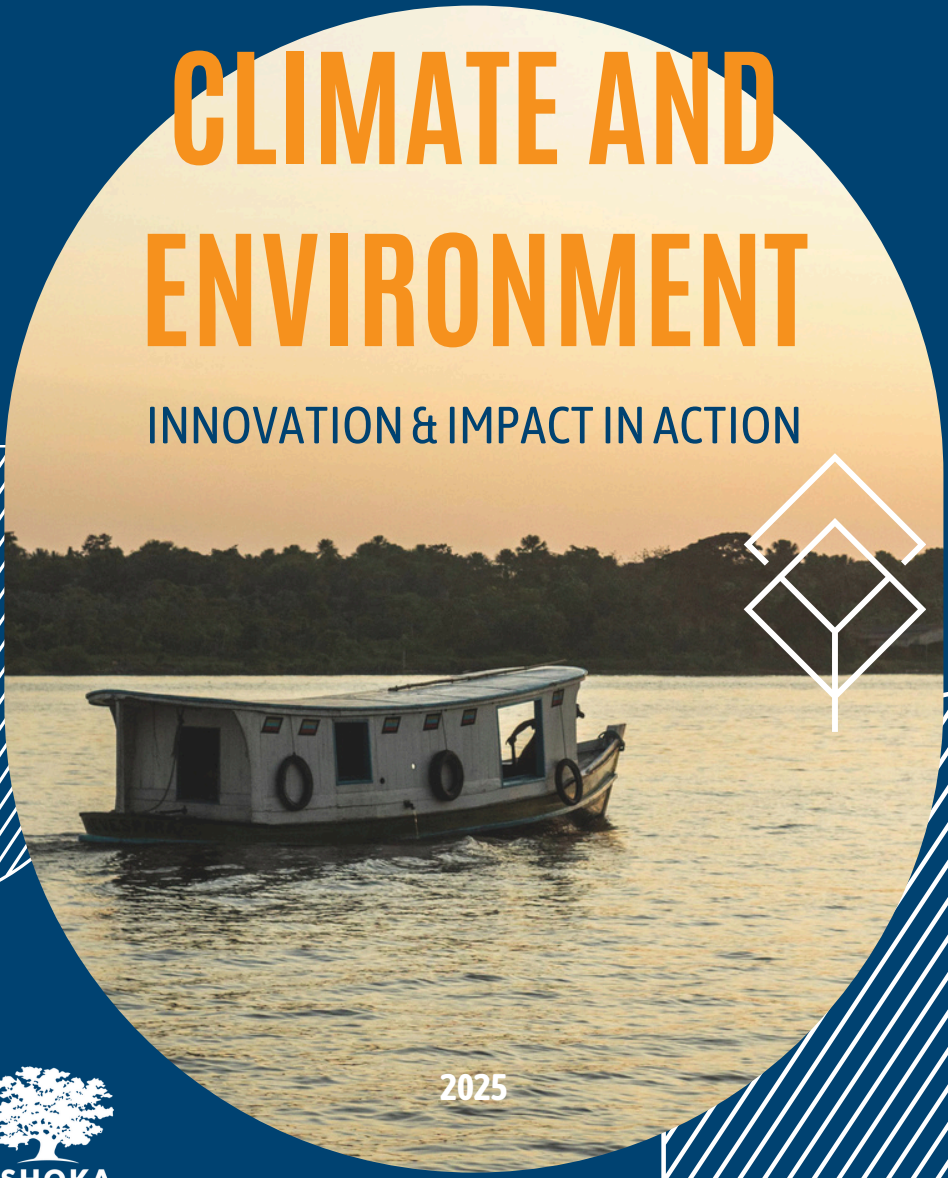
SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

INNOVATION & IMPACT IN ACTION



2025

ASHOKA

INDEX

Executive Summary	2
Methodology	4
Pillar I: Transitioning Energy, Industry, and Transport	7
Pillar II: Stewarding Forests, Oceans, and Biodiversity	11
Pillar III: Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems	19
Pillar IV: Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure, and Water	28
Pillar V: Fostering Human and Social Development	36
Pillar VI: Cross-Cutting Issues – Unleashing Enablers and Accelerators (on Finance, Technology and Capacity Building)	44
Acknowledgement	50

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the world approaches COP30, the climate conversation is shifting. While outright denial of climate change is decreasing in the face of overwhelming evidence, a new skepticism has emerged—one that questions the effectiveness, credibility, and real-world impact of proposed solutions. This "solution denialism" threatens to stall progress at the very moment when urgent, transformative action is needed.

This skepticism is not without consequence. It risks undermining public trust, delaying investment, and providing cover for inaction at a time when the world can least afford it. Policymakers, funders, and communities are left asking: Are there truly solutions that work? Can we point to real-world examples that are not only visionary, but also measurable, inclusive, and scalable? The answer, as this publication demonstrates, is a resounding yes.

COP30 is a historic moment—not only because of the urgency of the climate crisis, but because it is being hosted in Brazil, in the heart of the Amazon. The Amazon is not just a symbol of global biodiversity and climate stability; it is also a living laboratory for innovation, resilience, and community-driven solutions. Brazil's leadership and the Amazon's centrality make this COP uniquely positioned to showcase how local action can drive global impact, and how the world's most critical ecosystems can be protected and restored through collaboration, ingenuity, and inclusion.

This publication is designed to meet the moment. It provides policymakers, investors, and civil society leaders with a curated portfolio of solutions that are already delivering impact at scale. Each section addresses a core COP30 theme (energy transition, ecosystem stewardship, food systems, urban resilience, human and social development, and cross-cutting enablers), identifying the persistent barriers and showcasing leading **Ashoka Fellows**—social entrepreneurs from the world's largest network of changemakers—who have broken through them.

The case studies go beyond anecdotes. They offer hard evidence: megawatts of renewable energy installed, millions of hectares restored, hundreds of thousands

gaining access to clean water and energy, and measurable improvements in health, education, and livelihoods. These are not isolated pilots—they are models being replicated and adapted across regions, cultures, and policy environments.

For more than 40 years, Ashoka has identified and supported social entrepreneurs who pioneer systemic solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. Their work forms the foundation of this publication, illustrating how social innovation can turn climate ambition into tangible, lasting impact.

In an era of rising skepticism, it is not enough to assert that solutions exist; we must prove it. By shining a light on what works, we aim to inspire confidence, accelerate adoption, and galvanize investment in the social innovations that are already changing lives and landscapes. The evidence is here. The time to act is now.

As the world gathers in Brazil for COP30, let us move beyond doubt and debate, and commit to scaling the solutions that are already delivering results—for people and for the planet.

Isabela Carvalho - Ashoka Global
icarvalho@ashoka.org
Daniela Matielo - Ashoka Global
dmatielo@ashoka.org
Rafael Murta Reis - Ashoka Global
rmurta@ashoka.org
Luana Marques Soares - Ashoka People & Planet
lsoares@ashoka.org
Ricardo Sanchez Tomazoli - Ashoka Brasil
rsanchestomazoli@ashoka.org

To learn more about Ashoka's global initiatives on climate, social innovation, and changemaking, visit: *www.ashoka.org*

METHODOLOGY

(AND HOW TO READ THIS PUBLICATION)

This publication is structured to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based response to the most pressing climate and development challenges discussed at COP30. Our approach is designed to be both rigorous and accessible, ensuring that policymakers, practitioners, and the broader public can see not only the scale of the problems, but also the real-world solutions that are already making a difference.

1. Organizing by the Six COP30 Thematic Pillars

We have organized the publication around the six pillars of the COP30 Action Agenda, each of which addresses a critical dimension of the global climate debate:

- **I. Transitioning Energy, Industry, and Transport:**
- Tripling renewables, doubling energy efficiency, accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, ensuring universal access to energy, and transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly, and equitable manner.

- **II. Stewarding Forests, Oceans, and Biodiversity:**
- Investments to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation; efforts to conserve, protect, and restore nature and ecosystems for climate, biodiversity, and desertification; and efforts to preserve and restore oceans and coastal ecosystems.

- **III. Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems:**
- Land restoration and sustainable agriculture; building more resilient, adaptive, and sustainable food systems; and ensuring equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all.

- **IV. Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure, and Water:**
- Multilevel governance; sustainable and resilient construction and buildings; resilient urban development, mobility, and infrastructure; water management; and solid waste management.

- **V. Fostering Human and Social Development:**
- Promoting resilient health systems; reducing the effects of climate change on eradicating hunger and poverty; education, capacity-building, and job creation to address climate change; and integrating culture, cultural heritage, and climate action.

- **VI. Cross-Cutting Issues – Unleashing Enablers and Accelerators:**
- Climate and sustainable finance; mainstreaming climate in investments and insurance; finance for adaptation; climate-integrated public procurement; harmonization of carbon markets and accounting standards; climate and trade; reduction of non-CO2 gases; governance and institutional strengthening; artificial intelligence and digital technologies; innovation and entrepreneurship; bioeconomy and biotechnology; and information integrity in climate change matters.

2. Identifying Barriers

For each pillar, we have identified the key barriers, those specific issues that create the problem and/or prevent effective solutions. These barriers are based on a combination of research, practitioner insights, and the lived experience of communities. By naming these obstacles clearly, we set the stage for understanding what must be overcome to achieve real progress and impact.

3. Showcasing Leading Social Entrepreneurs

Within each pillar, we highlight the work of leading social entrepreneurs from the Ashoka network. Special attention is given to Brazilian innovators, reflecting the unique role of Brazil and the Amazon at COP30, while also ensuring representation from every continent (see map below). This shows that effective, measurable solutions are emerging worldwide — and that climate leadership is truly global.

4. Case Studies and Impact Data

For each pillar, we provide detailed case studies of one or more social entrepreneurs. These case studies go beyond stories: they offer concrete, quantitative evidence of impact, showing how these innovators are overcoming barriers and delivering results at scale. The case studies are selected to illustrate both the diversity of approaches and the replicability of solutions.

5. Accessible, Actionable Insights

Throughout the publication, we use clear, accessible language and focus on actionable insights. Our goal is to make the evidence and examples in this publication useful for policymakers, funders, and practitioners, helping to accelerate the adoption and scaling of solutions that are already working.

**

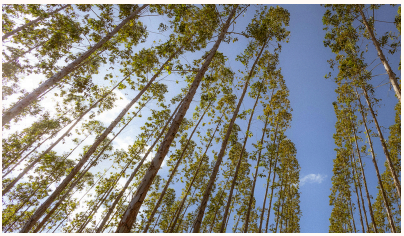
Pillar I: Transitioning Energy, Industry, and Transport

Transitioning energy, industry, and transport is essential for achieving global climate goals. This means tripling renewable energy, doubling energy efficiency, accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies in hard-to-abate sectors, ensuring universal access to energy, and transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly, and equitable manner.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented and Inaccessible Energy Systems: Centralized energy grids don't reach or serve many marginalized communities.

