



LATIN AMERICA BUREAU

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS PROJECT?

Mobilising support for environmental defenders (EDs) and finding ways to uphold their protection and that of the environment through sharing their campaigns for justice and highlighting the challenges EDs face, the tactics they employ and successful case studies for other EDs to learn from.



This is a media series using writing, photography, video and social media, to:

- create awareness of the causes and effects of environmental destruction
- bring lesser-known grassroots campaigns to English-speaking audiences
- report on environmental campaigning tactics
- improve transparency and accountability
- hold up case studies of success and failure to learn from
- motivate an international public to support environmental defenders' campaigns to protect the earth
- inspire action.



ONLINE MEDIA

Through motivational stories, impactful images and video, and accessible writing in English, we inspire the general public to defend the earth and protect its defenders.

We publish online articles, social media graphics and video content.



BOOKS

We will publish a collection of texts about the importance of protecting the Amazon: *The Amazon in Times of War* by Brazilian documentary-maker and researcher, Marcos Colón, and an autobiographical testimony *Terricide* by Mapuche land rights activist, Moira Millán.



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

We'll facilitate international relationships between individuals, communities, and organisations through reporting, interviews, social media, and cross-publishing partnerships.



TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT

We'll contribute to Global South-North learning by bringing knowledge from Latin American communities, journalists, photographers, and media outlets to a majority Global North audience. The series will also be a tool for researchers and students.

ABOUT THE LATIN AMERICA BUREAU

Established in 1977, the Latin America Bureau (LAB) is an online and in-print publisher and source of quality independent news about Latin America, focusing on struggles for social and environmental justice. We have published 185 books over the years –some of these have been translated into languages like Korean, Chinese, and Bengali– and LAB’s established, respected platform allows English-speaking audiences to connect and engage with Latin American news.



WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- The series began as a voluntary initiative within LAB. In October 2023 we won funding to work on the series for 6 months.

This included:

- Commissioning/publishing 12 original articles from international writers (e.g. in Chile, Surinam, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Mexico and the UK)
 - Publishing inspiring, high-quality photographs to accompany original articles
 - Commissioning English translations of important reporting by our partner outlets about EDs' work in Latin America
 - Hiring a social media manager to create content to raise awareness of EDs' campaigns and direct users to our articles
 - Commissioning and publishing a mini-documentary amplifying the voices of 4 Black and Indigenous regional environmental defenders and their work.
- Topics covered included:
 - Indigenous beekeeping in Mexico
 - the Rights of Nature Movement in Ecuador
 - activists in Suriname fighting to keep its 93% forest cover
 - women water defenders in Mexico
 - a Colombian community fighting to protect their forest from open-pit mining
 - Indigenous communities in Paraguay employing ancestral knowledge and advocacy against the impacts of climate change



