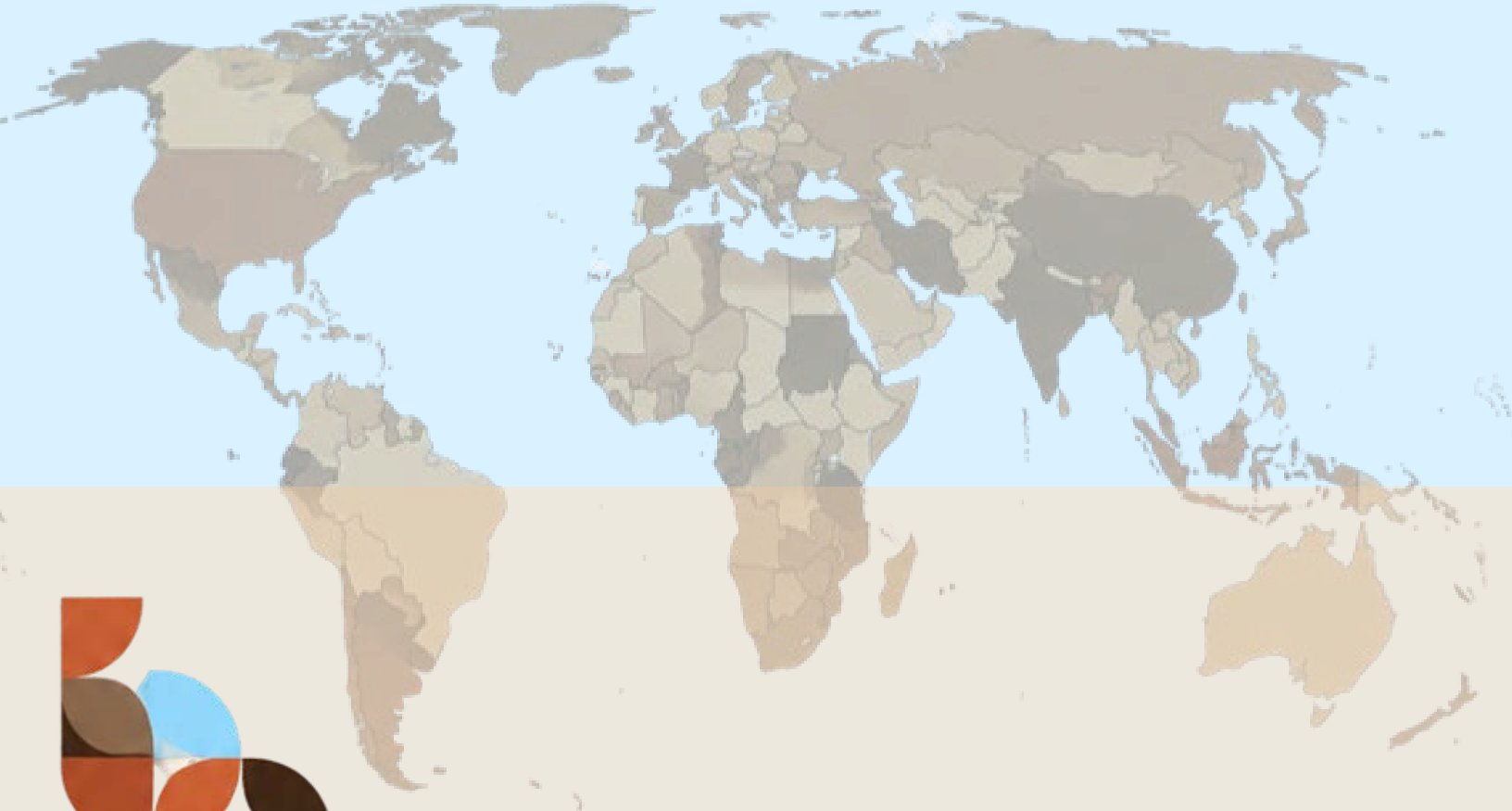
International Funders
IFIP
for Indigenous Peoples

MAPPING THE MOMENT:

The structural invisibility and marginalization of funding to Indigenous Peoples

Evidence from aid data, IFIP members, and Indigenous Peoples Organizations



October, 2026

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the dedicated team at the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) for their commitment and contributions to this work.