- Financial and Regulatory Barriers to Clean Energy Adoption: High costs and complex rules make it hard for people and communities to switch to clean energy.



- Lack of Local Capacity and Technical Skills: Communities lack the know-how to install, maintain, or repair clean energy solutions.

- Misaligned Incentives and Market Structures: Markets and policies still favor fossil fuels over renewables, slowing the transition.

- Cultural and Behavioral Resistance to Change: Social norms and habits make people hesitant to adopt new, sustainable energy options.

Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

Agamemnon Otero (United Kingdom, Energy Garden & Repowering London) Agamemnon Otero is democratizing renewable energy and urban greening in London by combining community gardens with solar installations and cooperative finance. Through Energy Garden and Repowering London, he enables residents—including those in social housing—to co-own solar projects, gain renewable energy skills, and reinvest locally. His initiatives have created gardens at over 30 train stations, launched community share offers like a 231 kWp solar project in Streatham, and trained young people through paid internships. Otero's model merges education, cooperative

ownership, and participation to build resilient and sustainable urban communities.

Sean Kidney (United Kingdom, Climate Bonds Initiative)
Sean Kidney is a global leader in climate finance who has helped shape the green and sustainable bond markets into central tools for funding the low-carbon transition. Through the Climate Bonds Initiative, he has developed international standards and policy frameworks that align capital markets with climate goals. Under his leadership, the global green bond market has reached more than USD 3.5 trillion in cumulative issuances, while the broader green, social, and sustainability bond market surpassed USD 5.7 trillion by the end of 2024 (Climate Bonds Initiative, 2025). His work has mobilized large-scale investment in renewable energy, low-carbon transport, and sustainable infrastructure, making climate finance both credible and accessible worldwide.

Harish Hande (India, SELCO India & SELCO Foundation)
Harish Hande is expanding access to clean, affordable energy for low-income communities in India through decentralized, livelihood-focused solar solutions. As co-founder of SELCO India and CEO of the SELCO Foundation, he combines technology, local finance, and after-sales service to reach underserved households and micro-enterprises. His work has brought solar power to over half a million people, enabling livelihoods and improving quality of life. Today, Hande strengthens the ecosystem for decentralized renewable energy—driving innovation, policy reform, and social inclusion.

Eduardo Mallman (Brazil, Green Social Bioethanol)
Eduardo Mallmann is advancing community-owned clean energy in Brazil by enabling smallholder farmers to produce renewable fuel locally. Through Green Social Bioethanol, he created compact Ethanol Micro Distilleries that turn local crops—such as cassava, sweet sorghum, and sweet potatoes—into clean bioethanol. The closed-loop model reuses by-products as fertilizer or animal feed, generating both environmental and economic value. By linking energy access to rural development, Green Social Bioethanol helps farming communities build autonomy, income, and resilience in the clean-energy transition.

Fábio Rosa (Brazil, IDEAAS – Institute for the Development of Alternative Energy and Sustainability)
Fábio Rosa is a pioneering agronomic engineer who made rural electrification in Brazil affordable and sustainable. He created a single-wire distribution system that cut connection costs by 90%, bringing power to thousands of families. Through Pro Luz (Project Light)

and IDEAAS, he expanded renewable energy access, linking solar power to farming and income generation. His model inspired Brazil's Luz para Todos ("Light for All") program, which has connected over three million households.

Case Study
Fábio Rosa – Pro Luz and Instituto para o Desenvolvimento de Energias Alternativas e da Auto Sustentabilidade – IDEAAS (Brazil)

For decades, millions of rural Brazilians lived without access to electricity, limiting opportunities for economic development, education, and health. Traditional electrification models were prohibitively expensive for remote and low-income communities, costing up to US $7,000 per household and requiring large-scale infrastructure, which excluded smallholder farmers and perpetuated rural poverty.

Agronomic engineer Fábio Luiz de Oliveira Rosa pioneered a transformative approach to rural electrification. In Palmares do Sul (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), where about 70 percent of rural residents lacked electricity, Rosa implemented a low-cost mono-phase (single-wire) distribution system that reduced connection costs from approximately US $7,000 to US $400 – 500 per household — a cost reduction of around 90 percent.

This breakthrough made electricity affordable for thousands of families, allowing them to power homes, run irrigation pumps, refrigerate food, and improve their overall quality of life.

Recognizing the need for sustainable and scalable solutions, Rosa founded Pro Luz (Project Light) and later the Institute for the Development of Alternative Energy and Sustainability (IDEAAS) in 1997.

Through these organizations, he expanded renewable-energy access — especially solar power — and linked it to productive agricultural uses such as solar-powered electric fencing and irrigation systems, which improved livestock management, crop yields, and rural incomes.

Rosa's model combined technical innovation with community partnership. He worked with local governments, cooperatives, and financial institutions to develop service-based payment models (around US $10 per month), replacing large up-front investments

with affordable fees. His approach proved that rural electrification could be both socially equitable and financially viable.

His work also influenced national energy policy. Rosa's low-cost mono-phase and community-based service model informed the design of Brazil's Luz para Todos ("Light for All") programme, launched in 2003 by the federal government to universalize energy access in rural areas. The programme adopted several of the design principles Rosa had demonstrated: affordable connection models, partnerships with cooperatives and municipalities, and emphasis on social inclusion. By 2014, Luz para Todos had connected ≈ 3.3 million households (over 15 million people) — surpassing its initial goal of 2 million families and helping Brazil achieve near-universal electrification.

Impact

- Dozens of municipalities in southern Brazil, bringing affordable electricity to tens of thousands of low-income rural households and demonstrating the viability of community-based electrification.

- Connection costs reduced by ≈ 90 percent, from US $7,000 to US $400 – 500 per household, using the mono-phase system.

- 70 percent of rural families previously spent ≈ US $11 per month on kerosene, candles, and batteries — expenses largely replaced by Rosa's ≈ US $10 per-month solar/lease model.

- Luz para Todos programme (influenced by Rosa's model) has since brought electricity to 17 million people across Brazil, demonstrating the scalability of his principles of low-cost, inclusive rural electrification.

Fábio Rosa's approach democratizes access to energy, empowers rural communities, and provides a replicable model for inclusive, sustainable energy transitions worldwide.

Pillar II: Stewarding Forests, Oceans, and Biodiversity

Stewarding forests, oceans, and biodiversity is critical to halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, and preserving oceans and coastal environments. These efforts are essential for climate stability, food security, water cycles, and the protection of countless species, including humans.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented Governance, Siloed Conservation Efforts, and Lack of Local Ownership: Lack of coordination among stakeholders, fragmented policies, and exclusion of local and Indigenous communities hinder large-scale, effective, and sustainable conservation.

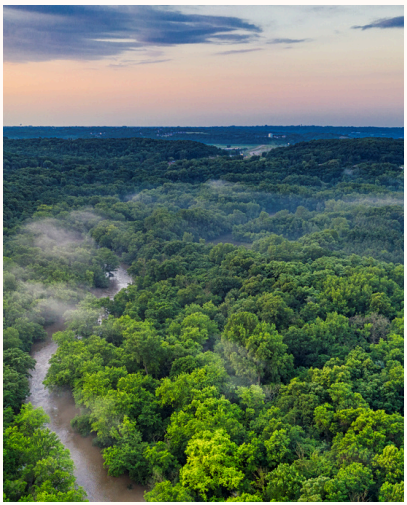
- Perverse Economic Incentives and Unsustainable Value Chains: Short-term profits from logging, fishing, and land conversion outweigh long-term ecosystem health, making it more profitable to exploit nature than to protect it.

- Data Gaps and Lack of Monitoring Capacity: Poor access to reliable, actionable data and limited monitoring capacity make it hard to manage or protect ecosystems effectively.

- Weak Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Environmental laws are weak or not enforced, so harmful practices continue with impunity.

- Disconnection Between Conservation and Human Wellbeing: Conservation is often seen as a threat to livelihoods, creating resistance among local communities.

- Lack of Environmental Education and Connection: Many communities, especially youth, lack opportunities to connect with and value nature, reducing support for conservation and stewardship.



Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

Ann Dumaliang (Philippines, Masungi Georeserve)
Ann Dumaliang is leading a landmark conservation movement through the Masungi Georeserve, a ~2,700-hectare karst forest area in Rizal, Philippines, critical for water and climate resilience. Since its formal launch in 2017, the foundation has restored over 2,000 hectares of forest, planted more than 68,000 native trees, and engaged more than 20,000 Filipinos through educational programs. Her model blends community-based restoration, geotourism and wilderness protection—and in 2025 won the National Energy Globe Award in the Philippines, recognizing Masungi as a best-practice example for ecosystem rehabilitation.

Rui Barbosa da Rocha (Brazil, Instituto Floresta Viva)
Rui Barbosa da Rocha is restoring Brazil's Atlantic Forest and advancing large-scale ecological recovery that benefits both nature and local livelihoods. Through Instituto Floresta Viva, based in Bahia, Brazil, he leads reforestation, biodiversity restoration, and environmental education initiatives that engage farmers, schools, and public agencies in sustainable forest management. In partnership with SOS Mata Atlântica, Energisa, and other institutions, his team is currently restoring over 700 hectares of degraded land in the Xingu River Basin—part of Brazil's national goal to recover 12 million hectares of forest by 2030. Instituto Floresta Viva also develops community nurseries and monitoring systems with local universities, promoting native species recovery and green income generation. Rui's approach demonstrates how ecosystem restoration can become a driver of regional development and a model for inclusive conservation across Latin America.

Luis Fernando Guedes Pinto (Brazil, Imaflora and SOS Mata Atlântica)
Luis Fernando Guedes Pinto is transforming Brazil's land-use and forest economies by aligning market incentives, public policy, and science-based management. At Imaflora, he helped pioneer sustainable certification and transparency systems that now guide responsible forestry and agriculture across the Amazon and Atlantic Forests. His leadership contributed to certifying over 230,000 hectares of land under international sustainability standards and mapping more than 80 million hectares of public land to identify carbon stocks and governance gaps—critical for climate accountability. Building on this legacy, as Executive Director of SOS Mata Atlântica, he now drives research, policy advocacy, and large-scale restoration efforts aimed at fulfilling Brazil's pledge to restore 12 million hectares of forest by 2030.

Through his combined work in both organizations, Guedes Pinto is redefining how evidence, markets, and civil society can work together to protect and regenerate Brazil's natural capital.

