



ANUAL IMPACT REPORT 2020

AMAZONFRONTLINES.ORG

AF AMAZON
FRONTLINES

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Letter from our Founder and Executive Director

DEAR FRIENDS,

For my annual letter this year, I turned to my interview notes, digital recordings and published writings in 2020 for guidance. I relived conversations with Indigenous leaders on the eve of the pandemic, in the midst of outbreaks, oil spills, floods, and relief efforts. And what struck me, more than anything, in their words and in their voices, was their composure in the face of crisis. They seemed to be saying: “We’ve been here before. We know what crisis is all about. We know what to do.” For this letter, then, I’ve decided to revisit some of these moments, highlighting a selection of quotes from the frontlines in 2020, and in doing so, reflect on how Amazon Frontlines showed up for our partners, what we learned, and where we are going from here.

In March of 2020, as the pandemic struck frontier towns across the Upper Amazon, the crisis seemed blinding, and nearly paralyzing in scope: “We are facing terrible times ahead. There is a new sickness in the world, unlike any other,” read my notes from a conversation between a Waorani leader and an elder over the static of an HF radio signal. “Go make camps deeper in the forest,” replied the Waorani grandmother. “Our ancestors survived many contagions over the centuries by isolating in the forest, and so we must follow in their footsteps.”

As outbreaks spread, our team took cues from our partners. We worked hand-in-hand with Indigenous leadership to provide critical public health information to remote communities - via radio broadcast, animations, and infographics in 6 different languages. Our years of experience and trust with partners allowed us to respond swiftly and effectively in deploying urgent resources to save lives, such as medical equipment, logistics and testing. We also leveraged legal advocacy strategies to improve the government’s response to the crisis, challenging a deep history of racism towards Indigenous peoples.

In early April, a massive oil spill compounded the Covid crisis, contaminating the drinking water for thousands of Kichwa

community members at the headwaters of the Amazon: “The oil spill flooded our gardens and is sweeping across the islands where our food is planted,” a Kichwa villager said during an interview: “There is nowhere to fish. But we must not leave our village because we don’t want to get sick and bring the virus back with us.”

Together with our partners at the Ceibo Alliance and with the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Confenaie) we organized fact-finding missions, deployed medical brigades, and partnered with the Kichwa people to file a lawsuit for remediation and compensation, challenging a long-history of oil company impunity in Ecuador’s Amazon going back all the way to the days of Texaco’s (now Chevron’s) infamous environmental legacy.

By the summer months, after the contagion had swept through nearly every Indigenous village across the Upper Amazon, the tenor of the stories began to change: “Our only refuge from this disease is our traditional medicine and our territory. The government has nothing to offer us – not tests, not medicine, not even resources,” said a leader of

The pandemic sharpened inequalities, exposed systemic racism, and intensified extractive pressures over their territories and cultures

the Siekopai people. “The jungle healed me more than the doctors could,” said an Indigenous covid survivor, living downriver from the oil fields.

The reality for Indigenous communities in the Amazon, not unlike elsewhere in the world, is that the pandemic

sharpened inequalities, exposed systemic racism, and intensified extractive pressures over their territories and cultures. In response, we partnered with the Ceibo Alliance and regional Indigenous organizations to design a set of grassroots strategies to fortify Indigenous sovereignty and resilience in times of crisis, including initiatives on food security, traditional healing systems, economic alternatives, communications infrastructure, and Indigenous-led advocacy and storytelling.

By the Fall of 2020, our partners began to receive unprecedented global recognition for their brilliant and tireless work to protect their rainforest homelands. The Ceibo Alliance won the UN Equator Prize, named one of the most effective grassroots organizations in the world. Waorani leader, Nemonte Nenquimo, was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize, the UN Champions of the Earth Award, BBC100, and was named one of Time's 100 Most Influential People of 2020.

In an irreverent, piercing and widely-read OPED in the Guardian, Nemonte delivered a powerful message to the Western World: "You forced your civilization upon us and now look where we are: global pandemic, climate crisis, species extinction and, driving it all, widespread spiritual poverty. In all these years of taking, taking, taking from our lands, you have not had the courage, or the curiosity, or the respect to get to know us. To understand how we see, and think, and feel, and what we know about life on this Earth."