37 ARTICLES

1 SHORT DOC

14 COUNTRIES COVERED

14 MEDIA PARTNERS

10K+ READERS

126% SOCIAL REACH INCREASE

75% ENGAGEMENT INCREASE

37

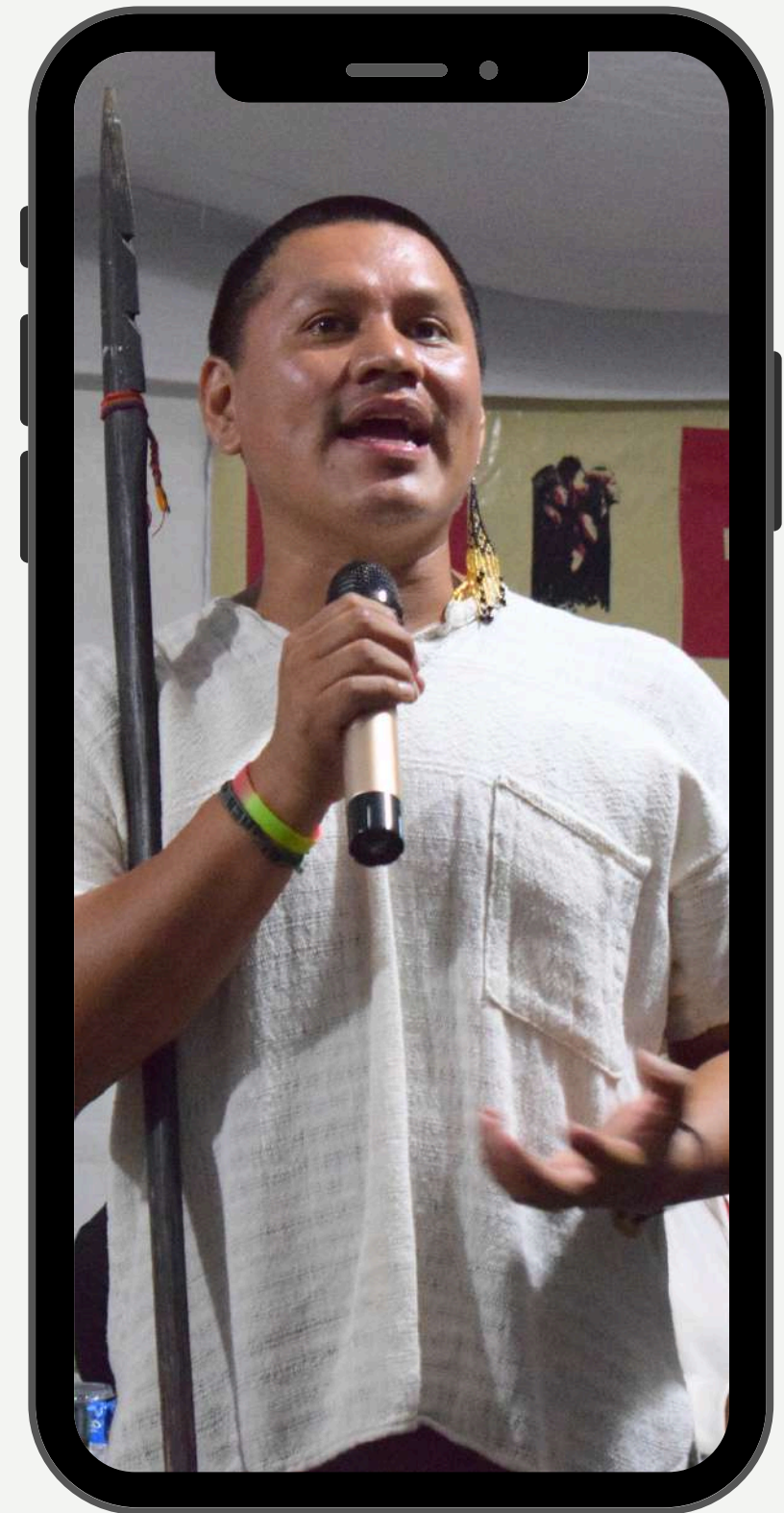
articles published

14

media partnerships developed

14

countries covered



WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?



- **We have sustained decades of reporting on environmental protection and grassroots testimony,**
 - following in the footsteps of LAB books like *Amazon Besieged* by Mauricio Torres and Sue Branford, 2018 and *Voices of Latin America* edited by Tom Gatehouse, 2019.
- **We have developed our coverage of resistance to mining in the region,** publishing:
 - the book *The Heart of Our Earth: Community resistance to mining in Latin America* by Tom Gatehouse (+ campaign events and press coverage in USA, UK, Chilean, Swiss, and Italian media)
 - an article series by Linda Etchart on the rise of Narco-mining in the Ecuadorian Amazon and increased use of mercury which poisons rivers and the communities who depend on them
 - our translation of an interview with leader of Ecuador's first women's Indigenous Guard protecting the community from mining
- **We've prioritised the voices of communities on the ground,** including those of:
 - 'Paĩ Tavyterã Indigenous communities employing ancestral knowledge and advocacy against the impacts of climate change in Paraguay
 - Yuturi Warmi, the first Indigenous guard led by Kichwa women in Ecuador
 - Kanan Ts'ono'ot collective in Mexico who demand cenotes are granted legal status and the Maya people named as their guardians
 - Yuly Velásquez, a local fisher documenting water contamination and corruption linked to the Ecopetrol refinery in Colombia
 - women of San Juan Bautista community struggling against a gas pipeline in defence of their lagoon, their land, and their existence as an Indigenous people.
- **We've championed under-reported struggles, like:**
 - a Surinamese organisation's goal to keep the country's 93% forest cover intact
 - a small Colombian community's fight against an open-pit mine in a little-known biodiversity hotspot providing countless towns with freshwater
 - Xinka people in eastern Guatemala using legal strategies and tools to preserve their land and culture.

THE IMPACTS OF OUR REPORTING SO FAR



Our international support for the community of Gualivá in Colombia helped mount pressure and the environmental authority cancelled the license to mine in an area critical for biodiversity.



Who will save Yasuní?

4th August, 2023

Ecuadorians go to the polls on 20 August 2023, to elect both a new president and 137 legislators for the country's National Assembly. They will also be given the choice to vote 'Yes' or 'No' in a referendum, where 'Yes' vote will shut down all oil extraction in Yasuní National Park.

LAB's publishing around the Yes to Yasuní campaign contributed to the national decision to stop oil drilling in the Ecuadorian national park in August last year. We will continue to cover this issue to pressure the new Ecuadorian government to stick to their word.