Angela Mendes (Brazil, Chico Mendes Committee)
Angela Mendes is advancing community-led conservation in the Amazon by empowering traditional and Indigenous peoples to govern and protect their territories. As coordinator of the Chico Mendes Committee—founded in honor of her father—she has strengthened participatory management of more than 3 million hectares of extractive reserves across Acre (Brazil) and neighboring states. Mendes mobilizes rubber tappers, Indigenous communities, and social movements to strengthen civic action for the defense of the Amazon's cultural and ecological heritage

Gustavo Candia Irigoitia (Paraguay, Eco... Global)
Gustavo Candia Irigoitia is uniting communities across the Paraguay–Argentina border to protect the Ypoá and Iberá wetlands — one of South America's most vital ecosystems. Through EcoGlobal, he leads a cross-border movement replacing destructive farming with ecotourism and native plant cultivation, creating new livelihoods while restoring biodiversity. By developing a participatory database and forging bilateral conservation agreements, Candia turns citizen science and local collaboration into tools for transnational ecosystem governance and long-term climate resilience.

Nicole Rycroft (Canada, Canopy)
Nicole Rycroft is transforming global supply chains to protect the world's most vital forests and climate systems. As founder and Executive Director of Canopy, she partners with more than 900 major companies across fashion, publishing, and packaging to eliminate deforestation and scale alternatives made from agricultural residues and recycled fibers. Her "Next Gen" solutions are driving a global shift toward circular, regenerative production while safeguarding millions of hectares of ancient and endangered forests.

Maria Elena Foronda Farro (Peru, Instituto Ambientalista Natura)
Maria Elena Foronda Farro has mobilized coastal communities to confront industrial pollution in the fish-meal sector. She co-founded the Instituto Ambientalista Natura (Environmentalist Institute Natura) and organizes citizen committees and youth monitors to advocate for cleaner industrial practices, better health, and stronger ecological outcomes. Her efforts have prompted reforms in the fish-meal industry and strengthened community capacity for environmental stewardship in Peru's port regions.

Beto Verissimo (Brazil, Imazon)
Beto Veríssimo is driving transparency and action in the Amazon by bridging rigorous research with on-the-ground partnerships. As co-founder and senior researcher at Imazon, he has helped turn satellite imagery and real-time deforestation alerts into decision-making tools that expose and reduce illegal forest loss. His work has elevated forest monitoring into a credible policy lever: Imazon's Alert System and data analyses have become reference points for government, business and civil society across Brazil's Amazon region. Veríssimo himself is recognized among Brazil's most influential environmental figures, and under his leadership Imazon continues to shape international conversations on forest governance and climate risk.

Yuri Salmona (Brazil, Instituto Cerrados)
Yuri Salmona is advancing the protection of Brazil's Cerrado biome through science-policy collaboration. As founder of Instituto Cerrados, he leads efforts to map and safeguard priority conservation areas in the cerrado—one of the world's most critical water-source biomes. Salmona's strategy brings together traditional communities, researchers, activists, and policymakers to create sustainable management frameworks that connect ecosystem restoration with broader climate and water-security goals. The vision is to protect 1 million hectares of the Cerrado by 2050.

Tasso Azevedo (Brazil, MapBiomas)
Tasso Azevedo is reshaping how Brazil monitors and addresses deforestation by creating open, collaborative data systems that integrate science, policy, and civic action. Through initiatives such as MapBiomas and SEEG – Sistema de Estimativas de Emissões de Gases de Efeito Estufa (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimation System), he has built transparent, accessible platforms that allow real-time tracking of land use and greenhouse gas emissions. These tools have influenced national policy, improved environmental governance, and empowered multiple sectors to act collectively for forest conservation and climate accountability.

Cynthia Camargo (Brazil, Instituto Cordilheira)
Cynthia develops strategies for environmental education that connect communities with nature. She promotes awareness, engagement, and sustainable practices to protect biodiversity and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. Instituto

Cordilheira operates in regions affected by mining conflicts and has a strong and determined history of activism and resistance against predatory extractivism in Brazil, among other key areas of conservation work

Suzana Pádua (Brazil, Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas – IPÊ)
Suzana Pádua and her team are building local capacity for conservation in Brazil's most biodiverse regions through IPÊ, one of Latin America's leading environmental organizations. They have trained over 7,000 professionals, teachers, and community leaders in conservation science, education, and sustainable livelihoods. IPÊ's innovative model integrates research, community engagement, and applied training—turning science into practical solutions for restoration and long-term stewardship of natural resources.

Case Study 1
Tasso Azevedo and MapBiomas (Brazil)

Tasso Azevedo is a forest engineer and social entrepreneur who has transformed how Brazil—and increasingly other countries—track, understand, and combat deforestation. For decades, conservation efforts were hindered by fragmented data, limited transparency and weak enforcement, allowing illegal loggers and land grabbers to operate with impunity, while policymakers and civil society lacked the means to ensure accountability.

Recognizing this gap, Tasso founded MapBiomas, a collaborative network of NGOs, universities, and tech companies that uses satellite imagery and artificial intelligence to produce annual, high-resolution maps of land use across Brazil. The data is freely available to the public, government agencies, businesses, journalists, and prosecutors, enabling anyone—from local officials to national authorities—to identify where deforestation occurs (or any transformation on the use of land), who is responsible, and whether laws are being enforced.

Tasso's strategy is not just technical, but systemic. He built MapBiomas as an open, multi-stakeholder platform, ensuring buy-in from government, civil society, and the private sector. He also launched SEEG (the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimation System), which tracks emissions from over 600 sources, for the country, each of the 27 states and 5,5k municipalities providing the most comprehensive, transparent emissions data in the world.

These platforms have become the backbone of Brazil's climate and conservation policy. Tasso was also Director General of the Brazilian Forest Service, designer of the Amazon Fund

(USD 2,5 billion dollar) and more recently the original ideal and concept of what is now TFFF.

MapBiomas have been replicated in other countries, including all countries in South America, Indonesia, India, DRC and México. By making environmental data open, actionable, and impossible to ignore, Tasso has shifted the balance of power—enabling enforcement, empowering local communities, and making it far riskier and less profitable to destroy nature.

Tasso is also leading the implementation of Conexão Povos da Foresta (Forest People Connection), initiative of 50+ organization that is creating the largest network connection all forest communities in the Amazon. It started in 2023 and now has over 2000 communities already connected.

Impact

- MapBiomas is recognized by providing the most complete, updated, and detailed annual land cover and land use data for any country in the world, freely accessible to the public.

- SEEG is the world's largest platform for annual greenhouse gas emissions data, tracking 600 sources of emissions across all sectors since the 1970s.

- SEEG is the world's largest platform for annual greenhouse gas emissions data, tracking 600 sources of emissions across all sectors since the 1970s.

- MapBiomas produces thousands of deforestation and restoration reports

- SEEG and MapBiomas has data available for 5,500 municipalities at zero cost, freeing up resources for local climate action.

- The MapBiomas model have been replicated 17 countries.

- Enabled the creation of Brazil's $2 billion Amazon Fund for forest protection.

- Supported the seizure and legal auction of illegal timber, collapsing the illegal mahogany market in Brazil.

- Connect with broadband internet over 2000 communities in the Amazon with over 150,000 users registered.

- Tasso participate as co-coordinator of the PPCDAM the Plan to Combat Deforestation in the Amazon which Enabled a 75% reduction in Amazon deforestation between 2004–2010 through real-time monitoring, policy enforcement, and multi-agency coordination.

Case Study 2
Suzana Pádua and Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas - IPÊ (Brazil)

Suzana Pádua is a pioneering Brazilian conservationist who has transformed the way biodiversity is protected in Brazil's most threatened and biodiverse regions. For decades, conservation efforts in the Atlantic Forest and Amazon were top-down, often excluding local communities and creating resistance to protected areas. This led to unsustainable outcomes, as local people lacked both the incentives and the capacity to steward the land.

Recognizing this, Suzana founded Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (IPÊ), a nonprofit that puts local people at the center of conservation. IPÊ's approach is rooted in the belief that lasting environmental protection is only possible when communities are empowered with knowledge, skills, and economic alternatives. Suzana's model integrates rigorous scientific research, environmental education, and sustainable livelihoods, ensuring that conservation benefits nature and people.

Suzana's strategy is deeply participatory and systemic. IPÊ works with communities to diagnose local needs and co-design conservation and development projects, from agroforestry to ecotourism.

School-based environmental education programs engage students and parents, building a culture of stewardship from an early age. IPÊ trains local leaders, teachers, and community members in conservation science, agroforestry, and sustainable business, creating a cadre of local stewards who drive change from within. The organization partners with government and international agencies to scale successful models and influence policy, and its research and monitoring ensure that interventions are evidence-based and adaptable.

IPÊ's work has become a reference for community-driven conservation in Brazil and beyond. By demonstrating that environmental protection and human development can go hand-in-hand, Suzana has helped shift national policy and inspired a new generation of conservation leaders.

An important milestone in IPÊ's journey is the creation of ESCAS – Escola Superior de Conservação Ambiental e Sustentabilidade, which offers a master's degree accredited by Brazil's Ministry if Education. ESCAS is one of the few NGOs in Brazil to offer such a program, and has already graduated more than 240 students in conservation and sustainability.

Impact

- Over 7,000 local leaders, teachers, and community members trained in conservation science, environmental education, and sustainable livelihoods.

- Restoration of more than 6,000 hectares of Atlantic Forest, including the creation of wildlife corridors that connect critical habitats for endangered species such as the black lion tamarin.

- IPÊ's sustainable livelihood initiatives have increased household incomes by up to 40% in participating communities, reducing pressure on forests and wildlife.

- School-based programs have reached 30,000+ students and their families, resulting in measurable increases in local biodiversity and community engagement in conservation.

- The organization's methodologies have been adopted by state and municipal governments and are being replicated in other regions of Brazil and Latin America.

- IPÊ's research and policy advocacy have contributed to the protection of key water sources for São Paulo, benefiting millions of people.

- Internationally recognized as a best practice for integrating conservation and human development, with partnerships spanning 20+ countries.

Suzana Pádua and an expert team of over 200 professionals have redefined conservation in Brazil, proving that empowering communities with knowledge, opportunity, and ownership is the key to protecting the world's most vital ecosystems. Their model now works in four Brazilian biomes Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), Amazon (Amazônia), Pantanal, and Cerrado, and offers a blueprint for inclusive, sustainable conservation globally.

Pillar III: Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems

Transforming agriculture and food systems is essential for restoring land, ensuring sustainable agriculture, building resilient and adaptive food systems, and guaranteeing equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all. This transformation is critical to address climate change, protect biodiversity, and secure livelihoods for rural communities.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented Governance and Lack of Local Ownership: Conservation and agricultural efforts fail when local communities aren't involved in decisions, and when governance is siloed or uncoordinated.
- Insecure Land Tenure and Exclusion from Decision-Making: Farmers and communities can't invest in land they don't control or have a say over, perpetuating vulnerability and limiting innovation.
- Perverse Economic Incentives and Unsustainable Value Chains: It's more profitable to exploit nature or pursue short-term gains than to restore land or invest in sustainable practices.