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We would like to especially acknowledge:

- **The 128 Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs)** across more than 50 countries who shared their direct ground-level realities, financial constraints, and resilience strategies. Your voices and leadership are the beating heart of this report.
- **The 17 IFIP Member Organizations** who participated in the funder survey, providing critical institutional transparency on funding trajectories, constraints, and adaptive practices.
- **The 43 representatives** of IPOs, Indigenous-led funds, and regional networks who took part in our June 2026 regional consultations to validate these findings.

A Message to Readers

We ask readers to please cite this report and acknowledge the collective wisdom of the knowledge holders who contributed to this research. Please use the following citation:

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples [IFIP]. (2026). Mapping the moment: The structural invisibility and marginalization of funding to Indigenous Peoples.

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Executive Summary

THE CONTEXT AT A GLANCE

Indigenous Peoples comprise around 6.2% of the global population (approximately 476 million people across more than 90 countries) and steward roughly 28% of the world's land surface. They are rights-holders under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007), ILO Convention 169 (1989), the Paris Agreement (2015), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022), and CEDAW General Recommendation 39 (2022). Despite this normative architecture, they remain among the world's most marginalized populations, accounting for an estimated 18.2% of those living in extreme poverty.

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) commissioned this report to serve the philanthropic ecosystem. For years, the global funding community has worked with a critical data gap, lacking a baseline for how much funding is directed toward Indigenous Peoples and how much of it reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) and their communities directly. This independent research begins to close that gap, combining macro aid data with direct insights from our members and from IPOs worldwide.

For IFIP, this evidence is a means of moving past assumptions and equipping our global community to advance a paradigm of giving grounded in the 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy: Respect, Relationships, Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Redistribution. Bringing clarity to institutional funding flows and to grassroots financial realities gives funders a practical basis for values-based collaboration, for honoring the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples, and for deepening support for their self-determination.

The report arrives at a moment when both ODA and philanthropic funding are under acute pressure. The contraction of US development assistance and the dismantling of USAID in 2025 have affected civil society globally, with Indigenous-led organizations among those most exposed. Several donor and recipient governments have advanced policies that restrict the women's rights, land rights, and advocacy work Indigenous communities identify as urgent. At the same time, the OECD's current review of biodiversity-related tracking opens a time-limited policy window to press for a dedicated OECD policy marker for Indigenous Peoples, a standard tag that would make funding for Indigenous Peoples visible across all donor reporting.

Key findings at a glance:

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES APPEAR IN 3.7% OF OECD AID COMMITMENTS AND 3.6% OF SPENDING OVER 2016–2024.

These figures count mentions of Indigenous Peoples, and miss programs that serve Indigenous communities without using the term. No current data system can show what share of that funding reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) directly.

TWO DONORS, SWEDEN AND NORWAY, ACCOUNT FOR 77.9% OF ODA THAT REFERENCES INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

Funding for Indigenous Peoples therefore rests on the domestic politics and budget cycles of two countries, with no comparably sized donor able to absorb a shortfall.

83.5% OF THIS SPENDING IS EXECUTED THROUGH MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.

These institutions report their own expenditures, and sub-reporting on what passes further down to IPOs and communities is limited. The data shows where money starts and goes dark at the last mile.

WHEN SURVEYED BETWEEN DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026, 45% OF IPOS HAD SIX MONTHS OF FUNDING OR LESS.

That window has now closed, and whether those organizations secured further funding is unknown. 86% had already taken crisis actions, among them staff cuts, program suspensions, and increased reliance on unpaid volunteer labor.

CUTS FALL HARDEST ON THE WORK IPOS IDENTIFY AS MOST URGENT.

