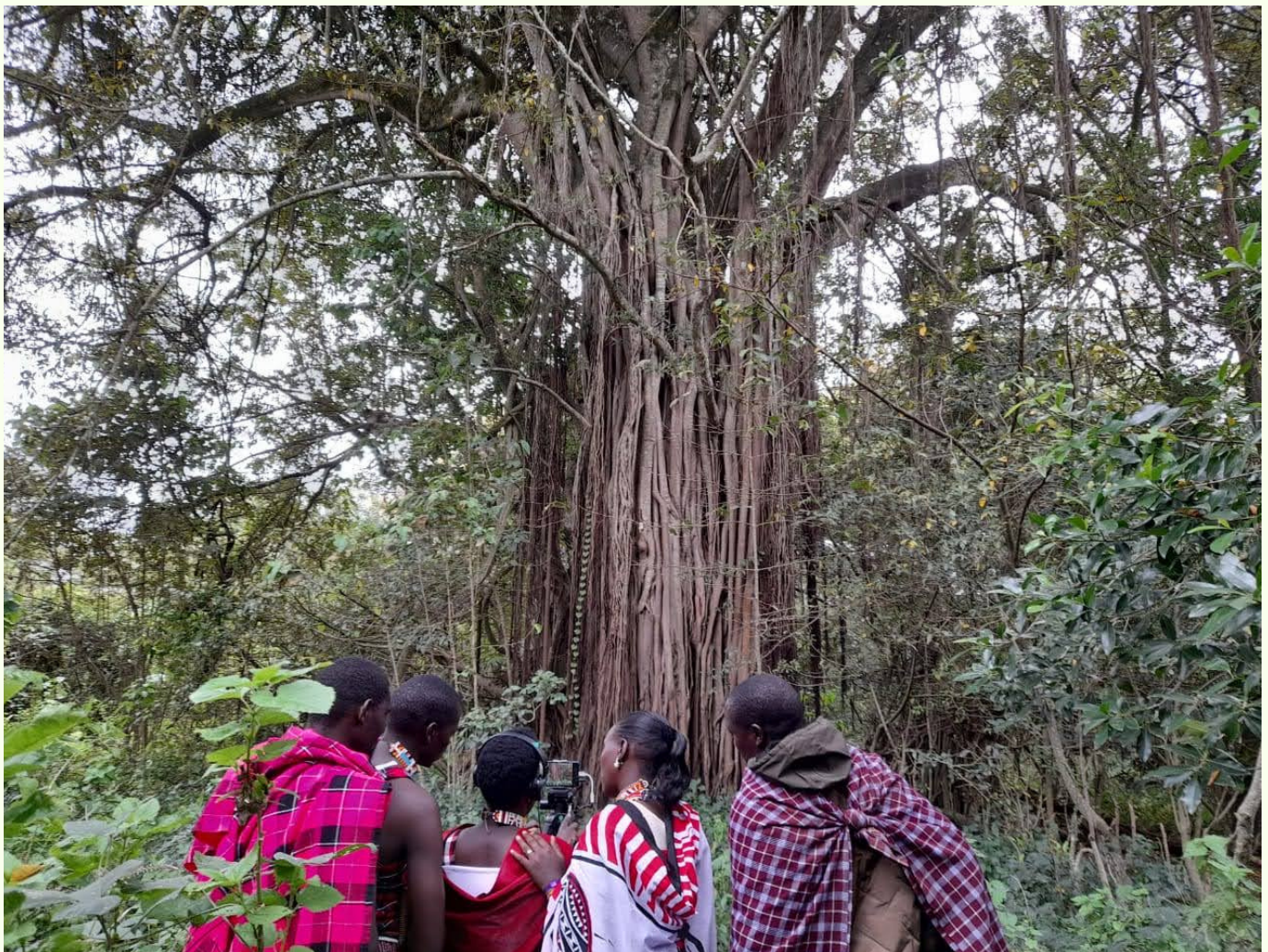


InsightShare

ENSURING INDIGENOUS VOICES ARE HEARD AT UNCOP26 & BEYOND



A call to Action!