Over the course of 2020, in the face of unprecedented crisis, the key to Indigenous peoples' very survival lay in the knowledge of their own elders, in the water, food, and medicines that their rainforest territories provide, and in the wisdom of nature herself. At Amazon Frontlines, this inspires us deeply, and has motivated us to double down on our strategies, developed hand-in-hand with our Indigenous partners, to strengthen community autonomy and resilience, Indigenous leadership, and Indigenous rights. This is not only a lynchpin in our efforts to protect community health and safety, but also in our efforts to safeguard the Amazon rainforest and protect future generations across the world from climate change.

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Our entire planet faces the unprecedented threat of a rapidly warming planet. What has become inarguably clear is that Indigenous peoples hold the key to future life on Earth in balance with the natural world, both in their way of life and in the critical ecosystems they defend with their lives. It is up to us to ensure they have the support and resources they need to face the colossal threats they are up against. That's where Amazon Frontlines comes in. We wouldn't be able to do this work without supporters like you, and so I'll end this letter with a grateful acknowledgement of all of our supporters who helped us stay strong during this very challenging year. Thank you for all you do, and for being a part of this movement.



**MITCH ANDERSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



OUR MISSION

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

**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.



400

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS

Trained nearly 400 Indigenous community leaders to map and monitor their lands, communicate and tell their stories, defend their land through legal avenues, uplift their cultures and lead their people.



720.000

ACRES OF LAND PROTECTED FROM OIL AND MINING OPERATIONS

Safeguarded another 7 million acres of rainforest from planned oil and mining through legal precedent. **Over 100,000 acres of land titled** and opening a pathway to title at least **1,250,000 acres of Indigenous land** in Ecuador alone.

FIVE YEARS OF IMPACT

A BLUEPRINT

Our single greatest impact is the creation of a pioneering new model of globally packed, 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.



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.



03

3 PRECEDENT-SETTING LEGAL VICTORIES

Won 3 precedent-setting legal victories protecting Kofán, Waorani and Siona territory. **Two of these cases now sit at the Constitutional Court** of Ecuador, poised to deliver nation-wide and regional precedent on Indigenous rights.



\$8 MILLION

CHANNELED TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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

SOLUTIONS INNOVATED



1.164

RAINWATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS

121

SOLAR-ENERGY SYSTEMS

Enabled community installation of rainwater filtration systems serving every Kofán, Secoya, Siona and Waorani household affected by oil contamination, solar-energy systems in 15 roadless communities and 13 ceremonial houses.

2020: IMPACT IN TIMES OF CRISIS



GLOBAL RECOGNITION FOR OUR PARTNERS

The strength of our movement and the scale of our impact is determined by our partnerships. Since its formation, Amazon Frontlines has worked hand-in-hand with Indigenous partners to develop strategies and action plans that are based on Indigenous communities' own vision for the protection of their territories and their cultural survival. We have always prioritized bottom-up organizing and capacity building at all levels to guarantee the autonomy and self-determination of our partners. In 2020, our closest partners received international accolades for their inspiring leadership to confront some of the toughest threats to the Amazon rainforest. Waorani leader and Ceibo Alliance co-founder Nemonte Nenquimo was named to the TIME 100 list of the Most Influential People of 2020 and the BBC100.



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She was also honored with the Goldman Environmental Prize and the UN Champions of the Earth Award. The Indigenous-led organization Ceibo Alliance was awarded the 2020 UN Equator Prize. These awards are not only a recognition of the extraordinary efforts of our partners, they are a recognition of our unique partnership model that builds power with Indigenous peoples, the Amazon's most effective and experienced guardians.



**CHAMPIONS
OF THE EARTH**

COVID-19

The Amazon basin has faced one of the worst outbreaks of COVID-19 in the world. High infection rates, a collapsing medical system, severe shortages of testing supplies and laboratory infrastructure, as well as crowded urban living conditions crippled governments' ability to provide an effective response to the crisis when it was needed most.