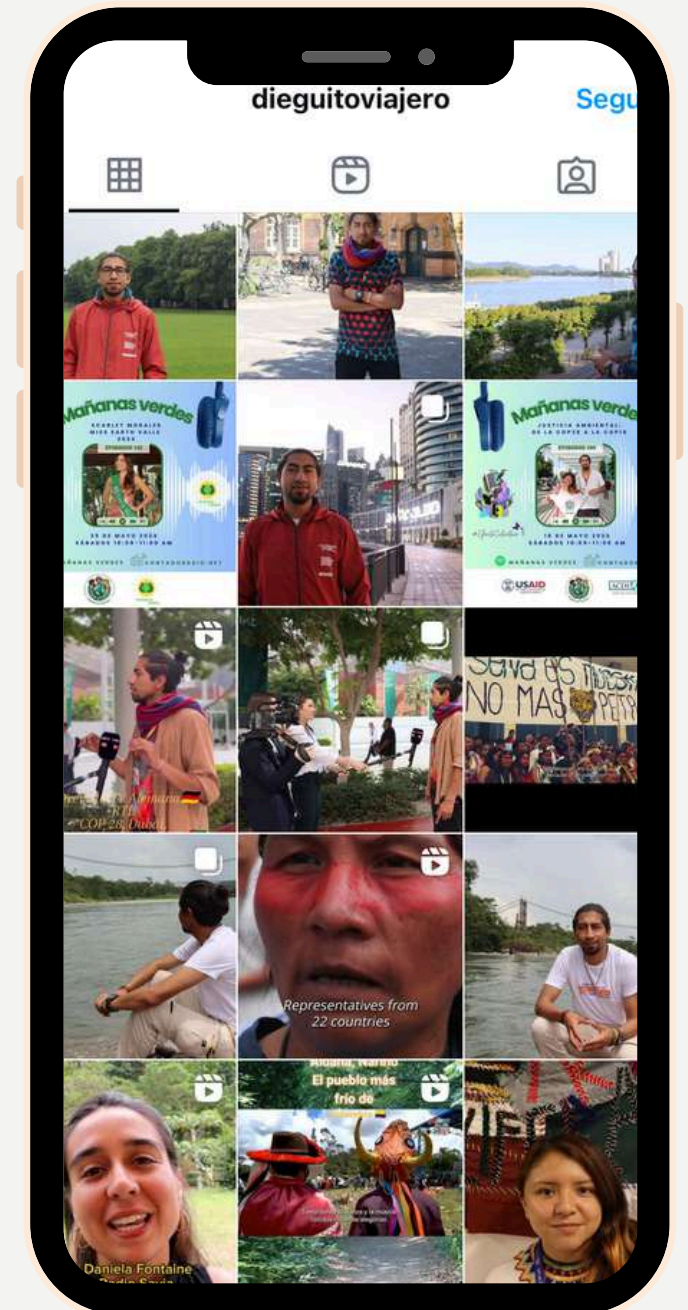
THE IMPACTS OF OUR REPORTING



We've boosted the public profiles of grassroots readers Lucia Ixchú, Diego Aza, Millaray Huichalaf, Moira Millán and Yuturi Warmi, helping them win support to continue their work in defending the planet and attending key meetings like COP28, UN Youth Climate Action Meeting, and the UNFPIL.



At a solidarity event we held for Moira Millán in London in April, we raised £600 for her cause and secured an interview with her about her work for BBC World Service which went out to 97 million people.



THE IMPACTS OF OUR REPORTING



We've shared key tactics that can be replicated by other communities, like holding local referendums, using paraecology, documenting species, reporting rights abuses, mapping, and working with NGOs, civil society groups and universities.



Ecuador: using the Rights of Nature to resist mining

Citizen scientists use 'paraecology' to defend the Intag Valley



Indigenous community sues Colombian government

Twuliá Wayuu community in La Guajira are being displaced by coastal erosion

Acción de tutela para

La comunidad indígena

ENGAGEMENT



- Since starting the series, our social reach increased by over 125%



- We achieved 13.5k organic reach on Instagram reels related the series and 5.7k paid reach.



- Engagement on social platforms increased by over 75% thanks to engagement with EDs content.



- Crucially, this content is leading people to read the articles on our website and the average time people spent reading these articles is high: av. **1 min 30 seconds on EDs series articles** (the average engagement time on any webpage is only 52 seconds).



WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

LEARN FROM LATIN AMERICA

- A continent of former colonies, Latin America has been plagued by extraction for centuries.
- All forms of extraction (minerals, oil, gas, timber, cattle, and plantation mono-culture crops) threaten to kill the ecosystems on which local communities and the whole world depend.
- There is therefore much to be learned from this key region for biodiversity, devastated by (often transnational) extractivism, home to Indigenous groups and Quilombo communities fighting to protect their land, culture, and sustainable practices.
- Mining in the region has increased exponentially in the last 20 years, bringing with it conflict with local communities, exhaustion and pollution of water resources, mercury poisoning, deforestation, and tailings dam collapses.
- The region's rich oil-fields offer tempting income for cash-strapped economies but at a high socio-environmental cost. As the world moves to curb use of fossil fuels, the voices of (often Indigenous) inhabitants of these areas must be heard.



WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

INFORM, INSPIRE, ACT

- Our project is urgently needed as it provides **accessible, in-depth, non-specialist, creative commons** coverage of issues often omitted from international reporting, otherwise unavailable to Western readers –who hold influential power in pressuring governments and companies to do better.
- Our project will help to raise the profile of lesser-known struggles. This international support can be leveraged by environmental defenders in their campaigns and negotiations (*and has been – see impact section*).
- Whereas much reporting on this topic and region is irregular and surface-level, we provide a platform to read the words of defenders themselves and to follow stories over time, long after they have faded from the attention of conventional news media.



WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

ENCOURAGE PROTECTION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

- In 2022, Latin America remained the world's deadliest region for EDs; on average, a defender was killed every other day (Global Witness, 2023)
- 36% of at least 177 defenders killed in 2022 were Indigenous and more than 1 in 5 of these killings took place in the Amazon. (Global Witness, 2023)
- Indigenous Peoples especially have a critical role to play in protecting nature. There is 50% less deforestation on Indigenous lands.
- “Organised crime has infiltrated the Amazon basin, seeking land for growing coca, rivers for drug trafficking and veins of gold underground. These groups are endangering the rainforest and the safety of those attempting to defend it.” (Crisis Group, 2024)
- A large and rapidly increasing proportion of the deadliest conflicts are triggered by mining, both legal and illegal.
- Yet, projects and media coverage concerning the region in the UK are few and are often overlooked by funders. Mechanisms to protect the environment and its defenders, like the Escazú Agreement, have been designed, but they are not being put in place, as we report.

2022

Latin America deadliest region

36%

s killed in 2022 were Indigenous

1 IN 5

killings took place in the Amazon

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?



“Mother Earth --militarised, fenced-in, poisoned, a place where basic rights are systematically violated-- demands that we take action,”

Honduran Lenca leader Berta Cáceres, in her Goldman Environmental Prize acceptance speech.

Cáceres was shot dead on 2 March, 2016.

Her work inspired this series and inspires environmental defenders around the world.

WHO ARE THESE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS?



click to watch this
LAB film made for
the series

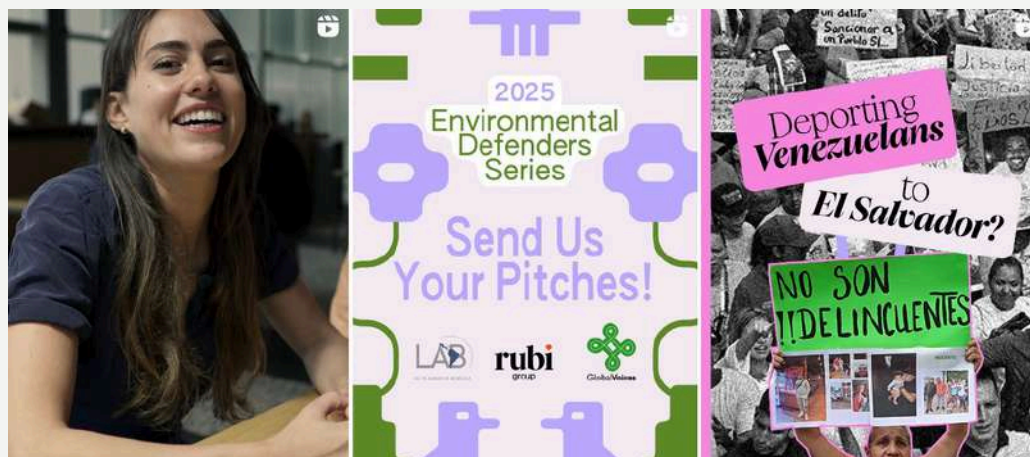
WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?