Women's rights is the top priority for 65% of surveyed organizations, and 69% report it being cut. Land rights is a priority for 49%, and 58% report cuts there. Nearly nine in ten of these organizations are Indigenous women-led or women-focused.

Why this matters

Life expectancy for Indigenous Peoples can be up to 20 years lower than for non-Indigenous populations in the same countries. Indigenous women face compounded discrimination and higher rates of violence. At the same time, Indigenous Peoples maintain over 4,000 of the world's languages, and research consistently shows that deforestation rates in Indigenous-managed forests are 17–26% lower than in comparable areas.

The gap between international recognition of these realities and the resources reaching IPOs directly is the central concern of this report. IFIP commissioned this analysis to look beyond philanthropic data alone and examine the broader landscape, official development assistance included, that shapes how and whether Indigenous Peoples are resourced to exercise self-determination.

Methodology

THE ANALYSIS DRAWS ON THREE COMPLEMENTARY SOURCES:

1. **OECD aid flows** from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) database, covering 900,000 activities, approximately $1.75 trillion in commitments and $1.16 trillion in disbursed spending, over 2016–2024.

2. **Funder perspectives** from 17 IFIP member organizations, 30% of the 57-member network, collectively representing approximately $110 million in annual Indigenous grantmaking.

3. **Direct accounts from 128 Indigenous Peoples Organizations** across more than 50 countries, of which 89% are Indigenous women-led or women-focused and 84% operate on annual budgets under $250,000.

We validated the preliminary findings with 43 representatives of IPOs, Indigenous-led funds, and regional networks across two online consultations held in June 2026.

One structural limitation shapes everything that follows: the OECD has no policy marker for Indigenous Peoples, so no donor reports funding for them in a standardized way. In its absence, we identified activities that reference Indigenous Peoples through keyword matching, organizational name matching, and SDG alignment. This produces a visibility metric rather than a definitive accounting, and a lower-bound estimate. Full methodology is set out in Section 2 and Annexes A and B.

What the aid data reveals (2016-2024)

Across 900,000 activities and $1.75 trillion in OECD aid commitments over nine years, activities that reference Indigenous Peoples accounted for 3.7% of commitments (approximately $65.4 billion) and 3.6% of spending (approximately $42.1 billion), an average of roughly $4.7 billion in annual reported spending.

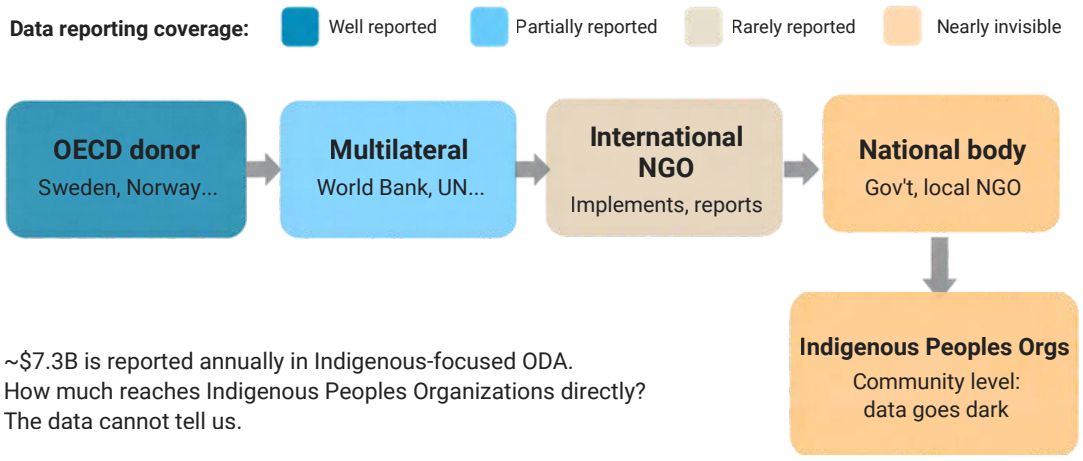
Three structural vulnerabilities sit within this small share.