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an existential threat to Indigenous peoples, particularly to elders - the keepers

timely support from our global community, we worked quickly with Indigenous leadership across the Upper Amazon to help enforce territorial lockdowns, provide public health information in Indigenous languages to remote villages, map the spread of the disease in frontier towns, build communications infrastructure including satellite internet and high frequency radios in remote communities, collaborate with universities to secure thousands of COVID-19 tests, and activate our global and local networks

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an existential threat to Indigenous peoples, particularly to elders, the keepers and transmitters of ancestral knowledge of the forest, cultural practices, and Indigenous language and history.



and transmitters of ancestral knowledge of the forest, cultural practices, and Indigenous language and history. When the virus first began spreading into the region in March 2020, and medical infrastructure across Ecuador collapsed, we had to immediately pivot to focus on the urgent need to keep communities safe in the absence of an effective response from the government. We launched an emergency fundraising campaign, and with critical and

to distribute basic food and medical provisions to hundreds of Indigenous families in the most at-risk communities.

In response to near-total abandonment by State institutions, we helped form a professional network of epidemiologists and medical specialists to assist and advise Indigenous communities cut off from medical services and information, and published reports and recommendations

to influence national, regional and local government policies and decisions regarding COVID-19. In response to near-total abandonment by the government in Ecuador, we won a case in the provincial court of Pichincha alongside the Waorani organization CONCONAWEP, that requires the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health to step up testing and provide medical supplies and accessible information about COVID-19 to Waorani communities, and sets an important legal precedent for other Indigenous nations.

During the pandemic, many of the most remote communities, marginalized from access to medical attention, relied on their elders' knowledge of plant medicines to heal people sick with coronavirus. Elders, who have lived through past epidemics resulting from early contact with the outside world, including measles and polio, identified the leaves, flowers, resins and barks to treat the various symptoms of coronavirus. The effective use of traditional medicines inspired a number of communities across the Siona, Siekopai, Waorani and Kofán nations to produce plant medicines to share across the region.

Our Indigenous partners are bracing for upcoming variant-spiked waves of the pandemic across the Upper Amazon.

This work was documented by Ceibo Alliance's Siekopai filmmakers, trained through Amazon Frontline's Indigenous Storytellers Training Program, and [published in the New Yorker](#).

Our Indigenous partners are bracing for upcoming variant-spiked waves of the pandemic across the Upper Amazon. In response to this threat, we are continuing our support to at-risk communities by supplying medicine and oxygen to community health clinics and medical outposts, coordinating visits by medical brigades to Indigenous communities, providing accurate information in local languages, and distributing ancestral medicines across the region. At the same time, we are focusing on longer term solutions, centering on strengthening community resilience and self-governance capacity by investing in Indigenous leaders and organizations to weather the current and future crises.



ADVANCING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND LAND TENURE





RIGHTS AND TENURE

Strengthening the rights of the Amazon's most effective defenders is a core component of our strategy to protect the rainforest. Indigenous peoples throughout the Upper Amazon enjoy internationally and constitutionally protected rights that often languish unimplemented. 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. Following major Indigenous rights victories of the last three years, the result of years of community organizing and legal actions, in 2020 we led and accompanied 26 legal cases, developed hard-hitting legal strategies, and fostered ground-up organizing with Indigenous stakeholder communities to advance rights at regional, national, and international levels. These actions aim to secure greater power for Indigenous peoples to decide what happens on their lands, while holding governments and corporations to account in the face of environmental disasters and their handling of the pandemic.

In 2020 we led and accompanied 26 legal cases, developed hard-hitting legal strategies, and fostered ground-up organizing with Indigenous stakeholder communities to advance rights at regional, national, and international levels

The fight for justice following the worst oil spill in Ecuador's Amazon in over a decade: On April 7, 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis, two pipelines burst in the Ecuadorian Amazon, causing the country's worst oil spill in over a decade. The spill affects approximately 118,617 people in 22 rural parishes along the banks of the Coca and Napo rivers, along with more communities downriver in Peru. As a result, hundreds of Indigenous communities continue to face food scarcity, as they relied on these rivers for food and fresh water. In response to this situation, and in addition to mobilizing urgent food and medicine to affected families, Amazon Frontlines, the Ecuadorian Amazon's regional Indigenous organization CONFENIAE, the regional Kichwa

Indigenous federation FCUNAE, the Ecuadorian Alliance for Human Rights, and several affected Indigenous families, filed a lawsuit demanding the government and oil companies carry out urgent environmental remediation, provide medical treatment and support for affected families, and repair or relocate the pipelines to avoid future spills. Although a pro-oil judge ruled against the plaintiffs in the first instance, our appeal has now been accepted before Ecuador's Constitutional Court, with the potential to set a historic national precedent on the Rights of Nature, enshrined in Ecuador's constitution.

