah Best	Elizabeth Connor	
Shannon Purves-Smith	Dana Berlin	Rodney Peasley	
Meredith Russo	Nels Darling	Freak-A-Holic	
Preston Webber	Veronica Perez	Maritza Gonzalez Solana	
María Francisca Frisone	Amie Illfield	Senara Wilson Hodges	
Sandra Koning	Veronica Carrillo	Marjan Christine Damste	
Philomena Laboe	Chantal Gagne	John Wilson	
Travis Lopez	Ricardo Mercado	Grant Kopplin	
Elena Langdon	Philip James	Kindra Smith	
Miranda Richmond Mouillot	Yael Fireshtein	Crystal De la Cruz	
Gregory Mikkelsen	Quorn Quorn	Dorthe Leth	
Theophile Pascot	Arne Ingwersen	Tilman Müller	
Elise Cording	Kevin Busch	Colin Holford	
Sara Armstrong	Ratna Sinroja	Edward Jones	
Anamaria Zambrano	William Kenneally	Elois Lewis	
Christine Glenn	Leonie Föbel	Gail and Gerrish Milliken	
Rosa Isela Lopez	Adam Howard Grafik Design	Global Glimpse	
Jean C Mejia	Nancy Castro	Jaap Renkema	
Dawn Garcia	Shane O'Reilly	Kat Wendelstadt	
Alex Farris	Angela Rosario	Kristin Kaul	
Christian Borgmann	Alyssa Knickerbocker	Lowell Weiss	
Hannah Jackson	Todd Hetrick	Madeline Buescher	
Robert Elliott	Per Bjork	Marlena Sonn	
Ryan Snyder	Randi Køhn	Megan Boone and Daniel	
Nico van den Boom	Jennifer Kirby	Estbrook	
Kate Roberts	Teresa Plowright	Mikel Maron	
Elena Anzina	Paola Lievano Cruz	Millie Bishop	
Patricia C Schwarzlander	Timur Ina	One Willow	
Alma Håkansson	Derekcirillo10's Store	Rampa Hormel	



## INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

Metabolic Studio of the  
Annenberg Foundation  
Avaaz  
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Earth Alliance  
Energy Transition Fund

Full Circle Fund of Tamalpays Trust  
The Further Foundation  
Nia Tero  
One Earth  
Rainforest Action Network  
Re:wild  
Sall Family Foundation  
Saving an Angel  
The Furthur Foundation

**WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO INCLUDE SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR 2021  
FUNDERS OF OUR INDIGENOUS-LED PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, CEIBO  
ALLIANCE AND CONCONAWEP:**

Both Ends  
Rainforest Fund  
All Eyes on the Amazon  
Global Greengrants Fund  
Re:wild  
Rainforest Action Network  
Metabolic Studio of the

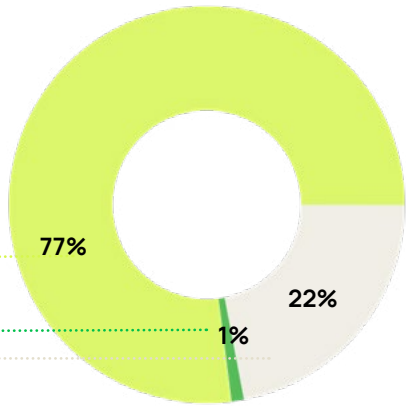
Annenberg Foundation  
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World Centric





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

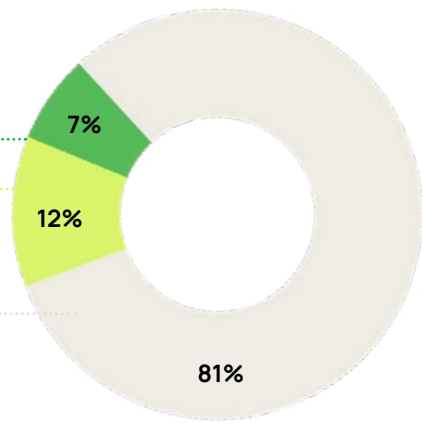
## REVENUE



FOUNDATIONS	\$1,156,609	77%
INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES	\$797,757	22%
OTHER INCOME	\$15,661	1%

**\$1,970,026 100%**

## EXPENSES



PROGRAM SERVICES	\$1,972,814	81%
MANAGEMENT & SERVICES	\$171,037	7%
FUNDRAISING	\$296,873	12%

**\$2,440,724 100%**

**NET ASSETS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021**

**\$2,023,072**

For a complete financial reporting by **McDonald Jacobs, P.C.** please contact  
Amazon Frontlines at [info@amazonfrontlines.org](mailto:info@amazonfrontlines.org)





## STAFF AND BOARD

### STAFF

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**MITCH ANDERSON** - Executive Director  
**KATE HORNER** - Deputy Director  
**JORGE ACERO** - Legal Defenders Program Coordinator  
**LUISANA AGUILAR** - National Media Coordinator  
**ALEJANDRA ALZATE** - Digital Strategies Manager  
**GABRIELA BOLIVAR** - Partnerships Coordinator  
**MARIA ESPINOZA** - Rights Team Leader  
**ALEX GOFF** - Senior Development Manager  
**ANGEL GONSALEZ** - Legal Assistant  
**ARNOLD OJEDA** - Education Coordinator  
**LAURA ROJAS** - Legal Defense Program Coordinator  
**NICOLAS KINGMAN** - Production and Communications Training Lead  
**MAURICIO LOAYZA** - IT Lead  
**NICOLAS MAINVILLE** - Land Protectors Lead  
**ELENA MANOVELLA** - Development Coordinator  
**JEREMY NELSON** - Director of Finance and Operations  
**BRIAN PARKER** - Global Communications Director  
**SOPHIE PINCHETTI** - External Communications Manager  
**INA SHKURTI** - Land Protectors Lead  
**SARA SKOLNICK** - Digital Organizer  
**PAOLO SOLIS** - HR & Operations Coordinator  
**YLENIA TORRICELLI** - Autonomy and Resilience Coordinator  
**LUKE WEISS** - Mapping and Monitoring Team Leader  
**MARINA WRIGHT** - Social Media Coordinator  
**JERONIMO ZÚÑIGA** - Culture Team Leader

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**GINGER CASSADY** - Board Chair  
**JOSH FRYDAY** - Board Treasurer  
**FELICITY MEU** - Board Secretary  
**JUSTIN WINTERS** - Board Member  
**MICHAEL DUIGNAN** - Board Member

### HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

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**RAYMOND GARVEY**  
**FRANCA SCIUTTO**

[AMAZONFRONTLINES.ORG](https://AMAZONFRONTLINES.ORG) | [INFO@AMAZONFRONTLINES.ORG](mailto:INFO@AMAZONFRONTLINES.ORG)

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San Francisco, CA 94108