There is a growing recognition of the urgent and central role Indigenous peoples might play in monitoring, mitigating, adapting to and averting the worst possible outcomes of the climate crisis. But the majority of these communities lack the skills, platforms and confidence to genuinely shape policy, solutions and narratives locally, regionally and internationally.

Given how disproportionately at risk these peoples' unique ways of life and very survival are from the climate shocks and biodiversity losses that industrialised societies' emissions have caused, we believe it is morally imperative that we all work faster to ensure these communities have the means to shape decisions and attitudes to nature, whether about their own lands, or internationally.

We believe digital activism and participatory storytelling now represents the most powerful and cost-effective way of doing so. Equipping Indigenous groups with digital activism and participatory storytelling skills has been InsightShare's relentless focus since our inception in 1999.

Our field has grown rapidly in the past 20 years, and InsightShare is now one of a number of expert and agile organizations with a wealth of insight and experience in how to deliver this powerfully enabling work.

But much more needs to be done if we are to realize the opportunity of genuine Indigenous self-representation and for these groups to play their fullest part in ensuring our planet remains habitable at this perilous moment.



By equipping Indigenous communities with digital activism and participatory video tools they will be able to:



- Address key issues that matter to them: protection of land, rights, climate
- Conserve and maintain their ancestral wisdom and cultural diversity
- Build a network to share knowledge and strengthen Indigenous movements' power to shift public perspectives on Indigenous issues, peoples, traditions and land

We believe now is the time to raise our collective ambitions and share our expertise, resources and plans in order to rapidly increase the numbers of Indigenous groups accessing this training, to build a genuinely worldwide network of Indigenous media hubs, and to bring the skills of self-representation to as many groups as possible by the next UN-COP.

Specifically we are calling on:

- Governments, trusts and foundations, especially those that are starting to make climate funding pledges, to make funding digital activism and participatory video within Indigenous communities a priority
- Media organizations to give more prominence to Indigenous-authored stories on your platforms; to open up your training courses to Indigenous youth and to broker new mentoring opportunities with your workforce with participatory video delivery partners
- NGOs and charities that work with Indigenous groups to work with us to train your partners or grantees in digital activism and participatory video
- Media training organizations to work with us to develop and roll out online training courses tailored to Indigenous communities, and professional membership organisations to create bursary places and awards
- All groups to think about how they might use their physical estate/events/media space/editorial to platform Indigenous voices

We urge any organization of any size anywhere in the world interested in seeing the improvement of the quality, range and uptake of digital activism tools, training, funding and advice to join our network. Please get in touch with our Director at nlunch@insightshare.org



Why is it urgent?

- At 5% of its population (300-370M people), Indigenous peoples are custodians of over 80% of the earth's biodiversity.
- With the IPCC saying it is now 'code red' for our species, there is a huge surge in interest in Indigenous people's wisdom and stewardship of lands and ecosystems.
- Uniquely intertwined with their local environments, Indigenous peoples are uniquely sensitive to environmental changes and vulnerable to environmental degradation.
- Indigenous lands are disproportionately at risk from the extractive and polluting industries that accelerate climate change: mining, deforestation and intensive land-use.



COP26

- COVID-19 travel restrictions mean that few NGOs that work with Indigenous peoples are planning to bring their partners to the UK for the crucial UNCOP26 this year.
- Compounding centuries of historic marginalisation, this means Indigenous voices will be more silent than ever at the exact moment and forum when they are needed most.
- Of the 30,000 delegates expected in Glasgow for this year's UN Climate Conference COP26 this November, only a fraction will be Indigenous.