- Data Gaps and Lack of Monitoring Capacity: Without good data and monitoring, it's hard to manage, protect, or improve food systems and ecosystems effectively.
- Weak Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Environmental and agricultural laws are weak or not enforced, so harmful practices continue and rights are not protected.
- Fragmented and Inequitable Access to Resources, Markets, and Knowledge: Small producers, women, and marginalized groups can't access the tools, markets, or information they need to thrive.
- Short-Termism and Lack of Incentives for Land Restoration: There's little reward for restoring land or investing in long-term resilience, so short-term gains are prioritized.

- Gender Inequality and the Invisibilization of Women's Contributions: Women's work in food systems is undervalued and unsupported, limiting their agency and the sector's potential.

- Cultural and Policy Barriers to Local, Nutritious, and Sustainable Diets: Policies and markets make it easier to access unhealthy, imported foods than local, healthy ones, and often ignore local culture and traditions.

- Disconnection Between Conservation and Human Wellbeing: Conservation and climate efforts are often seen as threats to livelihoods, creating resistance and undermining sustainability.

Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

Janet Maro (Tanzania, Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania)

Janet Maro is transforming agriculture in Tanzania by placing smallholder farmers at the centre of innovation. As Founder and Executive Director of Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania, she empowers farmers through participatory learning groups, reforms agro-ecology curricula in agricultural universities, and drives national policy advocacy for sustainable agriculture. Under her leadership the organisation reaches over 100,000 farmers each year, has spearheaded the integration of agroecology across East African university programmes, and influenced the drafting of Tanzania's national agro-ecology strategy. Her work creates stronger rural livelihoods and positions agroecology as a mainstream pathway for a climate-resilient food system.

Alpha Sennon (Trinidad and Tobago, WHYFARM)

Alpha Sennon is redefining how young people connect with agriculture across the Caribbean and beyond by blending education, storytelling, and entrepreneurship. As founder of WHYFARM (We Help You-th Farm) and creator of the AGRIman superhero, he uses comics, theatre, and popular culture to make farming aspirational and innovative. His programs build agricultural and leadership skills among youth, promote food security, and foster agripreneurship through school and community initiatives. By turning agriculture into a creative and purpose-driven pursuit, Sennon is cultivating a new generation of food system leaders across several Caribbean and African countries.

Mónica Guerra (Brazil, Instituto Comida do Amanhã)
Monica Guerra is transforming Brazil's food systems by uniting education, public policy, and citizen engagement around the right to food. As co-founder of Instituto Comida do Amanhã (Food of Tomorrow Institute) and co-coordinator of LUPPA – Laboratório Urbano de Políticas Públicas Alimentares (Urban Public Policy Laboratory), she works with municipalities across Brazil to co-design inclusive, evidence-based food policies that link health, sustainability, and social justice. Her leadership has made LUPPA a national reference platform connecting local governments and civil society to advance urban food governance. By amplifying Brazil's experience in global food policy networks, Monica challenges dominant agribusiness narratives and helps position sustainable and equitable food systems at the center of both national and international climate and development agendas.

Nora Jeanne Joseph (Haiti, RADIKAL)
Nora Jeanne Joseph is transforming food security in Haiti by empowering women street-vendors and informal food entrepreneurs. Through RADIKAL, she has developed a micro-franchise model that professionalizes so-called "madan sara" (women vendors) by providing training, equipment, and a link to local producers, enabling safer, more nutritious food distribution in

underserved neighbourhoods. Her work also includes building a database of frontline vendors, developing alternative livelihoods, and bridging the informal sector with formal market systems. With this approach, Joseph is creating a network of hundreds of micro-entrepreneurs whose increased income and agency are driving improved food access, economic equity, and community resilience.

Paula Daniels (United States, Center for Good Food Purchasing)
Paula Daniels is transforming institutional food systems by tapping into the purchasing power of large public and non-profit institutions. Based in Los Angeles, her organisation helps cities, schools and hospitals adopt procurement standards that prioritise healthy food, fair labour, animal welfare and climate-friendly sourcing. With the program now implemented in over 60 institutions across 20+ U.S. cities, she has shifted millions in institutional spend toward equitable food systems. Her work draws on her experience as a lawyer and former senior public-sector official in Los Angeles, merging policy, markets and social justice to make food procurement a lever for systemic change.

Anil Verma (India, PRAN – Preservation and Proliferation of Rural Resources and Nature)
Anil Verma is advancing a farmer-led agricultural transformation across rural India through PRAN, a nonprofit based in Bihar. His organization promotes the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and other agroecological practices that help smallholders increase yields, reduce input costs, and strengthen resilience to climate change. Working through extensive farmer networks and local institutions, PRAN has trained and supported millions of producers—an estimated five million farmers to date—to adopt sustainable land and water management. Verma's approach combines participatory research, capacity building, and policy advocacy, positioning regenerative agriculture as a pathway to rural prosperity and environmental restoration.

Sean Sherman (United States, The Sioux Chef / NĀTIFS – North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems)
Sean Sherman, an Oglala Lakota chef and social entrepreneur, is rebuilding Indigenous food systems across North America by combining cultural restoration, education, and enterprise. As founder of The Sioux Chef and co-founder of NĀTIFS – North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems, he is creating pathways for Native communities to reclaim food sovereignty and economic independence. Through NĀTIFS' Indigenous Food Lab in Minneapolis, his team trains culinary professionals, supports over 50 Indigenous-owned food businesses, and strengthens supply chains for Native producers. Sherman's award-winning restaurant Owamni—staffed primarily by Native employees—won the 2022 James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant and will reopen in 2026 at the Guthrie Theater, doubling its capacity and creating dozens of jobs. His work is redefining food justice by demonstrating that Indigenous knowledge, when paired with modern systems, can drive cultural renewal, environmental stewardship, and community-based economic growth.

Simone Zoundi (Burkina Faso, SODEPAL)

Simone Zoundi is a pioneer in transforming Burkina Faso's food and nutrition landscape by valuing local agricultural resources and promoting food security. As founder of SODEPAL (Société d'Exploitation des Produits Alimentaires – Food Products Processing Company), she developed fortified, locally produced food products to fight child malnutrition and strengthen rural economies. Through partnerships with smallholder farmers and women's cooperatives, Zoundi has built local processing capacity and improved access to nutritious foods. Her model creates jobs, reduces dependency on imports, and advances food sovereignty across West Africa.

Valmir Ortega (Brazil, Conexsus)

Valmir Ortega is building a regenerative economy in the Brazilian Amazon and other key biomes by connecting small and medium-scale forest and agricultural producers with sustainable markets and finance. As founder and executive director of Conexsus, he helps community enterprises overcome structural barriers—such as limited access to credit, logistics, and market data—through financial innovation, technical assistance, and cross-sector partnerships. Since its creation, Conexsus has mobilized over US $1 million in investment and helped cooperatives and community businesses increase their income by up to 300percent, strengthening the forest-based economy as a viable alternative to deforestation. Ortega's systemic approach positions local producers as the drivers of Brazil's green and inclusive transition, proving that environmental regeneration can be both economically sound and socially just.

Elisabeth Cardoso (Brazil, CTA-Zona da Mata)

Elisabeth Cardoso and her team are making the invisible work of rural women visible and valuable. Through CTA-Zona da Mata, she developed a simple yet powerful "log-book" methodology that enables women farm producers to track what they plant, consume, sell or exchange, thereby gaining proof of production and access to credit, technical assistance and policy recognition. This innovation re-frames women's backyard and agroecological production as legitimate economic contribution, shifting gender norms, strengthening food security and improving livelihoods for thousands of rural families in Brazil's high-biodiversity regions.

Laili Khairnur (Indonesia, Lembaga Gemawan)

Laili Khairnur empowers women and Indigenous communities in Indonesia's West Kalimantan to secure land rights, restore local food systems, and lead sustainable agriculture and resource-governance initiatives. Through Lembaga Gemawan (Gemawan Institute), she builds networks of women across ethnic, religious, and rural-urban divides, equipping them with skills in civic leadership, participatory land-use planning, and agroecology. Her work enables these women to influence decision making, challenge large-scale land concessions (such as palm-oil and mining operations), and design locally-led pathways to food sovereignty and environmental resilience.

Case Study 1
Elisabeth Cardoso – CTA-Zona da Mata (Brazil)

Women's contributions to agriculture in Brazil have long been invisible in official statistics, public policies, and access to resources. This invisibility perpetuates gender inequality and limits rural development. Elisabeth Cardoso, through the Center for Alternative Technologies (Centro de Tecnologias Alternativas – CTA), developed the Agroecological Notebook (Caderneta Agroecológica) — a simple and accessible tool that allows rural women to record and measure their daily agricultural production, including what is sold, consumed, donated, or exchanged. These data are then used to demonstrate women's economic contributions, secure access to credit and technical assistance, and influence public policy.

The tool is disseminated through national and regional agroecological networks, with training and support to ensure that women of all education levels can use it effectively. Elisabeth's approach also includes mapping the biodiversity of women's production spaces and fostering women's leadership in rural communities. The methodology has been adopted by state and municipal governments and expanded through partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural

Development (IFAD). A two-year study led by Elisabeth and the Federal University of Viçosa used the Agroecological Notebook to assess women's family farming in four regions of Brazil. The study found that women's production generated between US$155 and US$188 per family per year—nearly a full minimum wage, a value previously unrecognized even within their own households. It also identified 245 different species of fruits and vegetables cultivated in women's home gardens, revealing them as ecological assets for their communities and key to local food security.

Impact

- More than 10,000 rural women have adopted the Agroecological Notebook, gaining visibility for their work and access to credit, technical assistance, and supportive policies.
- The initiative is present in 23 Brazilian states, covering all major regions and biomes.
- In another six-month study conducted by IFAD, women's household production generated an estimated US$346,000 (2025 projection) for 879 participants — income previously invisible in official data.
- 1,228 plant and animal products were recorded as part of women's production, underscoring their essential role in preserving agrobiodiversity and improving community nutrition.
- Women using the Notebook reported increases in self-esteem, leadership, and decision-making power within their families and communities.
- The methodology has influenced state and municipal public policies, with governments adopting the tool to inform rural development and gender equity programs.
- The model has benefited more than 71,000 families in Brazil through direct and indirect adoption and is now being expanded nationally and internationally through partnerships with networks and global organizations.