Advancing the Indigenous right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Rights of Nature before

Ecuador's highest court: Following our landmark legal victories protecting 79,000 acres of Kofán ancestral territory from gold mining in 2018 and 500,000 acres of Waorani territory from an oil auction in 2019, in early 2020, the new progressive-leaning Constitutional Court of Ecuador selected these two rulings for review out of thousands of cases, setting up the country's first real opportunity to interpret and apply the internationally recognized right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). This represents a major opportunity to establish new national jurisprudence on the right to FPIC and a significant step in our strategy to strengthen Indigenous rights as a pathway forward in the protection of the Amazon. In 2020, Amazon Frontlines' legal team coordinated bottom-up organizing with communities, worked with regional Indigenous federations to reach consensus around a regional Indigenous position on the right to FPIC, and developed multi-tier strategies combining public demonstrations, digital communications campaigning, and legal advocacy for the upcoming court hearing in 2021. A favorable court outcome will strengthen the struggles of Indigenous peoples throughout the Ecuadorian Amazon, all of whom face threats from resource extraction and who will directly benefit from strengthened jurisprudence to decide



Amazon Frontlines' legal team coordinated bottom-up organizing with communities, worked with regional Indigenous federations to reach consensus around a regional Indigenous position on the right to FPIC

what happens over millions of acres of forested territories. millions of acres of forested territories.

Gaining land titles and freeing up primary forests from military control:

Studies demonstrate conclusively that when the rights of Indigenous Peoples and other local communities (IPLCs) are recognized and secured, forests are better protected than those managed by other actors. Throughout our history, we have spearheaded legal and advocacy strategies to reform national legal frameworks and advance Indigenous land titling claims over hundreds of thousands of acres of rainforest across Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. In 2020, after several years of bottom-up

community organizing alongside the Amazon Frontlines' team, the Siekopai community of Wajoya in Peru secured formal recognition of their land title claim to a 100,000-acre area their ancestral territory. Following this landmark victory, we provided training and supported the communities of the Siekopai nation to develop a robust plan to map the rest of their 500,000 acre territory across Ecuador and Peru - a critical step in future land titling claims that will increase their control over their territory.

In 2020, we continued our work alongside the mixed Kichwa and Siona Indigenous community of Wisuya, located along the border separating Ecuador and Colombia, to reclaim control over their territory. In 2012, the Ecuadorian government established the Cuembi Triangle Protected Forest, a 250,000-acre national park that overlapped Wisuya's territory, and handed control of the territory over to the military, jeopardizing Indigenous forest guardianship. Owing to years of close partnership, in 2020 Amazon Frontlines' legal team was in a unique position to provide legal support and amicus curiae briefs to Wisuya to file a lawsuit before Ecuador's highest court. The result was a [landmark victory](#) that returned over 100,000 acres of ancestral rainforest territory to the Kichwa and Siona. The effects of the Cuembi case extend beyond these territories, and set new precedent for the Indigenous right to be consulted before any new laws or regulations that affect them -not just individual projects- are enacted, the right to limit the activities or presence of military in their territories, and the right to possess and hold formal ownership of their ancestral territories.

Seeking justice for victims of human rights violations in Ecuador's 2019 protests: In October 2019, thousands of Indigenous peoples, students, and civil society organizations took to Ecuador's streets to protest the government's economic plans championing privatization,

resource extraction, and other neoliberal reforms imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government responded to demonstrators with violent force and declared a state of emergency, ordering the intervention of armed forces to cease the protests. Over eleven days of demonstrations, clashes between civilians and the military resulted in seven deaths, 1,340 people severely wounded and more than 1,150 detained. In 2020, Amazon Frontlines and the Ecuadorian Alliance for Human Rights, an alliance we helped instigate during the protests, filed a case before Ecuador's Constitutional Court arguing that the deployment of armed forces in protests was unconstitutional. The case culminated in a landmark legal win that restricts disproportionate force against civilians and upholds the constitutional right to protest, a significant step in our efforts to advance Indigenous and human rights across the country.