- **Inspire, inform, motivate and connect** an English-speaking public with the stories of grassroots Environmental Defenders' work.
 - Give environmental defenders (EDs) from countries where their battles are under-reported **a greater voice**.
 - **Report on successful environmental defence campaigns** whilst committing to **document and denounce harm and human rights abuses**.
 - **Reach a wide audience** through storytelling, imagery, cross-publishing partnerships, and social media management.
 - Develop partnerships with trusted Latin American independent outlets reporting on EDs' work in regions which are underreported in Anglophone media.
- **Expose the role of transnational corporations and financial institutions** in extractive activities responsible for environmental destruction in an effort to address the root cause of the problem:
 - **put pressure on those accountable**
 - **provide campaigners with the information and data they require to mount successful campaigns**
 - **contribute to existing campaigns to resolve conflict;**
 - global awareness makes it harder for governments and companies to ignore often under-reported grassroots struggles.



WHAT WILL WE PRODUCE?

- **Original articles focusing on the challenges EDs face and the work they do** (some of these will additionally be published in other languages on our partner, **Global Voices**' website)
- **Translations of articles from our partner outlets in Latin America**
- **At least two high-quality, impactful photographs per original article**
- **Social media content** around each story. We are partnering with communications experts **Rubi Group** to create striking and clear social media videos to allow the stories to reach wider audiences. We will also re-share older content which is still relevant, with updates on campaign development.
- **A physical and ebook: A collection of texts by Brazilian documentary-maker and writer Marcos Colón, *The Amazon in Times of War* + promotional campaign and events**
- **A physical and ebook: *Terricide*, the English translation of Mapuche activist Moira Millán's testimony, + promotional campaign and events**



OUR PARTNERS



GLOBAL VOICES, INTERNATIONAL



AGUAYO LAB, SOUTH AMERICA



RUBI GROUP, USA



CONTRACORRIENTE, HONDURAS & CENTRAL AMERICA



AGÊNCIA PÚBLICA, BRAZIL



MONGABAY LATIN AMERICA, LATAM AND GLOBAL



CLIMATE TRACKER, INTERNATIONAL



AMAZÔNIA LATITUDE, BRAZIL

OUR PARTNERS



NO FICCIÓN, GUATEMALA



PERU SUPPORT GROUP, UK



FEDERACIÓN ECOLOGISTA, COSTA RICA



EL CLIP, COSTA RICA



EXPEDIENTE PÚBLICO, CENTRAL AMERICA



HUMAN CONET, COLOMBIA

OUR TEAM

OUR TEAM CONSISTS OF EDITORS, AUTHORS, CONTRIBUTORS, TRANSLATORS, AND PHOTOGRAPHERS. HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR CORE TEAM MEMBERS...



MARCELA LÓPEZ LEVY
EDITOR AND TRANSLATOR

Argentinian researcher, writer, and translator focused on social justice. Editor at LAB 1997-2004, current LAB Chair. Author of *Argentina under the Kirchners: The legacy of left populism* (2017) and *We are Millions: neo-liberalism and new forms of political action in Argentina* (2004). *Terricide* translator.



LINDA ETCHART
CONTRIBUTOR AND EDITOR

Lecturer in Human Geography at Kingston University and Senior Co-Chair of the Environment Section of the Latin American Studies Association in Pittsburgh. Regular contributor to the EDs series, author of “Indigenous Peoples and the Rights of Nature” in 'Voices of Latin America' and 'Global Governance of the Environment, the Rights of Nature and Indigenous Peoples: Extractive Industries in the Ecuadorian Amazon'. Ecuador specialist.



ANA REYES-HURT
CONTRIBUTOR

Coordinator of the Peru Support Group, UK, an independent NGO that works with Peruvian groups and an international network to defend human rights, promote social inclusion and strengthen democracy. Peru specialist.



FIONA WATSON
RESEARCHER

Field and research director at Survival International international NGO which works with tribal peoples to defend their lives, protect their lands, and determine their own futures. Expert in environmental impacts of deforestation in the northern Amazon state of Roraima in Brazil. Advisor on *Amazon in the Times of War*.



SUE BRANFORD
EDITOR

Journalist who has written for The FT, *the Economist*, *the Observer*, *BBC World Service*, *The Times*, *the Guardian*, and *Mongabay*. She specialises in environmental reporting, particularly on the Amazon. Sue has published five books, including *The Last Frontier – Fighting over Land in the Amazon* and *Cutting the Wire – the Story of the Landless Movement in Brazil*, which was awarded the Vladimir Herzog human rights prize. Amazon specialist.



MARILENE CARDOSO RIBEIRO
PHOTOGRAPHER AND ARTIST

Award-winning photographer and ecologist whose works investigate the relationship between human beings and nature. MSc in Ecology and Wildlife Conservation and Management, PhD in photography. Ribeiro's works focuses on Brazil as a window to discuss worldwide phenomena. Brazil specialist.