Elisabeth Cardoso's model makes women's work visible and valued, driving systemic change in rural development, food security, and gender equality. By quantifying and recognizing women's contributions, the Agroecological Notebook is unlocking new resources, rights, and opportunities for thousands of rural families.

Case Study 2
Valmir Ortega – Conexsus (Brazil)

For decades, Brazil's small farmers, extractivist communities, and forest peoples have faced a stark choice: join the cycle of deforestation and monoculture, or remain trapped in poverty and exclusion. Despite their critical role in stewarding biodiversity and producing food, these communities have been systematically excluded from credit, technical assistance, and markets. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, 88% of small farmers in the Amazon lack technical assistance and 83% have no access to credit. Meanwhile, public and private investment overwhelmingly favors large-scale, unsustainable agribusiness, accelerating the loss of native vegetation and deepening rural inequality.

Valmir Ortega founded Conexsus to break this cycle by activating a new ecosystem for sustainable rural and forest community businesses. Conexsus works as an enabler and connector, filling gaps in value chains and building bridges between small producers, markets, and finance. Its approach is holistic: strengthening local leadership and business capacity, promoting fair-trade and market access for sociobiodiversity products, and pioneering innovative financing models that unlock credit for sustainable enterprises.

Valmir's strategy began with the Conexsus Challenge, a nationwide mapping and acceleration program that engaged over 60 organizations and identified 300 cooperatives and associations—including indigenous, quilombola, and land reform settlements. Through 13 national seminars and tailored acceleration for 100 cooperatives, Conexsus built a methodology rooted in local knowledge and cross-sector collaboration. The organization now operates on three fronts: (1) developing local leaders and management capacity; (2) connecting producers to premium markets through roadshows and direct partnerships; and (3) expanding access to credit via hybrid loans, guarantees, and partnerships with public banks. Today, Conexsus is recognized nationwide for its innovative mode.

Conexsus has created a network of "credit activators" who guide extractivists and family farmers through the process of accessing rural loans at scale. In partnership with Banco da Amazônia and Banco do Brasil, Conexsus is shifting the profile of rural credit in the Amazon—where less than 0.6% of public funds currently go to sustainable activities—toward biodiversity-friendly production. The organization also operates CX Investments, a fund that provides direct credit to community businesses under special conditions.

Impact

- Over R$6 million delivered in direct support to community businesses since 2018.
- 7,500+ families directly benefited, with more than 175,000 people in the impacted territories.
- 1,000+ socio-productive organizations supported, strengthening their financial and organizational capacity.
- CoopCerrado, a cooperative of 4,000 producers in five states, increased its revenue from R$2 million (2018) to over R$7 million (2021) after Conexsus support—a 300%+ increase—demonstrating the viability of a new, sustainable rural economy.
- The Conexsus network has leveraged R$4.6 million to 17 business prototypes from other investors (at a rate of 1:5).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Conexsus and Banco da Amazônia co-developed the Covid-19 Social and Environmental Response Plan, delivering R$6.4 million to 82 community businesses and impacting more than 10,500 family farmers.
- Conexsus is now building a network to ensure 4,200 family production units from traditional communities access R$30 million in public loans, technical assistance, and financial education.
- The model has contributed to improved land management on over 1 million hectares, supporting both climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

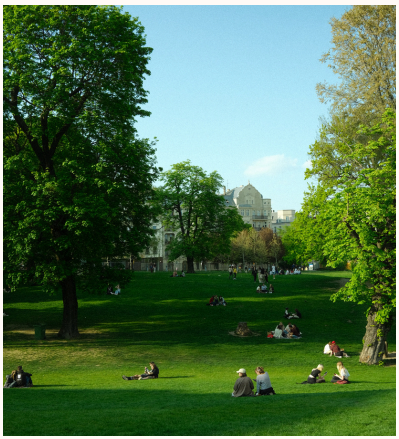
Valmir Ortega and Conexsus are proving that it is possible to reconcile rural development, poverty reduction, and large-scale biodiversity restoration. they are building a new economy that keeps the forest standing and delivers prosperity for those who live with it.

Pillar IV: Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure, and Water

Building resilience for cities, infrastructure, and water is essential to ensure that urban areas can withstand and adapt to climate change, rapid population growth, and resource pressures. This includes multilevel governance, sustainable and resilient construction, resilient urban development and mobility, effective water management, and solid waste management.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented Governance and Siloed Urban Systems: Lack of coordination among agencies and sectors leads to disjointed and ineffective urban solutions.
- Exclusion of Marginalized Communities from Decision-Making: Vulnerable groups are left out of planning, so solutions don't fit their needs.
- Inequitable Access to Infrastructure and Services: Poor and marginalized communities often lack access to safe water, sanitation, mobility, and resilient housing.
- Lack of Adaptive, Context-Specific Solutions: Standardized approaches fail because they don't fit local realities.
- Insufficient Data, Transparency, and Accountability: Lack of open, reliable data makes it hard to track progress or hold anyone responsible.
- Short-Term, Top-Down Approaches and Lack of Maintenance: Projects are built without plans for long-term care, so they quickly break down.
- Economic Pressures and Policy Misalignment: Economic and policy systems don't reward resilience or sustainability.
- Weak Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Urban environmental and planning laws are weak or not enforced, so harmful practices continue.



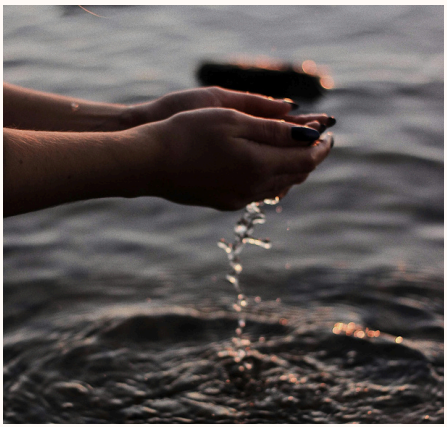
Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

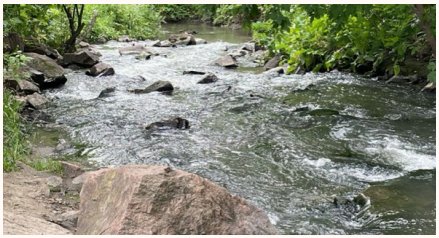
Sena Alouka (Togo, Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement - Young Volunteers for the Environment)
Sena Alouka mobilises youth across Togo and beyond to design and implement community-based projects addressing deforestation, water scarcity and climate change. As Director of JVE, he leads one of Africa's largest youth-environment movements, training young volunteers in both rural and urban settings to monitor natural-resource threats, engage in policy advocacy and drive local solutions. Under his leadership, JVE operates dozens of local branches, has established pan-African partnerships and offers youth pathways into environmental leadership. Alouka's work transforms awareness into action by equipping young people with the skills, networks and agency to protect their environment and shape development.

S. Vishwanath (India, Biome Environmental Trust)
S. Vishwanath, a civil engineer and water-system innovator, leads Biome Environmental Trust, where he develops scalable solutions for urban and rural water management in India. Based in Bengaluru, his work blends traditional knowledge of rain-harvesting, lake restoration, and community engagement with applied engineering systems across multiple states. Through his approach, he has trained hundreds of local technicians and engaged communities to reclaim degraded water bodies, demonstrating how water-secure regions can be built with low-tech, high-participation models. Vishwanath's work is shifting paradigms around infrastructure, proving that water resilience can emerge from community-led regeneration rather than large centralised projects.

Sunderrajan Krishnan (India, INREM Foundation - Indian Natural Resources Economics & Management Foundation)
Sunderrajan Krishnan is addressing India's drinking water contamination crisis by empowering communities to become local stewards of water quality. As Executive Director of INREM Foundation, he leads a nationwide effort that turns affected citizens into "Water Quality Champions" through training, digital monitoring, and community-led governance. As of 2025, his model has reached more than 13 million people across eight states, mobilized over 60,000 local champions, and achieved measurable improvements in access to safe water. By combining data, education, and public health action, Krishnan is redefining how India's environmental and health systems respond to water pollution in both rural and urban areas.His work demonstrates how citizen-driven action can secure safe water and dignity for millions.

Óscar Romo (Mexico/United States, Alter Terra – Alter Terra Foundation)
Óscar Romo is leading one of North America's most innovative cross-border environmental initiatives by reclaiming the binational Tijuana River watershed from waste and pollution. As founder and executive director of Alter Terra, he designed and oversaw the deployment of a 1,200-foot floating trash boom that, as of March 2025, intercepted over 250 tons of debris. His work has brought together community volunteers, civil society organisations, government agencies and engineering partners to not only remove trash but generate data on pollution flows, map waste sources, and advocate for ecosystem-restoration policies. By combining engineering, activism and education, Romo is proving that durable, community-led infrastructure can restore shared ecosystems, refine waste-management systems, and safeguard public and environmental health across borders.





Liliana Miranda (Peru, Ecociudad)
Liliana Miranda is advancing sustainable urban development and green infrastructure in Peru's fast-growing cities. As leader of Ecociudad and the Cities for Life Forum, she promotes local, eco-efficient building materials, grey water reuse systems and community-designed green spaces in Lima and beyond. Her approach reframes urban expansion by integrating environmental, social and architectural innovation—shifting construction and planning norms toward more resilient, liveable cities.

Juan Carlos Calizaya Luna (Peru, CENCA – Instituto de Desarrollo Urbano / Institute for Urban Development)
Juan Carlos Calizaya Luna is pioneering participatory water and sanitation systems in Peru's urban peripheries by combining technical innovation, community design and policy engagement. Through CENCA, he has worked to empower neighbourhoods to plan and maintain low-cost systems for water supply and ecological sanitation, challenging conventional infrastructure models and enabling more equitable access to essential services.

Wilson Passeto (Brazil, Água e Cidade)

Wilson Passeto is reshaping how cities in Brazil manage water by equipping citizens and communities with tools, measurements and skills to improve urban water use. As Director of Água e Cidade (Water and City), he has built a network of community water-agents, led implementation of individual water measurement systems in thousands of homes, and promoted behavioural and technological changes that strengthen water governance. His innovation lies in putting water management into local hands—enabling municipal systems to respond dynamically while reducing wastage, improving accountability and deepening engagement across neighbourhoods.

Alexandre Só de Castro (Brazil, Instituto Ilhas do Brasil)

Alexandre Só de Castro, an ecologist and social entrepreneur, is transforming the management of Brazil's islands and coastal zones by placing local communities—especially artisanal fisherpeople—at the center of conservation and governance. Through Instituto Ilhas do Brasil (Brazil Islands Institute), he bridges scientific expertise with traditional knowledge, organizing fishing families and local leaders into associations that co-manage resources and influence national and global policy. His initiatives include the Open Community University, which documents and shares ancestral practices and local culture, and a Climate Change Adaptation Program active in ten coastal areas, whose methods have been recognized by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The institute also provides technical consultancy to the UN Development Programme and the Brazilian government, including for COP 30. Alexandre's work has catalyzed a movement for participatory marine governance in Brazil—improving the management of marine protected areas, strengthening small-scale fisheries, and embedding social justice in ocean conservation.