InsightShare's approach

Since 1999, InsightShare has pioneered the use of participatory video and storytelling to support the self-representation and self-determination of Indigenous peoples, and, over the course of 20 years, we have repeatedly witnessed the massive value and power of training Indigenous peoples in digital activism: participants develop the skills to champion and conserve their own communities' languages, culture, knowledge and lands, and often experience hugely positive and profound shifts in their personal sense of agency and optimism in the process. In 2021 InsightShare piloted a seven-month leadership programme for Indigenous women and youth to foster skills in facilitation, journalism, critical thinking, advocacy, digital activism and public speaking.


The course was delivered online, reducing carbon emissions and bypassing COVID-19 travel restrictions, and used familiar, secure and low-bandwidth technologies—such as WhatsApp—to reduce costs and to leapfrog the lack of communications infrastructure in often-remote Indigenous areas.

38 Indigenous youth between the ages of 20 and 35 in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania took part in the pilot, creating community-authored videos on issues that mattered to them aimed at both local and global audiences. Each community set up an autonomous video hub to use as training and production sites, which together formed a regional network of media centres to allow pan-African dialogue and exchange.

How the pilot helped Indigenous peoples address issues that matter to them: land, rights, climate

- Fellows gained a strong understanding of broader issues impacting Indigenous communities through inter-hub exchanges and through the process of creating their films, on topics ranging from sacred sites and traditional schools, food and nutrition, tuberculosis, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence.
- Participants identified storytelling as a possible tool to resolve and reduce the frequency of inter-tribal conflicts through greater understanding and dialogue.
- Fellows identified opportunities for joint-campaigns and ways to share their films with wider audiences: i.e. in a campaign for UNCOP26.

‘Despite some progress for the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in processes relevant for them, there is much to do for their full and effective participation. After decades of historic exclusion, it is urgent that we strengthen Indigenous peoples’ representation and voices within UN negotiations and decisions on climate. While COVID-19 has made it impossible for Indigenous leaders to travel to Glasgow in greater numbers, participatory video, such as that provided by InsightShare, provides a unique way to hugely amplify their insight and increase their advocacy power at this vital moment for our planet.’

- Dr. Mariam Walleh Mohamed Aboubakrine,
Tuareg woman, Co-Principal Investigator,
Ārramāt 
Former Chair of UN Permanent Forum on
Indigenous Issues



How the fellowship helped IPs in the conservation and maintenance of ancestral wisdom and cultural diversity.

- Participants immediately saw the power of video archives to document, preserve and celebrate their cultures and felt their connection with and pride grow in their own traditions in the course of documenting them.
- Inter-hub dialogue increased participants' sensitivity to and appreciation for their own cultural uniqueness; provided inspiration for greater conservation of their own linguistic or cultural traditions; and revealed the corrosive impacts of urbanization/globalization on Indigenous identities.



How the fellowship built a network to share knowledge and strengthen Indigenous movements' power to shift public perspectives on Indigenous issues, peoples, traditions and land

- Fellows benefitted from powerful online exchanges with other hubs in the fellowship: sharing their first videos, giving feedback and discussing shared issues.
- The hubs built connections and pathways of support for one another; and, once they'd discovered shared struggles, started to design partnership campaigns: such as video campaigns.
- The groups learned from established InsightShare hubs ie NEN in Nagaland, India and La Marabunta Filmadora, North West Mexico about possible journeys towards sustainability, successes and ways to overcome challenges.

Summary and next steps

In just seven months we have demonstrated some of the benefits to Indigenous peoples of digital activism and media hubs. But there is much more to do if we are to shift public perspectives on Indigenous issues, peoples, traditions and land; and particularly to support Indigenous peoples to seize the opportunity to influence crucial policies that directly impact them, eg the implementation of global commitments to protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030 through support for intact Indigenous territories and self governance. Interaction between both new and existing InsightShare hubs during the fellowship immediately resulted in stronger relationships and strengthened solidarity links.

Building a network has the potential to hugely increase Indigenous movements' impact, effectiveness, resilience and joint and individual lobbying power. This is why over the next five years, InsightShare plans to train and support 200+ new facilitators in 20 countries to bring video and storytelling skills to multiple Indigenous communities across Africa, Asia and the Americas and we would like to work with like-minded individuals, communities, funders, NGOs and research institutes to build the field of Indigenous digital activism.