MOIRA MILLÁN
MAPUCHE WEYCHAFE, LAND ACTIVIST, WRITER

Indigenous Mapuche weychafe ('protective warrior'), land activist and writer. Millán founded the Movement of Indigenous Women and Diversities for Good Living and is one of the leaders of the Indigenous ancestral lands recovery movement in Argentina. She is a novelist (*El tren del olvido*, 2019) and scriptwriter (*La rebelión de las flores*, 2022). *Terricide* author.



MARCOS COLÓN
DOCUMENTARY-MAKER, ACADEMIC, WRITER

Producer and director of two documentary films *Beyond Fordlândia: An Environmental Account of Henry Ford's Adventure in the Amazon* (2018) and *Zo'é* (2018), based on experiences with the Zo'é Amazonian tribe, who have had little to no contact with the outside world. Editor and creator of Amazonia Latitude, a digital environmental magazine and LAB partner. *Amazon in the Times of War* author.

HOW WILL WE DO IT?

- Prioritising urgent storytelling with image-led article templates that showcase brave, inspiring stories and lead readers to action.
- Demonstrating wider context through easy navigation of topics on the ED website and smooth navigation to other LAB articles.
- Maintaining an easy-editing website that can host translations of articles published by partners as well as original content from our authors.
- Creating dedicated social media posts designed to inspire and inform and targeting specific audiences.
- Expanding our social media reach through the Yoast plug-in, allowing us to set more detailed SEO adjustments and meta-data, and easy sharing from the website to social media
- Working with partner outlets to increase the reach of these stories.
- Presentation is key for holding the attention of other outlets and demonstrating our rigour and credibility.

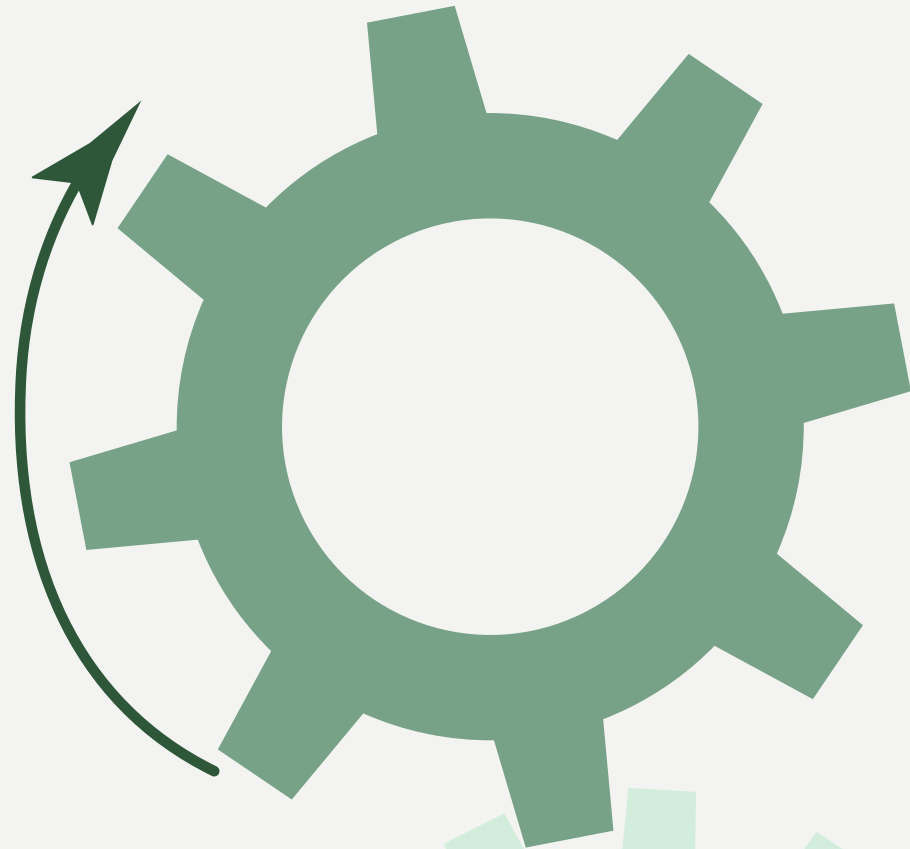


WHO AND WHAT WILL BENEFIT?

- The website will encourage awareness, reflection, and support among the **general public in the Global North** for environmental campaigns in the Global South, inspiring and informing local environmental struggles.
- **Students, researchers, academics, journalists, activists, and policymakers** can use it as an archive.
- **Latin American grassroots campaigners, activists and their communities/habitats** will benefit from increased awareness of their struggles especially when their lives/livelihoods are threatened.
- **Partner outlets** will benefit from their content being translated into English and shared among wider audiences, as well as by finding new content we provide to them about EDs' work elsewhere
- LAB will benefit by developing our work and our network will benefit from freelance work and connections.