Thiago Mundano (Brazil, Pimp My Carroça)

Mundano is transforming how Brazilian cities view and value waste pickers—the workers who keep urban recycling systems running. Through Pimp My Carroça ("Pimp My Cart"), he combines art, advocacy, and technology to bring visibility, safety, and dignity to waste pickers, painting their carts, equipping them with reflective materials, and connecting them to citizens and policymakers. The initiative has reached thousands of waste pickers across Brazil and inspired similar movements in over a dozen countries. Mundano also launched the Cataki app, which connects residents directly with nearby recyclers, helping divert tons of waste from landfills and influencing national debates on inclusive solid-waste management and environmental justice.

Case Study 1
Alexandre Só de Castro and Instituto Ilhas do Brasil (Brazil)

Alexandre Só de Castro is an ecologist and social entrepreneur who is transforming the management of Brazil's islands and coastal zones by putting local communities—especially artisan fisher-people—at the center of conservation and governance. For decades, Brazil's 8,500 km coastline and hundreds of islands have faced mounting threats from industrial fishing, unchecked tourism, and real estate speculation. These pressures have depleted fish stocks, damaged fragile marine ecosystems, and undermined the livelihoods of over 600,000 small-scale fisher-people. Traditional conservation efforts, led by scientists and policymakers, often excluded local knowledge and failed to address the economic realities of coastal communities.

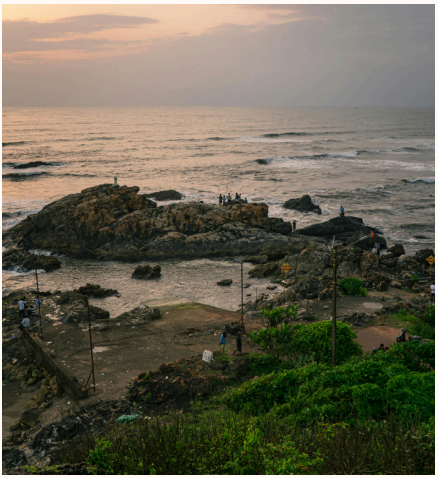
Recognizing this gap, Alexandre founded Instituto Ilhas do Brasil to bridge scientific expertise with the lived experience of island and coastal residents. His approach is participatory and network-based: he organizes fishing families and local leaders into strong associations, builds their capacity for self-governance, and connects them to national and global policy forums. Alexandre's model integrates environmental education, community-driven research, and practical conservation action, ensuring that solutions are both ecologically sound and socially just

A cornerstone of his strategy is the creation of the Open Community University, which documents and shares traditional knowledge—from sustainable fishing techniques to local cuisine and artisanal crafts—with scientists, policymakers, and the next generation. Alexandre's team also runs regular school programs, reaching children and parents with hands-on lessons about marine stewardship and the importance of preserving both biodiversity and cultural heritage. Through structured volunteer programs, he mobilizes hundreds of eco-volunteers for coastal clean-ups, educational campaigns, and capacity-building workshops.

In addition to these initiatives, Instituto Ilhas do Brasil coordinates the Climate Change Adaptation Program, whose actions have been implemented in 10 areas. The methodology developed was applied during an extreme weather event in Santa Catarina, supporting six municipalities in 2023. The organization is also the creator of the Adapt Brazil Project (2007–2013), which developed essential themes for climate change adaptation with island and coastal communities, reaching 24 communities in Santa Catarina, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro. The methodologies developed through this work have been recognized by UNEP and are included in the Nairobi Work Programme's adaptation actions database as examples of good practice for the private sector.

Instituto Ilhas do Brasil also provides technical consultancy specializing in adaptation strategies for the United Nations Development Programme, including at COP 30 Brazil and for the PRODOC/MRE/MMA (Routetobelem) initiative. Most recently, the organization developed a proposal for the Ocean Streams for Climate Fund (OS4C Fund), an innovative financing mechanism for ocean-related solutions. Inspired by a grant model, the OS4C Fund aims to integrate climate adaptation, marine conservation, and social justice, with a permanent financial mechanism and participatory governance to protect coastal and ocean ecosystems.

Alexandre's work has catalyzed a movement for participatory marine governance in Brazil. By empowering local communities to lead, he has helped reverse the decline of small-scale fisheries, improved the management of marine protected areas, and influenced national policy on coastal resource management.



Impact

- Over 200 fishing families in Florianópolis and surrounding islands organized into active associations, with strengthened governance and collective bargaining power.

- 750+ eco-volunteers mobilized for coastal clean-ups, school education, and community campaigns, directly engaging more than 10,000 residents and visitors in conservation actions.

- School-based programs have reached over 2,000 students annually, fostering a new generation of marine stewards and increasing youth engagement in local fisheries.

- The Open Community University has documented and shared more than 100 traditional practices, bridging local and scientific knowledge and informing public policy.

- Participatory management models piloted by Alexandre have contributed to the recovery of key fish stocks and improved the sustainability of artisanal fisheries in at least three coastal regions.

- Instituto Ilhas do Brasil's advocacy has influenced the inclusion of community voices in Brazil's National Program of Coastal Management and contributed to the design of new marine protected areas.

- The model is being replicated in other Brazilian states and has inspired similar initiatives in Latin America and island nations globally]

- The Climate Change Adaptation Program has been implemented in 10 areas, with its methodology successfully applied during an extreme weather event in Santa Catarina, supporting six municipalities.

- The Adapt Brazil Project developed adaptation strategies with 24 communities in SC, BA, and RJ, with methodologies recognized by UNEP and included in the Nairobi Work Programme's adaptation actions database.

- Instituto Ilhas do Brasil has contributed technical expertise to the United Nations Development Programme and developed the Ocean Streams for Climate Fund (OS4C Fund), a pioneering financing mechanism for integrated climate and ocean solutions.

Alexandre Só de Castro's work demonstrates that resilient coastal and island communities are essential to the future of marine conservation. By integrating local knowledge, scientific research, and participatory governance, his model delivers measurable ecological and social impact—offering a blueprint for sustainable coastal management worldwide.

Case Study 2
Mundano and Pimp My Carroça (Brazil)

Mundano is a Brazilian artivist and social entrepreneur who transforms social and environmental challenges into collective action through art. Founder of Pimp My Carroça and Cataki, he has brought visibility, dignity, and public recognition to thousands of waste pickers across Brazil, promoting inclusion, fair income, and climate awareness through creativity and collaboration.

His research began with paints made from environmental crime residues, including mud from the Brumadinho dam collapse, evolving into Cinzas da Floresta (Ashes of the Forest), a global artivism project that turns wildfire ashes into pigments for artworks and murals addressing climate injustice. The project connects artists, Indigenous leaders, and environmental defenders, and will be showcased at COP30 in Belém through a collective exhibition and a large mural made with ashes from burned biomes.

Impact

- Pimp My Carroça has directly benefited over 10,000 waste pickers, engaging more than 4,000 volunteers and 2,600 artists across 102 cities, 34 states, and 25 countries, through creative actions such as Pimpex, Pimpão, and Amparos e Repars.

- Cataki connects over 5,000 waste pickers with more than 500,000 citizens and businesses across 2,100 municipalities, generating fair income and promoting inclusive recycling.

- Together, these initiatives have built a powerful bridge between art, social innovation, and environmental impact, inspiring replications throughout Latin America and beyond.

- The Cinzas da Floresta project expands this impact to the climate front, transforming ashes from wildfires into art that raises awareness about environmental destruction and honors the courage of forest firefighters and defenders who protect life on the frontlines.

Pillar V: Fostering Human and Social Development

Fostering human and social development means building resilient health systems, reducing the effects of climate change on hunger and poverty, expanding education and job creation for climate adaptation, and leveraging culture and heritage to drive climate action. This transformation is essential for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies in a changing world.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented and Siloed Health, Education, and Social Systems: Poor coordination and lack of collaboration across sectors lead to missed opportunities, inefficiency, and undermine resilience.

- Exclusion of Marginalized Voices in System Design and Decision-Making: Solutions are often designed without input from those most affected, resulting in interventions that don't fit local realities or needs.

- Lack of Accessible, Actionable Knowledge and Tools: Communities and individuals lack the information, skills, and resources needed to act on climate and social challenges.

- Short-Term, Top-Down Interventions Undermine Sustainability: Projects imposed from outside often lack local ownership, cultural relevance, and plans for long-term impact.

- Economic and Policy Disincentives: Short-term economic pressures and misaligned policies discourage investment in resilience, health, education, and social development.

- Weak Legal Frameworks and Enforcement: Laws and policies to protect health, education, and social rights are weak or not enforced, perpetuating vulnerability.

- Cultural Disconnect Between Climate Action and Local Identity: Climate efforts often ignore local culture, heritage, and knowledge, reducing community engagement and impact.

- Data Gaps and Lack of Monitoring: Poor data and monitoring make it hard to track progress, target resources, or hold systems accountable.

Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

Alison Tickell (United Kingdom, Julie's Bicycle)
Alison Tickell is mobilizing the arts and culture sector to drive climate and environmental action. Through Julie's Bicycle, she has built one of the world's leading networks for culture-based sustainability, providing tools, research, and advocacy that connect creative institutions with climate policy. She plays an active role in the UNFCCC, Climate Heritage Network, and Global Artivism initiatives, and co-leads We Make Tomorrow: Global Call—an effort to embed culture into the Second Global Stocktake at COP31, ensuring that creativity is recognized as a force for systemic change.

Fletcher Harper (United States, GreenFaith)
Fletcher Harper is uniting faith communities worldwide to lead the fight for climate justice. Through GreenFaith, he trains religious leaders and congregations to integrate environmental stewardship into worship, daily practice, and public advocacy. His interfaith network spans more than 60 countries and includes partnerships with Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and Indigenous communities. By combining moral leadership with collective action—through global campaigns such as Faiths For Climate Justice—Harper is transforming faith-based engagement into a powerful force for systemic environmental and social change.

Hossain Shahriar (Bangladesh, Environment and Social Development Organization – ESDO)
Hossain Shahriar is leading Bangladesh's fight against plastic pollution by combining policy reform, education, and community engagement. Through Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO), he has mobilized thousands of citizens—especially women and youth—to reduce single-use plastics and adopt sustainable practices. His advocacy helped drive Bangladesh's pioneering national ban on polythene bags, and his team continues to shape government policies on mercury, microplastics, and chemical waste. By linking grassroots action with national and global policy, Shahriar is positioning Bangladesh as a model for community-driven environmental governance in the Global South.

