

2021 Year in Review

Throughout 2021, Land is Life continued its commitment to support communities and defend Indigenous rights around the world. We have worked tirelessly so that Indigenous peoples can continue to live in and safeguard their ancestral territories, in the ways they choose and according to their own principles, priorities and visions.

In 2022 we'll celebrate the 30th anniversary of Land is Life. It indeed has been three decades since Land is Life was founded in a small, forested valley in Brazil, in the village of Kari-Oca. Throughout the years we have accomplished a great deal, even though the struggles have not gotten any easier. On the contrary - the ways in which climate change, destructive industries, and the ongoing pandemic continued to affect Indigenous communities over the past year, demonstrated that our unbroken, daily commitment to strengthening our grassroots work is needed more than ever.

Over the past year we managed to expand our initiatives globally. A new program was launched in Mesoamerica, and existing ones grew in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America – regions where Indigenous peoples are increasingly facing human rights violations and oppression. This would not have been possible without our donors and funders who have stood in unity with our global network of Indigenous leaders, activists, and allies.

Now, as the year has come to an end and a new one has begun, we would like to share some reflections on the past year. Please find below a review of Land is Life's accomplishments in 2021.

An overview of our approach



Grassroots Empowerment

Direct support to organizations and leaders.



Alliance & Network Building

Collaborating on Indigenous-led strategies.



Policy & Legal Advocacy

Increasing participation in policy-making.

Indigenous Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact

Land is Life continues to bolster its work to advocate for the rights of Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation (PIACI), especially in our role as the Secretariat of the [GTI-PIACI Working Group](#). The working group consists of more than 20 Indigenous and non-governmental organizations that are working to ensure the protection of the nearly 200 distinct peoples (over 10,000 individuals) living in voluntary isolation throughout the Amazon and El Chaco regions.

Throughout 2021, Land is Life worked on a detailed [report on the situation of PIACI in Bolivia](#), in collaboration with the Center for Legal Studies and Social Research (CEJIS). The report built on the work from 2019 when our team developed a regional report on PIACI communities in Latin America, that didn't include Bolivia.

We also worked closely with [COIAB](#) to analyze the fire situation affecting Indigenous Peoples in Isolation across Brazil. With this, we produced a short documentary called [Amazon Under Fire](#) which highlights the tremendous efforts of the Indigenous firefighters protecting the forests of Brazil and Bolivia.

In addition, after two years of challenges generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Land is Life was able to hold the first in-person [meeting of the PIACI Working Group](#) in Panama in 2021. During the four-day meeting, we shared updates on the situation of Peoples in Isolation and established a work plan for the upcoming years.

We also directly supported 8 Indigenous organizations and nonprofits to strengthen their PIACI programs in 2021.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent

Land is Life works with Indigenous communities to support them in the development of protocols for the implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent processes. The Land is Life team has worked to create a replicable and scalable methodology that provides communities with tools to design and develop their own FPIC protocols, based on their own norms and governance structures.

In 2021, the initiative led by the [Kichwa Indigenous People of Sarayaku](#), in the Ecuadorian Amazon, reached its final stage. After a series of in-depth interviews with authorities, political and spiritual leaders, as well as roundtable discussions with women and youth groups of the Sarayaku community, the completed FPIC protocols were presented to their Governing Council and accepted by the entire community. Also the Tacana People of the Indigenous Territory of Madre de Dios in Bolivia made significant progress with the development of their FPIC protocols in 2021.

For the first time, our FPIC program also expanded to a new region in 2021, when the methodology, learnings, and experiences from the Amazon were taken to Kenya. Land is Life partnered with the Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP) to assist in developing [FPIC protocols for the Ogiek Peoples](#). To kick off the process, our team organized a series of virtual trainings and facilitated exchanges between the local teams of Sarayaku and OPDP.

Land is Life will continue to support communities around the world to exercise their right to Free, Prior and Informed consent and will continue to build on this year's learnings so that communities around the world.

[Highlighted quote from Daniel Kobei?]

Safety and Security of Indigenous Peoples

Since its founding, Land is Life has made it a priority to accompany Indigenous leaders under threat, and provided funding, legal aid and other resources to assist Indigenous human rights defenders, their families, organizations and communities.