Strengthening successful partnerships to impact national jurisprudence: 2020 marked an important chapter in our efforts to build partnerships with civil society organizations and international bodies to advance Indigenous and human rights at the national level. In 2019, Amazon Frontlines' legal team helped form the [Ecuadorian Alliance for Human Rights](#) (the Alliance) to support victims of human rights abuses during Ecuador's 2019 protests. One year later, the Alliance grew to include a total of 15 organizations, which have been working jointly on emblematic human rights cases across the country. In 2020, Amazon Frontlines played a central role in analyzing and building human rights cases across Ecuador. Among those cases, we filed a landmark demand alongside other members of the Alliance to decriminalize abortion in cases of rape in Ecuador. This successful demand is particularly relevant to Indigenous women and women from other marginalized groups, who are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence in Ecuador.



DEFENDING INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES IN REAL TIME THROUGH MAPPING AND MONITORING



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. In 2020, we deepened our on-the-ground efforts alongside

practices as a key tool to secure land titles for hundreds of thousands of acres of Indigenous territory. By enhancing community ownership of territorial data, our monitoring and mapping programs empower Indigenous authorities to make informed decisions and help to unify Indigenous positions on territorial management and forest conservation. In 2020, Amazon Frontlines' support of Indigenous-led monitoring and mapping initiatives is contributing to the ongoing protection of over 1 million acres of pristine rainforest, providing a scalable model of forest conservation for Indigenous peoples in the Amazon and around the world.

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



Indigenous nations to map, monitor and ensure control of rainforest territories. Trained and equipped with innovative tools and technologies, Indigenous land patrols are halting illegal activities through territorial monitoring, while mapping teams are producing robust maps that delineate territorial boundaries and document traditional land use

Monitoring and mapping ancestral lands in Sinangoe:

Since the formation of the Kofán community of Sinangoe's first land patrol in 2016, and following a landmark legal victory that protected more than 79,000 acres of pristine rainforest from the impacts of gold mining in 2018, Sinangoe has been a bastion of Indigenous resistance and territorial

defense in the Upper Amazon. In 2020, the community of Sinangoe is taking on the next stage of their fight for their rights and prepared to seek formal recognition of their land title claim. Their monitoring efforts supported the development of a territorial map that will serve as the backbone of Sinangoe's land title claim in 2021. Over the course of the year, the land patrol gathered 5,000 GPS points over hundreds of square miles of ancestral territory, the building blocks of the map the community is creating with the aid of cutting-edge offline mapping software developed jointly by our partners at Digital Democracy and Sinangoe's land patrol. In partnership with Amazon Frontlines, Sinangoe's Indigenous youth communicators conducted over 20 video interviews with elders about their ancestral knowledge of the forest, medicinal plants and spiritual connection to the territory to complete the territorial mapping exercise with historical data critical to the Kofán's land claims. The map, which Sinangoe aims to complete in 2021, will demonstrate how their forest territory is historically, culturally and materially vital to the Kofán's future and will serve as an important tool in preparing a land title claim for 79,000 acres to be presented before the Ministry of the Environment. In the spirit of unity and information sharing with Indigenous nations across the region, we helped organize an inter-tribal land patrol gathering in Sinangoe that brought together seven Indigenous nations to foster territorial monitoring knowledge exchanges and skill shares, to help ensure the replicability of our monitoring and mapping strategies.

Scaling Siekopai land patrol efforts along the Aguarico River: Over the past century, oil operations, industrial agriculture, and colonist settlement have reduced the Siekopai's once seven-million-acre territory to less than 250,000 acres. With conflict over natural resources increasing across these lands, Amazon Frontlines supported the Siekopai in forming the nation's first land patrol. Equipped with effective knowledge on the use of camera traps, drones and GPS, the patrol installed

surveillance cameras across remote areas of their territory to gather evidence on illegal activities, including poaching and logging. Siekopai monitors also began using alert systems to track deforestation along the Aguarico river region. In addition to strengthening the Siekopai's control over their territory by developing the skills and experience of community land patrols, we are also paving the way for a future participatory mapping process to support the Siekopai's urgent demand for legal title over 240,000 acres of ancestral territory along the Aguarico River.