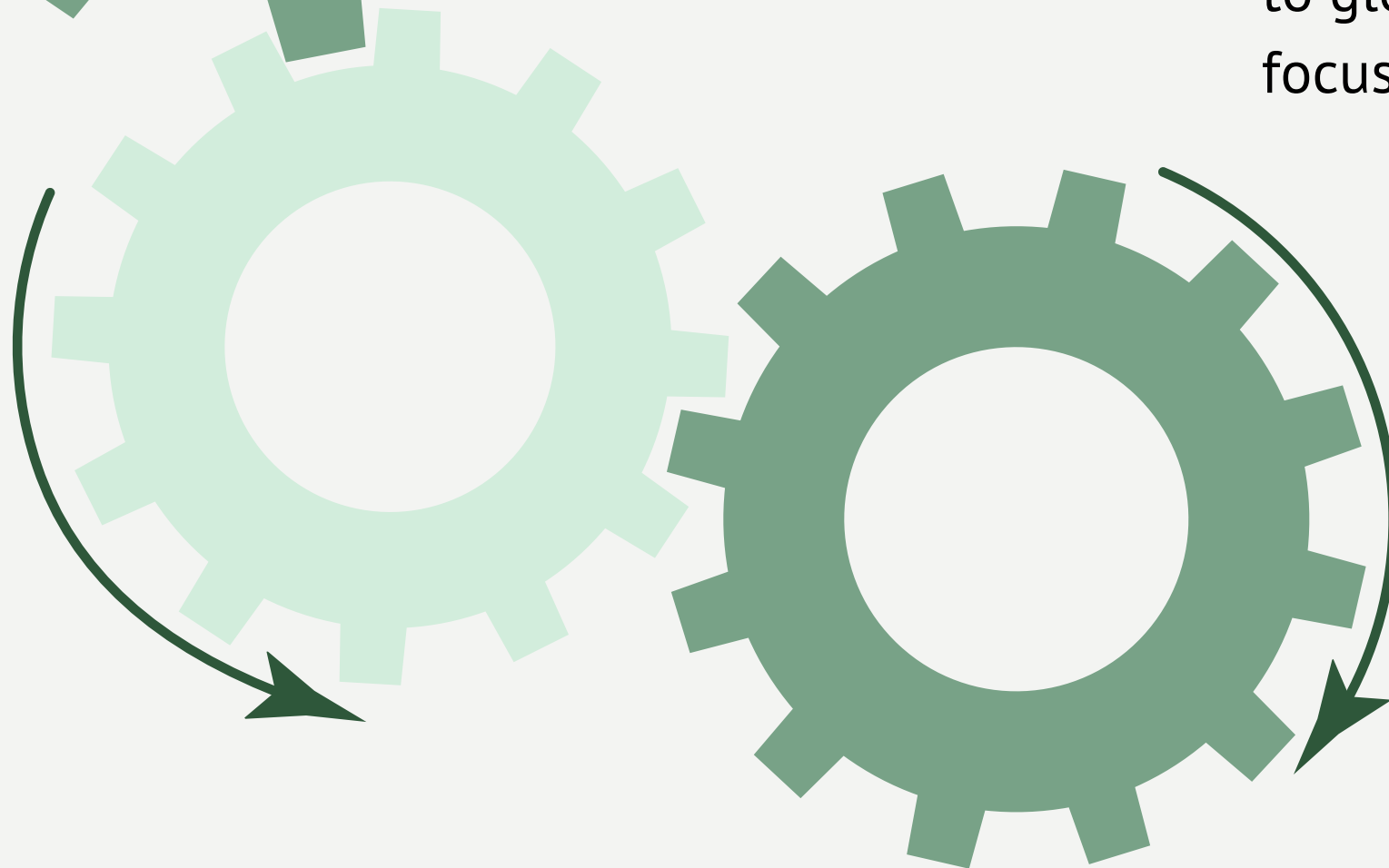


WHO ELSE IS DOING THIS?



There are **no other groups disseminating this information in this way in the UK**. Although Latin American environmental issues are occasionally reported in English-language media, articles are not prominent, nor offer wider context and grassroots case studies.

Global Witness shares vital annual reports on threats to global environment defenders, but they do not focus on storytelling and testimony.



2021-22 project **Tierra de Resistentes** comprised 31 Latin American partners (including four of our collaborators), however, articles were not published in English or disseminated in the West.

PROJECT FUNDING



LAB is funded by our members and donors, and by selling its services. To carry out this project, we need dedicated project funding.