Jennifer Uchendu (Nigeria, SustyVibes)
Jennifer Uchendu is redefining youth climate leadership in Nigeria by linking environmental action with mental health and social justice. Through SustyVibes, she mobilizes young people to design community-based sustainability projects, influence public policy, and build resilience in the face of climate anxiety. Her network reaches thousands of youth across Nigeria through campaigns, workshops, and advocacy that center both environmental and emotional well-being.

Juliana Uribe Villegas (Colombia, Movilizatorio)
Juliana Uribe Villegas is advancing democracy and peacebuilding across Latin America by empowering citizens to take collective action and shape public agendas. Through Movilizatorio, she connects marginalized communities with policymakers and fosters leadership for social change. Her initiatives blend technology, storytelling, and civic engagement to strengthen democratic participation and social cohesion. Recognized as one of the region's leading voices on civic innovation, Uribe shows how inclusive participation can drive peace and sustainable development.

Verengai Mabika (Zimbabwe, Development Reality Institute)
Verengai Mabika is equipping young Africans to lead climate action through innovation, education, and policy engagement. Through the Development Reality Institute, he has created platforms like Greenvarsity, a virtual university offering accredited climate courses, and COP@Home, a knowledge hub supporting African participation in global climate negotiations. His work builds the skills and confidence of sub-Saharan youth to design practical climate solutions, influence policy, and strengthen resilience in their communities.

Graça Xavier (Brazil, União Nacional por Moradia Popular – UNMP)
Graça Xavier is a housing-rights organizer who strengthens women's leadership in Brazil's urban peripheries. As a coordinator with União Nacional por Moradia Popular (National Union for Popular Housing) and a member of the Rede Mulher e Hábitat da América Latina e Caribe (Women and Habitat Network of Latin America and the Caribbean), she helps grassroots associations advocate for dignified housing, infrastructure, and public services, and equips women to participate in policy and oversight spaces.

Gabriela Agustini (Brazil, Olabi Makerspace)
Gabriela Agustini is democratizing access to technology and promoting diversity in Brazil's innovation sector. Through Olabi Makerspace, she creates programs that bring digital and creative skills to underrepresented groups—especially Black women, older adults, and youth. Initiatives like Gambiarra Favela Tech and Learn with a Grandmother make technology learning accessible and community-driven, while partnerships with companies and civil society foster inclusive hiring and digital literacy across Brazil.

Silvana Bahia (Brazil, PretaLab)
Silvana Bahia is transforming Brazil's tech sector by advancing the presence and leadership of Black women. Through PretaLab, she offers training, mentorship, and corporate consulting to promote inclusive work environments and equitable hiring. Her work bridges advocacy, research, and public policy, positioning PretaLab as a leading initiative for digital inclusion and gender and racial equity in technology.

Diane Pereira (Brazil, Instituto Formação)
Diane Pereira is transforming community spaces in Brazil through inclusive, low-cost solutions that promote youth leadership and civic participation. At Instituto Formação she ensures that children and youth from marginalized rural and urban areas have safe, accessible spaces to play and practice sports. Her methodologies combine sports, education, and community engagement, fostering social transformation and empowering young people to participate actively in local decision-making.

Josilene Brandão da Costa (Brazil, CONAQ – Coordenação Nacional de Articulação das Comunidades Negras Rurais Quilombolas)
Josilene Brandão da Costa is a leading advocate for Brazil's quilombola (Afro-Brazilian maroon) communities, championing land rights, cultural preservation, and economic inclusion. CONAQ (Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black Quilombola Communities) advances legal recognition of quilombola territories, women's empowerment, and community-based education initiatives such as brinquedotecas (children's learning and play spaces). A displaced quilombola herself, Josilene has helped

shape national campaigns for land titling and now leads efforts on climate resilience and food sovereignty—ensuring that quilombola voices are central to Brazil's debates on rural justice and environmental policy.

Jurema Pinto Werneck (Brazil, CRIOLA and Amnesty International Brazil)
Jurema Pinto Werneck is a physician, B lack feminist, and one of Brazil's most influential human rights leaders. Through CRIOLA, the Black women-led organization she co-founded in 1992, she has advanced racial and gender equity by combating the forced sterilization of poor Black women, promoting reproductive justice, and building national coalitions for health, education, and social rights. CRIOLA works through advocacy, legal defense, leadership development, and community-based health programs to challenge structural racism and empower Black women as agents of change. The organization has influenced national policies on racial and gender equality, collaborated with UN agencies and universities, and trained hundreds of grassroots leaders across Brazil. Since 2017, as Executive Director of Amnesty International Brazil, Jurema has continued to lead national and international campaigns against racism and gender-based violence, reinforcing CRIOLA's mission of transforming Brazil's institutions toward justice and inclusion.

Paulo Lima (Brazil, Viração Educomunicação)
Paulo Lima is empowering young people in Brazil to use media as a tool for civic participation and social change. Through Viração Educomunicação ("Viração Educommunication"), he equips youth with communication skills, promotes values of peace, diversity, and human rights, and fosters intergenerational dialogue through participatory media production. His network connects schools, NGOs, and public institutions across Brazil, creating spaces where

young people shape public discourse and influence community decisions. By bridging education, journalism, and activism, Lima is redefining how youth engagement and media literacy strengthen democracy.

Laís Fleury and Ana Lúcia Villela (Brazil, Expedição Vaga Lume and Alana Foundation)
Laís contributed to the literacy of children in the Amazon region by encouraging them to enjoy reading. Through Vaga Lume, Laís expanded opportunities for personal development deliverying libraries to rural communities and training teachers as "Reading Mediators" in the region. Over the last 8 years, Laís has been working for Alana, advocating for the right of every child to connect and have access to nature. She currently serves as the Head of Partnerships at the Alana Foundation, organization founded by social entrepreneur Ana Lúcia Villela that promotes the full development of children. In COP30, Laís and Alana are advocating for children's rights to be incorporated into climate negotiations and reflections.

Raquel Rosenberg (Brazil, Engajamundo)
Raquel is a climate activist and co-founder of Engajamundo, Brazil's largest youth-led network for climate action and environmental advocacy. She has developed strategies to engage young people in global climate negotiations and local sustainability initiatives, building a horizontal, peer-to-peer platform that empowers youth to lead on climate, biodiversity, and social justice. Under her leadership, Engajamundo has mobilized thousands, influenced climate policy, and fostered a new generation of youth leaders. Raquel continues to support youth participation in COP processes, expand Engajamundo's reach, and advocate for systemic change toward a more sustainable and just world. She also lends her expertise to organizations mobilizing for Indigenous rights across Brazil and Latin America, ensuring these communities are at the heart of decision-making.

Eugenio Scanavino (Brazil, Project Saúde e Alegria)
Eugênio Scanavino is improving health, education, and environmental

sustainability in remote Amazonian communities through creativity and community engagement. Projeto Saúde e Alegria ("Health and Happiness Project") combines mobile health units, environmental education, and art-based learning—using theater, music, and circus performances—to promote preventive healthcare and ecological awareness. His approach reaches thousands of Indigenous and riverside families, integrating traditional knowledge with modern medicine and inspiring new generations to protect both their health and the Amazon.

Case Study
Gabriela Agustini, Silvana Bahia, Olabi, and PretaLab (Brazil)

Gabriela Agustini and Silvana Bahia are pioneering social entrepreneurs transforming Brazil's technology sector to be radically more inclusive. In a country where tech is dominated by white men from privileged backgrounds, their work with Olabi and PretaLab is opening doors for those most excluded—especially Black women, older adults, and favela youth.

Gabriela Agustini founded Olabi in 2014 as a makerspace and innovation hub in Rio de Janeiro, with the mission to diversify who creates and benefits from technology. Olabi's approach is to meet people where they are, integrating digital skills into daily life and cultural contexts. Its programs are co-designed with and for marginalized groups, building confidence, community, and pathways to jobs and entrepreneurship.

Olabi's signature programs—such as PretaLab (for Black women in tech), Tramas Digitais (for digital rights), and Transborda60+ (digital literacy for older adults)—combine hands-on learning, mentorship, and leadership development. Olabi partners with schools, cultural centers, and major companies to scale its methodologies and collaborates with tech giants like Google to design and implement diversity hiring and training campaigns.

Silvana Bahia is a journalist, researcher, and social entrepreneur who created PretaLab, an initiative within Olabi dedicated to ensuring the presence and recognition of Black women in technology. Her strategy combines technical training, leadership development, the creation of a national network of Black women in tech, and preparing companies to hire and retain them. She also plays a leading role in regional and international networks advancing racial and gender equity in technology.

Together, Gabriela and Silvana have built a movement that is both grassroots and systemic. Olabi's impact extends beyond

direct training: it is a laboratory for inclusive innovation, a convener for national conversations on diversity in tech, and a catalyst for systemic change in education, employment, and innovation policy.

Impact:

- Over 20,000 people directly trained in digital skills, with a focus on Black women, older adults, and youth from marginalized communities, including robotcs and STEMs workshops.
- Pretalab has built a national network of over 2,000 Black women in technology, supporting their entry and advancement in the sector.
- 1 million face shields produced and donated during COVID-19 through Olabi's maker network, supporting hospitals and health workers in all 27 Brazilian states.

- 30+ companies engaged in diversity and inclusion campaigns, resulting in measurable increases in Black and female hires in tech.
- Olabi's methodologies have been used by schools, companies, and cultural centers in more than 15 states, and was used internationally.
- Olabi's awareness and media work have shifted the national conversation on diversity in tech, with campaigns reaching millions through online platforms.

Olabi and Pretalab are proving that inclusive, community-driven approaches to technology and innovation can unlock talent, drive economic opportunity, and build a more just and resilient society. By empowering those most excluded to become creators and leaders in the digital age, Olabi is setting a new standard for social innovation in Brazil and beyond.

Pillar VI: Cross-Cutting Issues – Unleashing Enablers and Accelerators (on Finance, Technology and Capacity Building)

Cross-cutting enablers and accelerators are essential for scaling climate action and resilience. This includes climate and sustainable finance, mainstreaming climate in investments and insurance, finance for adaptation, harmonization of carbon markets and standards, climate-integrated public procurement, climate and trade, reduction of non-CO2 gases, strengthening governance and institutional capacity, leveraging artificial intelligence and digital technologies, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, advancing the bioeconomy and biotechnology, and ensuring information integrity in climate change matters.

