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October 20, 2021

Climate Crossroads Exhibit: Indigenous Women and Youth Tell Their Peoples' Stories to Inspire Climate Action at the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow

Human Impacts Institute Brings Multimedia Artwork and Youth Leaders to COP26



Image: Elvia Dagua Guatatuca (Ecuador) illustrated by [Bolanle Adeboye](#) (Nigeria).

GLASGOW, UK (October 20, 2021) – The [Climate Crossroads Exhibit](#), features the stories of 10 Indigenous women and youth from the Global South, all illustrated by 10 commissioned Indigenous and Afro-descendant artists, will be showcased during **The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties, (COP26)**, November 1-November 12. Curated by the [Human Impacts Institute](#) (HII) and in partnership with [The Tenure Facility](#), the multi-media exhibition launches at the [Centre for Contemporary Arts](#) and will be installed to create a “Storytelling Sanctuary” to share the work and demands of indigenous leaders, while inviting delegates, activists, and other diverse participants in the UN Climate Conference to share their climate impacts, stories and culture.

“With the *Climate Crossroads Exhibit* we are bringing attention to how Indigenous Peoples’ ancestral knowledge must be central to how we address climate action. These 10 Indigenous women and youth leaders, who come from as far as the Brazilian Amazon to the jungles of Borneo, exemplify the innovation and depth of experience frontline communities have and they are demanding that their culture and land rights be respected and included in all levels of decision making,” explained Tara DePorte, executive director and founder, Human Impacts Institute, a nonprofit that uses arts and culture to inspire environmental action for social good.

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DePorte continued, “Because of the inequities in both who have access to the COP26 process, as well as the exacerbation of global inequities due to lack of vaccine access and travel restrictions due to the ongoing pandemic, Indigenous Peoples will be drastically underrepresented at the COP26 global negotiations. We are committed to using our immense privilege of access to make sure their voices, ideas, and demands are present in the halls and the streets. It is not us telling their story; this is about passing the mic and bringing their stories to the delegates and leaders at COP26 because they must be heard.”

The *Climate Crossroads Exhibit* highlights these diverse leaders by showing the diversity of the immense contribution Indigenous women and youth are having to systems of education, conservation, policy, communication, and so much more. The stories magnify the work of Indigenous leaders who are developing innovative and integrative ways to define our knowledge of place, preservation, and paths forward. These ten leaders come from communities where biodiversity and ancestral land are most threatened, making the connection between land tenure and the conservation of our cultures and global climate. Sharing these personal stories through audio interviews and a large-scale exhibition with commissioned portraits are designed to help political leaders, local communities, and donors deeply listen and to reframe Indigenous practices across the globe as a critical component of securing land for the preservation of biodiversity, culture, and climate.

“We are excited to be collaborating with the Human Impacts Institute and multiplying efforts to share the value of ancestral indigenous and local communities’ knowledge among the international community, major donors, and international media,” added Paula Alvarado, chief strategic communications and outreach officer, The Tenure Facility. “We hope that the Climate Crossroads Exhibit will catalyze interest in ancestral wisdom and contribute to ongoing efforts to integrate this perspective in solutions addressing the climate crisis.”

In addition to focusing on the leadership of these ten women and youth, the Human Impacts Institute commissioned 10 Indigenous and Afro-descendant artists to create original portraits that reflect the richness of culture and impact represented in the *Climate Crossroads Exhibit*.

The highlighted leaders and artists in the *Climate Crossroads Exhibit* are (in first name alpha order):