The **Indigenous-led Security Fund** (ILSF) was established as a response to the threats that Indigenous defenders are increasingly facing. The fund’s unique concept, that came from Indigenous leaders from across Africa, is based on small, flexible grants that are quickly and directly disbursed to the communities. After a successful pilot in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019, the fund was later taken to Colombia, and expanded to Mesoamerica (Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama) and the Philippines in 2021, due to increasing human rights violations in the regions.

Globally, Indigenous peoples are threatened daily, so the need for urgent and flexible funds to these threats is critical. With our vast network, which understands the unique contexts and evolving security needs of communities, our Indigenous-led Security Funds are uniquely suited to minimize the risk for Indigenous peoples as they continue their fight for their lands, rights and livelihood.

46

Urgent security response grants

9

Countries

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Do we want to mention the amount?

Strengthening Indigenous Participation in Policy Making

Indigenous peoples have a vital role to play in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and the challenges presented by global climate change. Although this has been recognized in Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and other international agreements, Indigenous peoples are still, in practical terms, treated as obstacles to development and western notions of progress.

Land is Life works to ensure that Indigenous leaders have a seat at the table wherever decisions are being made that affect their lives, lands and cultures, and we work to strengthen their ability to come to the table prepared to participate effectively.

In 2021, Land is Life hosted two side events at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Although the forum took place virtually as a result of the ongoing pandemic, our team was able to hold two important discussions on the topics of Self-Determination and Recovery Experiences of Indigenous Peoples from the Amazon Facing COVID-19, and Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Situation in Asia.

Another side event was hosted at COP26 in Glasgow where Land is Life, alongside members of the PIACI Working Group, brought Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation to the discussions around climate change. Watch the livestream of our side event [here](#).

2021 also brought significant advocacy for the recognition of the rights of peoples living in isolation, as part of our role as the Secretariat of the GTI-PIACI Working Group. Land is Life partnered with Organisatie van Inheemse Volken in Suriname (OIS) on advocacy actions for the rights of Indigenous peoples in Suriname, notably with the financing and production of [OIS' stakeholder's report in March 2021](#) that was submitted to the UPR's Third Cycle Universal Periodic review of the UN Human Right Council.

Also, together with Earth Rights International, we developed a questionnaire on self-determination, as requested by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), for their preparation of a report on self-determination of peoples living in isolation.

Throughout the year, we also participated in several meetings with UN Agencies and the High Commissioner for Human Rights to deliver relevant information on Indigenous territories and the lack of guarantees for Indigenous defenders.

We also supported the [Women's March of Brazil](#) where more than 4,000 Indigenous women led a peaceful protest to raise awareness of the protection of their lands, as a response to the government's anti-Indigenous policies.

Grassroots Support to Indigenous Leaders and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations

Long-term Partnerships

From Indonesia to Nicaragua, Land is Life keeps providing Indigenous organizations and communities with long-term strategic, technical, and financial support. This support strengthens the work of Indigenous communities and organizations around the world, ensuring that they are financially healthy, efficiently managed, and have the knowledge, tools and resources that they need to effectively seek and manage grants and carry out the work of promoting and defending their peoples' rights.

90

Indigenous organizations
and NGOs

58

Indigenous peoples

20

Countries

New Initiative on Agroecology

In 2021, Land is Life expanded its work to Mesoamerica. Our Mesoamerica Program Director launched a new initiative in the region centered around agroecology and its relevance in building climate resilience among Indigenous communities. Land is Life assisted 2 Miskito communities in Nicaragua in developing agroecological tools to restore food systems that have been destroyed by climatic disasters, as well as to enhance the capacity to adapt to future challenges. The process is based on strengthening traditional knowledge and practices related to communal agroecological systems.

Indigenous-led Grantmaking

Land is Life's Indigenous-led grantmaking initiative provides critical support through small, flexible grants, to initiatives that enhance the self-determination and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. In 2021 we continued to expand the program in the Arctic, with our partners at [Snowchange Cooperative](#). Throughout the year, Indigenous-led projects in the Arctic and Latin America were supported with grants totaling \$43,000.