Barriers to overcome

- Fragmented and Inaccessible Finance: Climate and sustainable finance mechanisms are often siloed, complex, and inaccessible to small businesses, communities, and the Global South.
- Lack of Integration Across Sectors: Climate considerations are not systematically integrated into investment, procurement, trade, or insurance decisions.
- Weak Governance and Institutional Capacity: Many governments and institutions lack the capacity, coordination, or standards to implement and enforce climate action at scale.
- Data Gaps and Lack of Transparency: Inconsistent or inaccessible data on emissions, finance, and impact hinders accountability and effective decision-making.
- Limited Access to Technology and Innovation: Small and marginalized actors often lack access to digital tools, AI, biotechnology, and innovation ecosystems.
- Information Integrity and Misinformation: Lack of reliable, science-based information

- Policy and Market Misalignment: Carbon markets, accounting standards, and trade policies are fragmented, creating barriers to scaling solutions and reducing non-CO2 gases.

- Insufficient Capacity Building: There is a lack of investment in skills, training, and institutional strengthening for climate entrepreneurship and adaptation.

Social Entrepreneurs working on this topic

Saurav Malhotra (India, Rural Futures/Balipara Foundation)
Saurav Malhotra is restoring forests and livelihoods in India's Eastern Himalayas through Rural Futures at the Balipara Foundation. By combining digital tools, green finance, and community innovation, he partners with Indigenous and rural communities to regenerate ecosystems and build climate resilience—aiming to restore 1 million hectares of forest while creating sustainable local economies.

Katia Brasil (Brazil, Amazônia Real)
Kátia Brasil is redefining investigative journalism in the Amazon by centering Indigenous, quilombola, and riverine voices. As co-founder and executive editor of Amazônia Real, Brazil's first nonprofit, independent news agency rooted in the Amazon, she trains young reporters from traditional communities and amplifies their stories on environmental, social, and human-rights issues. Under her leadership, Amazônia Real has reached over 10 million people since its creation, producing award-winning coverage that has influenced national and international debates on deforestation, Indigenous rights, and climate justice. Kátia continues to expand the network's collaborations with universities, journalists, and NGOs, championing press freedom and information integrity across the Amazon region.

Joaquim Melo (Brazil, Banco Palmas)
Joaquim Melo is pioneering community-led finance in Brazil by transforming how low-income neighborhoods access capital and build local economies. He founded Banco Palmas, Brazil's first community bank, in Fortaleza's Conjunto Palmeira neighborhood to prove that residents of marginalized areas could drive their own economic development. The model—based on microcredit, a local social currency (Palmas), and community cooperatives—has inspired a national network of over 100 community banks serving urban and rural populations. Through Banco Palmas and its partners, more than half a million Brazilians have gained access to financial services,

created small businesses, and strengthened climate resilience through locally driven economic systems. The model is now studied globally as a benchmark for solidarity-based and inclusive finance.

Fabio Gerosa (Italy, Fratello Sole)
Fabio Gerosa is transforming Italy's social sector into a driving force for the clean energy transition. As co-founder and president of Fratello Sole ("Brother Sun"), he enables NGOs and cooperatives to finance and implement renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects at scale. His model combines technical expertise, impact investment, and collective purchasing power—reducing energy costs and emissions while reinvesting savings into social impact. Gerosa's work is positioning the social economy as a key player in Europe's path toward climate neutrality.

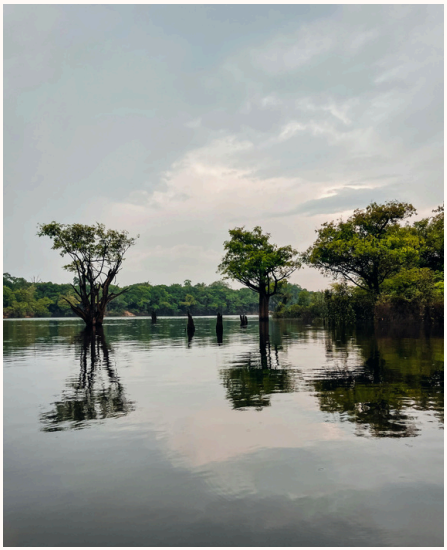
Tony Joy (Nigeria, Durian)
Tony Joy is transforming rural economies in Nigeria by leveraging circular-economy principles, digital skills and women's leadership. As founder of Durian, she empowers women in remote communities to turn agricultural and fabric waste into marketable products, build local enterprises, and reclaim economic agency. Her model aligns with rural prosperity by mapping local resources, fostering cooperatives, and promoting regenerative practices in rural communities. By investing in women's economic participation, Joy is advancing both social inclusion and climate resilience—turning overlooked waste streams into opportunities for innovation and sustainable development.

Carlos Nobre (Brazil, Amazônia 4.0)
Carlos Nobre, one of Brazil's lea
ding climate scientists, is pioneering Amazônia 4.0, an initiative that unites scientists, Indigenous and traditional communities, and policymakers to build a sustainable bioeconomy for the Amazon. His work promotes forest-based innovation, digital monitoring systems, and value chains rooted in biodiversity, offering a science-driven alternative to deforestation and extractive models. Through bio-industrial labs and open-source technology, Nobre is demonstrating how the Amazon can generate prosperity while preserving its ecosystems and strengthening climate resilience.

Ana Paula Morales (Brazil, Agência Bori)
Ana Paula Morales is transforming science communication in Brazil by bridging the gap between research, journalism, and public decision-making. Through Agência Bori (Bori Agency), she ensures that climate and environmental data are accurate, accessible, and timely—connecting scientists with journalists and training media professionals in evidence-based reporting. Her work has become essential for improving undermines public trust and effective climate action.

information integrity in climate communication, combating misinformation, and helping science drive public understanding and policy action.

Anna Oposa (Philippines, Save Philippine Seas)
Anna Oposa is redefining marine conservation in Southeast Asia through digital innovation and youth leadership. As co-founder of Save Philippine Seas (SPS), she mobilizes thousands of young "seatizens" via online campaigns, hackathons, and entrepreneurship programs to protect marine ecosystems and influence environmental policy. Her work has led to national action on shark protection, plastic reduction, and sustainable tourism, building a powerful movement for ocean stewardship and climate integrity.



Case Study 1
Carlos Nobre and Amazonia 4.0 (Brazil)

Carlos Nobre is a renowned climate scientist and social entrepreneur who co-launched the Amazonia 4.0 initiative, which aims to transform the Amazon's economy from one based on intensive use of natural resources to one rooted in bioeconomy innovation, digital monitoring, and sustainable livelihoods. Amazonia 4.0 brings together scientists, Indigenous communities, and community entrepreneurs to co-create value chains for non-timber forest products—such as açaí, Brazil nuts, and natural rubber—using advanced digital tools and blockchain for traceability.

The initiative's "Amazon Creative Labs" are mobile, solar-powered labs that enable communities to learn how to process, certify, and market forest products locally, increasing income and reducing pressure on forests.

Carlos Nobre conceptualised the Amazon Third Way Initiative, operationalized by Amazonia 4.0, during a residency at the Bellagio Center in Italy, seeing a need for a "third way" (after pure conservation and commodity exploitation) for the Amazon region's development. Now led by Ismael Nobre (president) the Institute emphasises "Biomas 4.0" — expanding beyond just

the Amazon to looking at all Brazilian biomes Amazon (Amazônia), Atlantic Forest (Mata Atlântica), Cerrado, Caatinga, Pantanal, Pampa (Campos Sulinos) with the 4.0 bioeconomy lens.

Impact

- 4+ biofactories deployed in Indigenous and riverine communities, increasing local income from forest products by 40–60%.
- 1,200+ community members trained in digital monitoring, product certification, and sustainable business practices.
- Partnerships with 10+ research institutions and government agencies to harmonize carbon accounting and support policy reform.
- The first Biofactory 4.0 with commercial-scale production will be implemented in the Paiter Suruí indigenous community in 2025.

Case Study 2: Ana Paula Morales and Agência Bori (Brazil)

Ana Paula Morales is a science communicator and entrepreneur who is transforming how climate and environmental data are shared and used in Brazil. Through Agência Bori, she connects scientists with journalists, policymakers, and the public, ensuring that climate information is accurate, timely, and actionable. Bori's digital platform curates and translates peer-reviewed research into accessible news briefs, fact-checks climate claims, and provides training for journalists on science communication.

Agência Bori has become the go-to source for climate and environmental news in Brazil, especially during crises such as Amazon fires and extreme weather events. The platform's partnerships with major media outlets and government agencies have improved the quality and reach of climate information, countering misinformation and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

Impact

- 1,000+ peer-reviewed studies on climate and environment translated and disseminated to 3,500+ journalists and 200+ media outlets since 2020.
- 80%+ of Brazil's top newsrooms now use Bori's platform for science-based reporting on climate issues.
- 500+ journalists trained in climate and science communication, with 95% reporting increased confidence tand accuracy in covering climate topics.

- Bori's rapid response briefs have been cited in 30+ government policy documents and legislative debates.

- Independent evaluations show a 25% reduction in climate misinformation in major Brazilian media since Bori's launch.

Ana Paula Morales' Agência Bori offers a data-driven, scalable solution for improving information integrity in climate change matters. By bridging the gap between science and society, Bori's platform delivers measurable improvements in media accuracy, public understanding, and policy relevance—making it a model for other countries facing climate misinformation.

**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This publication was developed by Isabela Carvalho, Daniela Matielo, Rafael Murta Reis, Luana Soares, and Ricardo Sanches Tomazoli. Design by Giovanna Lejanoski.

Special thanks to Alexandra Mitjans, Simon Stumpf, Helena Singer, Mariana Nakajuni Mitushima, and Natalia Lever, from Ashoka's COP30 Team of Teams, for their valuable expertise and contributions.

We also thank the following teams:

Ashoka Brasil
Ashoka Brasil is the Brazilian branch of Ashoka. Since 1986, Ashoka Brasil has identified and supported leading social entrepreneurs who are solving systemic problems across the country. The team works to empower changemakers, foster a culture of social innovation, and build partnerships that drive positive change throughout Brazil. Their work is central to Ashoka's mission of creating a world where everyone is a changemaker.

Planet & People - Ashoka Global
The People and Planet team, part of Ashoka's Next Now initiative, accelerates solutions at the intersection of social and environmental change. It connects social entrepreneurs, innovators, and partners to co-create strategies that address root causes of climate and inequality—building a movement for a sustainable and equitable world.

Ashoka Changemakers - Ashoka Global
Ashoka Changemakers scales changemaking worldwide by identifying breakthrough social innovations and supporting the innovators driving them. Through global challenges, learning journeys, and collaborative networks, it expands access to knowledge, visibility, and resources—creating an inclusive ecosystem where individuals and institutions work together to accelerate lasting social impact and build a world where changemaking is the new norm.

SOLUTIONS FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

INNOVATION & IMPACT IN ACTION

ASHOKA
EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER™

2025