Amazon Frontlines supported the Siekopai in forming the nation's first land patrol. Equipped with effective knowledge on the use of camera traps, drones and GPS, the patrol installed surveillance cameras across remote areas of their territory

Halting Deforestation and Poaching in Siona Territory Within the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve: In 2020, the Siona of Cuyabeno made significant headway in their work to defend their rainforest territory in one of the most biodiverse and threatened regions of the Ecuadorian Amazon. While rampant COVID-19 outbreaks in the area challenged monitoring activities, Siona land patrols managed to keep monitoring activities going throughout the year, communicating with each other and with Amazon Frontlines staff through satellite internet installed during the pandemic, which allowed them to detect a drastic increase in illegal activities, particularly illegal poaching and deforestation. Through numerous virtual meetings, Amazon Frontlines worked with the Siona to hone a shared vision for territorial defense strategies across the area. We coordinated meetings with local authorities and ensured

a consistent flow of information on territorial defense processes with communities and families across Cuyabeno to build consensus around forest conservation strategies. Through their monitoring trips, the Siona were able to establish clear territorial boundaries and to expel a high number of land invaders and poachers from their territory. Our efforts to strengthen community-led monitoring and community unity among the Siona of Cuyabeno are helping to set the stage for land titling demands in the years to come.

litigation strategies that led to an unprecedented legal victory in 2019 that immediately protected nearly 500,000 acres of forested lands from the planned auctioning of Oil Block 22. Because the government used the same process of prior consultation for all communities in the 16 oil blocks up for auction, this explicit ruling by the court that the process was not constitutional further protects vast swaths of territory from oil drilling for the time being. In late 2020, we worked side-by-side with the Waorani Indigenous organization of Pastaza, CONCONAWEP, to support the



Since 2014, Amazon Frontlines has supported the Waorani's efforts to map their vast territory.

Establishing a new land patrol among the Waorani of Pastaza: Located in the south-central Ecuadorian Amazon, the Waorani peoples territory spans over 2.5 million acres of some of the most biodiverse rainforest on the planet, an area threatened by enduring and escalating resource extraction and deforestation. Since 2014, Amazon Frontlines has supported the Waorani's efforts to map their vast territory. The years-long mapping process, which brought together elders, women and youth to map tens of thousands of acres of Waorani land, supported grassroots

formation of the Waorani's first land patrol in response to a pandemic-fueled increase in illegal settlements, balsa wood logging, and gold mining in their territory. Land patrols are now building off of the mapping efforts of previous years to ensure sustained surveillance across the most threatened areas of their 500,000 acre territory. This work serves as an important foundation to help forge a unified Waorani position and develop strategies to confront illegal gold mining, which today represents a pressing threat to Waorani territory in Pastaza.

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



CULTURE AND RESILIENCE

As we've witnessed urban and western economic and medical systems buckle under the weight of the pandemic, reinvesting in traditional wisdom and culture is now even more essential for Indigenous communities, who are vulnerable in the face of ongoing resource extraction in their territories. Primary water sources have been polluted by multiple oil spills and run-off from mining operations, causing extreme health impacts. Traditional hunting and harvesting practices are made increasingly difficult by

Indigenous knowledge, culture and resiliency across the Upper Amazon of Ecuador, Peru and Colombia by building local leadership capacity and piloting community-led initiatives on food sovereignty, traditional plant medicines, and economic alternatives.

Creating a replicable model of Indigenous education:

Over the last fifty years, schools have been used— initially by missionaries and then by the government— deprive

We are supporting Indigenous knowledge, culture and resiliency across the Upper Amazon of Ecuador, Peru and Colombia by building local leadership capacity and piloting community-led initiatives on food sovereignty, traditional plant medicines, and economic alternatives.



diminished wildlife populations, polluted waterways and reduced territory. Young people are forced to abandon their territories and traditional practices in order to seek educational and economic opportunities in urban areas. With industry knocking at the door, Indigenous peoples must be able to pursue alternative solutions that sustain rather than exploit their rainforest territories and establish financial autonomy. In response, we are supporting

Indigenous peoples of their ancestral cultures and assimilate these diverse peoples into mainstream society. As a result, the 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 our Indigenous partners in the Upper Amazon is to improve schools and provide students with the tools to remain autonomous leaders, retain

ancestral cultures, defend their territories, and gain access to modern resources and employment opportunities. In 2020, we worked to revolutionize educational options in Indigenous communities, despite the limitations of the pandemic, by working together with families and teachers to identify community-led educational objectives and co-create new teaching methods, learning strategies, and educational content.