Our ambition is to:

- Engage with policymakers and governments, provide free advice, create multi-stakeholder platforms and collaborations that interweave scientific knowledge on climate change, practical policy-making and traditional Earth-based wisdom
- Living Cultures Alliance will reach multi-million-strong global audiences with powerful and inspiring Indigenous-authored stories
- Scale-up training, creating new resources and training materials for our fellows
- Establish local, regional and international media, research and advocacy partnerships especially to increase hubs experience of real world media and improve the impact of their films
- Train the trainers -highly experienced Indigenous partners in Mexico, India, East and Southern Africa to design and deliver regional fellowship programmes
- Further our Indigenous-to-Indigenous learning model, by enabling current fellows to lead their own trainings in neighbouring Indigenous communities
- Seed regional and international networks between Indigenous practitioners
- Build the capacity of Indigenous-led organisations, by investing in local infrastructure (contributing to office and connectivity costs)
- Support advocacy and engagement aims by profiling our fellows in online and face-to-face events, exhibits, webinars and conferences

Listening to the Land Pilgrimages

Our hubs are embarking on pilgrimages to sacred sites, forests and local communities to speak with elders about the impacts of climate change. We are screening these films during COP26 and will host online Q&A sessions with the Indigenous filmmakers.

‘We will make a journey to the land, the forest and the ocean. We will walk with our elders to teach us and reinforce the connection between people and the land and show our dependence on the ecosystem. For our food, water, and health we are dependent on a healthy ecosystem. Our land is sacred, we want to pass on the message at COP26, how we relate to the trees, the rivers, the mountains and the ocean. People in our community use these resources for healing, for cultural and spiritual practices.’

- Lungelo Mtwa, Living Cultures Indigenous Fellow, amaMpondo, South Africa hub



‘Climate change is not far, it is a reality we are facing. Pastoralism and nature or natural resources are in a state of crisis all over Maasailand in Tanzania and Kenya. State management has failed to control forest exploitation, and development interventions continue to undermine Maasai community livelihood systems and their management regime. The project is determined to show how a fundamental misunderstanding of indigenous Maasai community land management, and in particular our land tenure system, has undermined protection of the environment we were once responsible for.’

- Samwel Nangiria, Maasai Community Leader,
Tanzania OLM video hub



Our work at the UNCOP26 and beyond, aims to inspire people to reimagine development, conservation and the way they relate to each other and to Mother Earth.

The journeys to be undertaken by the 6 video hubs with their elders and cultural singers, will strengthen culture and spirituality, promote intergenerational and intercultural exchanges, and share those learnings within their territories and with other Indigenous peoples.

The Living Cultures Fellowship reconnects youth and elders within ancestral homelands, enhancing Indigenous capability to gather and influence civil society through the powerful medium of video.

How participatory video works as a sustainable tool for change:

AGENCY Fellows’ self-confidence grows radically: from low self-esteem to a profound belief in their capacity to affect change in their communities.

SKILLS TO PARTICIPATE Fellows learn the essential tools for successful participation in global forums and webinars: technical skills, critical thinking and the skills/tools for online collaboration.

SUSTAINABILITY Fellows draw up plans to keep hubs operating after the life-span of the project; seek to pass their skills on; explore storytelling as a tool for income-generation.

OWNERSHIP The Fellows hold community screenings to improve film’s content, thereby overcoming community skepticism of video/film/technology and forging new relationships of trust with elders.

‘Olamal in Maa language is when people come out of their comfort zones and make a call for action. It is the word for a contemplative walk, leaving one's area to assess a situation... To visit the sacred sites and sing and pray for guidance and blessing, to do the right thing for their children, for themselves, and for future generations.’

- Amos Leuka, Maasai Community Leader,
Kenya OLM video hub



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