WE NEED PROJECT FUNDING TO:

- PAY WRITERS
- PAY EDITORS
- TRANSLATE, EDIT & PUBLISH BOOKS
- BUY IMAGE RIGHTS
- MANAGE THE PROJECT
- ENGAGE & GROW OUR AUDIENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA



WEYA CAHUIYA

Our Indigenous territory
is not up for negotiation.

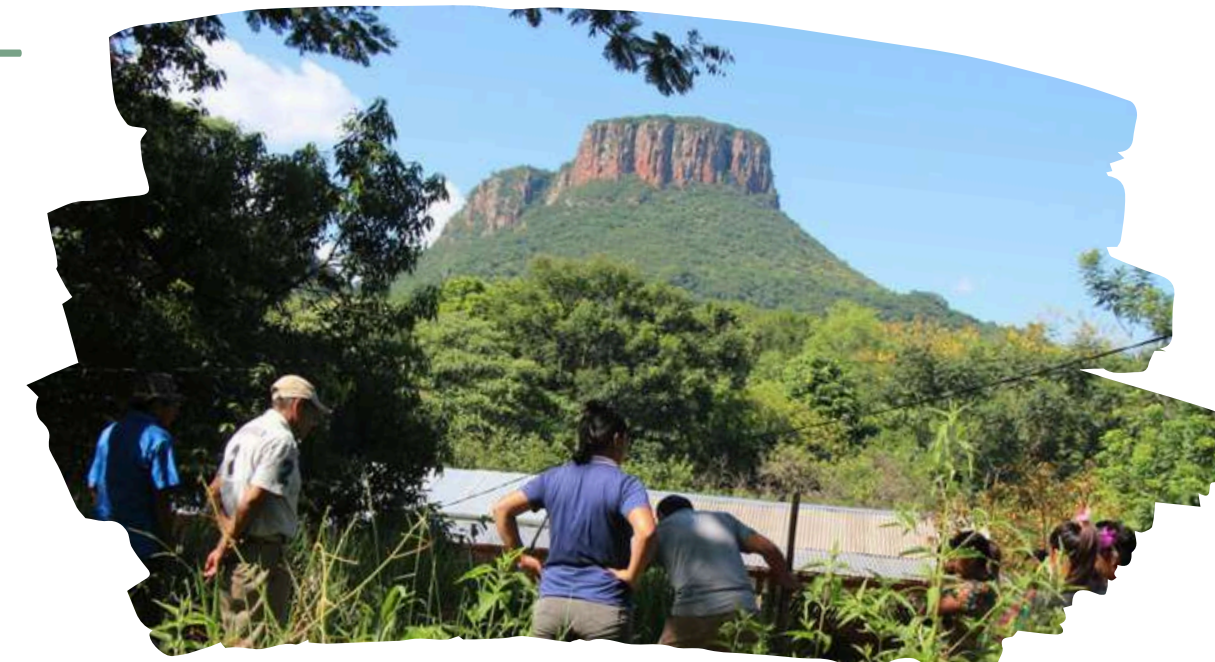


PROJECT BUDGET

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR TOTAL OF £24,070
TO FUND THE FOLLOWING OVER ONE YEAR:**

Item	Description	No. of items	Cost	Total
Writing original articles (1,500-2,000 words)	12 articles @ average of £180 per article	12	£180.00	£2,160.00
Translation of articles into English	15 articles @ £95 per article translation	15	£95.00	£1,425.00
Image rights	1-2 images per original article @ £25 per image	24	£25.00	£600.00
Project Management and Editing	8 hours a week for one year @ £24 per hour	416	£24.00	£9,984.00
Social media content creation & marketing	8 hours a week for one year @ £15 per hour	392	£15.00	£5,880.00
Admin costs (budgeting, invoicing, payments,	£280 per quarter = £1,120	4	£280.00	£1,120.00
			TOTAL	£21,169.00
LAB Overheads	15% LAB overheads			£3,175.35
		GRAND	TOTAL	£24,344.35

- **THE PROJECT WAS PART-FUNDED BY LUSH CHARITY POTS (£5,000 FROM OCTOBER 2023–MARCH 2024) AND BY NSCCT (£8,000 FROM MARCH–DECEMBER 2025)**
- **IN THIS PERIOD, MOST OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS VOLUNTEERED TIME AND SERVICES.**
- **WE HAVE BUILT A SKILLED TEAM WHO WE WILL HIRE AS CONSULTANTS AND A STRONG NETWORK OF WRITERS, TRANSLATORS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND EDITORS WHO WE WILL COMMISSION.**



CONTACT US

HELP LAB MAKE AN IMPACT



contactlab@lab.org.uk



+57 300 5087848 (WhatsApp)



**Enfield House Castle Street, Clun, Craven
Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8JU**



lab.org.uk