In 2020, we worked with community leaders, Indigenous students, local teachers, and education specialists to run a series of diagnostics in Waorani and Siekopai communities to establish education baselines and needs, and then to develop a curriculum and methodology for pilot educational programs in these communities, as a first step in building a scalable educational model across the region.

Food sovereignty, sustainable livelihoods, and strong cultures for longterm community resilience

The first wave of the pandemic revealed that communities with reliable access to food sources in their own territories and livelihood options outside of the extractive sector proved most resilient. In response to decades of pollution and an extractive sector that has greatly reduced the size of their biodiverse and productive rainforest territories, Indigenous communities are rehabilitating land and

creating bountiful food production systems to provide for their families. Young people and women are leading the way, innovating new livelihood strategies to keep their communities vibrant and local. We have been working with communities on the creation, replication and scale of innovative community-led initiatives that leverage traditional knowledge and new technologies to create economic alternatives and achieve food sovereignty.

Throughout 2020, Amazon Frontlines continued our accompaniment and funding for five women's associations of the Siona, Siekopai, Waorani and Kofán as they develop and lead community-based income generating activities. To better support these five women's associations, we brought on a multidisciplinary team to carry out a diagnostic of the associations, which included an analysis of existing practices and a set of recommendations to improve productivity, commercialization of community-made products, business administration, and organizational health, both financial and structural. The results from the diagnostic and recommendations to improve community-based initiatives were shared with the women's associations. We then established a plan to implement recommendations in the coming year.



Beginning in 2020, we worked with our Indigenous partners, women's associations, and women from dozens of communities to design a pioneering model for leadership training for Indigenous women in the form of a new leadership and business school. Beginning in 2021, the school will train 35 women in leadership skills, business administration, health, and cultural recuperation, and will establish a mutual support network between indigenous women across diverse nationalities. After training, the Amazon Frontlines team will accompany alumni in the implementation of projects across their communities and territories.

In the response to the pandemic, we doubled down on our strategy to strengthen community food and medicine sovereignty across the Upper Amazon. We began working with Waorani elders and an agricultural engineer to design a program focused on the diversification of family chacras, or food gardens, to strengthen community food sovereignty. As a core component of the program, 16 food sovereignty promoters will be selected to receive the training necessary to oversee the implementation of pilot gardens and the replication of these gardens across the four nations. The promoters will also be trained in family health and nutrition to ensure that gardens produce the traditional fruits and vegetables needed to ensure a balanced diet and wean dependence on mass produced industrial foods purchased from towns and cities.

As a continuation of our ongoing work to recover the sacred yoko and yagé plant populations in the Ecuador-Colombia-Peru border region, we established two new yoko and yagé gardens bringing the total to 20 gardens across the Kofán, Siona and Siekopai nations. Both yoko and yagé are sacred plants to these three nationalities, integral to their cultural survival, which have been over-harvested to near extinction. The yoko and yagé recovery initiative now manages

Beginning in 2020, we worked with our Indigenous partners, women's associations, and women from dozens of communities to design a pioneering model for leadership training for Indigenous women in the form of a new leadership and business school

tens of thousands of saplings that are the first stages in communities effort to reforest and rehabilitate their lands after decades of extraction, pollution and colonial control.

The use of traditional medicines to treat COVID-19 has fueled an initiative with the Siekopai nation to integrate medicinal plant knowledge into the official education curriculum. Siekopai leaders are establishing a medicinal plant garden in the community of San Pablo and are bringing in elders as teachers to educate Siekopai youth about traditional medicinal plants and their uses. In 2021, community members will be working together to plant the first community garden plot that will serve as a pilot learning garden. The practical experience from this project will set the stage for scaling this work in the coming months and years across the Siekopai, Siona, Kofán and Waorani communities of the Upper Amazon, and integrating traditional medicine recovery and preservation into Indigenous intercultural education initiatives.

AMPLIFYING INDIGENOUS VOICES



AMPLIFYING INDIGENOUS STORIES TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Indigenous voices are too often excluded from international communications, fora, and discussions on solutions to global problems, including climate change. However, we believe that Indigenous perspectives and wisdom can help transform the world for the better. We work to leverage strategic communications through traditional and social media, as well as powerful video and photographic content, to share the stories of Indigenous stewardship and struggles nationally and internationally. We support Indigenous leaders and spokespeople, like Nemonte Nenquimo, who was named to the TIME 100 list of the Most Influential People of 2020, to connect with new audiences and share their messages. Furthermore, we support a team of Indigenous youth storytellers to document their struggles and cultures through traditional storytelling and innovative media modalities. 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.