- **Elvia Dagua Guatatuca (Ecuador):** Founder of multiple indigenous schools for girls and Technical Support, Women's Coordination of the San Jacinto del Pindo Commune. Elvia draws upon her life experience as a climate and women's rights activist to teach the next generation the necessary skills to protect their home. Illustrated by [Bolanle Adeboye](#) (Nigeria).
- **Gabriella Sakina (DR Congo):** Program Officer, Pillar to Vulnerable Women Active in DR Congo (PIFEVA), Gabriella shares the indigenous knowledge of women and girls to fight against poverty and injustice. Illustrated by [Maryam Lethome](#) (Kenya).
- **Kynan Tegar (Indonesia):** Sixteen-year-old activist, Kynan uses storytelling and film to share the resilience of his community of Iban people. Illustrated by [Shaun Beyale](#) (Navajo Nation).
- **Lipi Rahman (Bangladesh):** Co-founder, Badabon Sangho, Lipi mobilizes indigenous women to engage with local governments and assert their rights to land and livelihoods. Illustrated by [Inuri Maheshika](#) (Sri Lanka).
- **Raquel Cunampio (Panama):** Coordinator of the Indigenous Women's Network and President of Ejua Wãdrã (“Guardians of Mother Earth”), Raquel helps women and young people recover their forest and safeguard their culture. Illustrated by [Astrid Caballeros "Lotus"](#) (Guatemala)
- **Saraswati Dhruv (India):** Lead Facilitator of KHOJ and leader of community resource rights initiatives as secretary of the Forest Rights Committee in Chhattisgarh, Saraswati supports women as key decision-makers in ensuring access to land rights and governance. Illustrated by [Radja Ouslimane](#) (Algeria)
- **Severiana Domínguez González (Mexico):** Technical Coordinator, Chinantla Regional Environmental Fund, Oaxaca, A.C, Severiana advocates for Indigenous territorial and water management to limit deforestation and ensure climate justice. Illustrated by [Sinomonde Ngwane](#) (South Africa).
- **Vanessa Racua (Peru):** Responsible for the Secretariat of Women, Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD), Vanessa builds leadership and communication skills for younger generations to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, land, culture, and forests. Illustrated by [Daniel Fishel](#).

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- **Vehia Wheeler (Tahiti):** Founder, Sustainable Oceania Solutions Mo'orea, Vehia connects youth with their local environment, knowledge, and cultural traditions, to ensure the next generation can cultivate a love for their land and build resilient leaders. Illustrated by [Sarah Ayagi Whalen - Lunn](#) (Inupiaq Nation)
- **Watatakalu Yawalapiti (Brazil):** Founder of the Xingu Women's Movement, is an Indigenous climate activist from the Yawalapiti community of Brazil, Watatakalu unites Indigenous women to ensure emancipation and participation in political decisions, both inside and outside their villages. Illustrated by [Helton Mattei](#) (Brazil).

The *Climate Crossroads Exhibit* will include:

- Curated, large scale visual posters that include direct quotes and demands from climate leaders, as well as how they do their work
- One-of-a-kind artist renderings of each climate leader, presented in a large format installation
- Long and short-form interviews with each climate leader
- An interactive installation in the form of a "storytelling sanctuary" where viewers are asked to share their own stories -- from all cultures and languages -- and connect on the importance of sharing space and listening to indigenous voices



In addition to the exhibit, the Human Impacts Institute in conjunction with the Bolivian government will hold a side event inside the UNFCCC COP 26 negotiations on Friday, November 5th "**Listening to the call of Mother Earth: Voices of governments, indigenous peoples, women and youth,**" which is a formal event amplifying the voices of global indigenous women and youth climate leaders, alongside these voices, we will present and discuss Bolivia's proposal to the UNFCCC: "An Urgent and Equitable call to stop climate collapse and restore balance with our Mother Earth" with speakers David Choquehuanca Céspedes (Vice President Plurinational State), Diego Pacheco (Head of Delegation Bolivia), Angelica Ponce (Director of the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth), Indigenous women and youth (civil society - Human Impacts Institute).

Image: Vanessa Racua (Peru) illustrated by [Daniel Fishel](#).

For more details on the *Climate Crossroads Exhibit*, visit <https://www.humanimpactsinstitute.org/climatecrossroads>

The Human Impacts Institute's *Climate Crossroads Exhibit* is made possible with the support of the Ford Foundation in partnership with [The Tenure Facility](#), focused on securing land and forest rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

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About Human Impacts Institute: Based in Brooklyn, New York, the [Human Impacts Institute](#) (HII) is a creative, action-oriented community of arts, policy, science, communications, and business experts committed to creating and sharing innovative approaches to tackling social and environmental challenges. Founded in 2010 by Executive Director Tara DePorte, the Human Impacts Institute sees individuals and communities as active agents of social and environmental change and leverages art, culture, and community to make environmental issues and solutions beautiful, personal, practical, and actionable. To learn more, visit www.HumanImpactsInstitute.org; follow on Twitter [@HumanImpacts](#), Facebook [@HumanImpactsInstitute](#), Instagram [@HumanImpactsInstitute](#).

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