In addition to raising awareness globally to the plight of Indigenous peoples in the face of the pandemic through our communications work and by securing placement of Amazonian stories in [major media outlets](#), we also continued our successful program to train Indigenous youth storytellers in the use of audiovisual and digital communications, including photography, filmmaking, blog writing, and social media. Additionally, we began collaboration with the Ceibo Alliance, the regional Ecuadorian Amazonian Indigenous federation

We support a team of Indigenous youth storytellers to document their struggles and cultures through traditional storytelling and innovative media modalities.





CONFENIAE, the community of Sarayaku, Pueblo Shuar Arutam, Fundación ALDHEA, and Witness to design and begin implementation of a training program focused on Indigenous women storytellers, which launched with a multi-day virtual gathering with 16 women participants from Indigenous nations across Ecuador. This program is helping build the skills, techniques, and experience that Indigenous women need to produce and share stories and perspectives about gender, equality, climate change and Indigenous resistance. We're excited to grow this collaboration and work with more women across the Amazon in the coming year.

Indigenous-made Feature Films

Over the course of the year the Amazon Frontlines communications team accompanied past participants from the youth storytellers training program to document Indigenous resistance processes and cultural practices, as well as to design and implement storytelling projects.

As a powerful example of the skills and experience youth storytellers have gained through this program, and the importance of ongoing accompaniment to turn these trainings into real world opportunities, two Siekopai youth filmmakers traveled with Amazon Frontlines staff to Bolivia to document the ongoing impacts of the devastating Amazon fires in 2019. In 2020 the filmmakers finished post production on a powerful documentary about their trip. We'll work to circulate the film, which combines scenes from the frontlines of the fires with interviews with affected community members and deep reflections from the Indigenous filmmakers themselves, through the Latin American independent film festival circuit and online.



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January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

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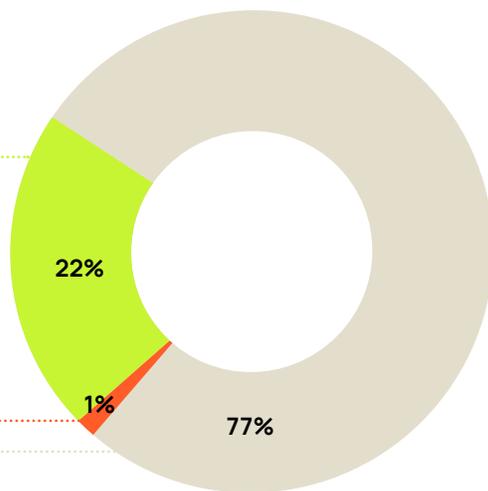
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

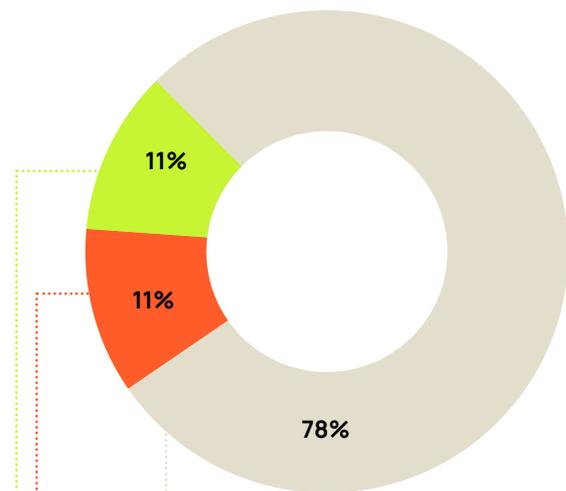
REVENUE



● Individual Donations	\$621,342.07	22%
● Foundations	\$2,146,923	77%
● Other income	\$13,572.14	1%

Total Revenue	\$2,781,837	100%
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EXPENSES



● Program services	\$1,461,986	78%
● Management & General	\$198,132	11%
● Fundraising	\$215,398	11%

Total Expenses	\$1,875,516	100%
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Net assets as of December 31, 2020

\$2,493,770

For a complete financial reporting by **McDonald Jacobs, P.C.** please contact **Amazon Frontlines** at info@amazonfrontlines.org

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