1. **Concentration risk**: Sweden and Norway together provide 77.9% of all ODA that references Indigenous Peoples. Aid that makes no such reference is substantially less concentrated, with the top two donors, Sweden and the United States, accounting for 56.5%. Funding for Indigenous Peoples rests on two Nordic countries whose domestic politics and budget cycles can shift independently of broader DAC trends, and no comparably sized donor could absorb a shortfall.

2. **The last-mile gap**: At the funding stage, 94% of commitments that reference Indigenous Peoples flow through bilateral channels. By the implementation stage, 83.5% of spending is executed via multilateral organizations, which report their own expenditures but rarely report what passes further down. The data shows where money starts and goes dark at the last mile, where IPOs operate.

3. **Vulnerability to global crises**: When total OECD commitments surged 65% in 2022 in response to the Ukraine emergency, commitments referencing Indigenous Peoples grew 17%, from approximately $11.5 billion to $13.4 billion, and still fell from 5.5% to 3.9% of total commitments as overall aid grew nearly four times faster.

FIGURE 1: THE FUNDING CHAIN AND LAST MILE VISIBILITY GAP



~$7.3B is reported annually in Indigenous-focused ODA.
How much reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations directly?
The data cannot tell us.

What funders report (17 IFIP members)

The 17 IFIP members who responded to our survey collectively reported approximately $110 million in Indigenous grantmaking in 2024, rising nominally to approximately $120 million in 2025. One funder's strategic decision to grow its Indigenous grantmaking from $14 million to $30 million accounts for almost the entire increase. Excluding that single change, the remaining 15 funders showed a slight aggregate decrease year on year.

These 17 sit at the engaged end of philanthropy rather than representing it broadly, since IFIP membership itself signals commitment to Indigenous rights. The gaps that surface among this self-selected group are therefore particularly telling. Six of 17 reported being themselves significantly or partially affected by funding reductions, and one lost 70% of its funding when its primary donor shifted political support. Concentration risk operates in philanthropy as it does in bilateral aid.

There are signs of adaptation: 7 funders increased multi-year grants, 7 increased core support, and 6 decreased single-year grants between 2024 and 2025. Twelve of 17 reported no change in emergency funding mechanisms, which means the absence of rapid-response capacity is an entrenched feature of the philanthropic ecosystem rather than a new constraint.

What Indigenous Peoples Organizations experience (128 IPO respondents)

THE 128 IPOS SURVEYED ARE PREDOMINANTLY SMALL, GRASSROOTS, WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS. AMONG THEM:

- **34%** **EXPERIENCED FUNDING DECREASES** BETWEEN 2024 AND 2025 (21% SIGNIFICANT, 13% MODERATE)
- **45%** **HAD SIX MONTHS OF OPERATIONAL RUNWAY OR LESS** WHEN SURVEYED IN DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026
- **58%** **REPORT BEING AFFECTED** BY POLITICAL CHANGES IN DONOR COUNTRIES
- **86%** **HAVE TAKEN AT LEAST ONE CRISIS ACTION**, INCLUDING REDUCING STAFF SALARIES (36%), SUSPENDING PROGRAMS (31%), REDUCING STAFF HOURS (24%), AND LAYING OFF STAFF (16%)
- **49%** **REPORT INCREASED RELIANCE ON UNPAID VOLUNTEER LABOR**, PREDOMINANTLY FROM INDIGENOUS WOMEN, TO ABSORB FUNDING SHORTFALLS

Organizations in North America, despite being headquartered in major donor countries, face the highest rate of funding cuts (45.5%), followed by Africa (38.8%). Latin America and the Caribbean report a lower rate of organizational decreases (27.9%) while receiving 26.4% of global ODA that references Indigenous Peoples.

The pattern of which programs are being cut is the central finding. Among these predominantly Indigenous women-led organizations, the deepest reductions fall on the priorities they identify as most urgent:

65% PRIORITIZE WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND 69% REPORT CUTS IN THIS AREA

49% PRIORITIZE LAND RIGHTS AND 58% REPORT CUTS

46% PRIORITIZE CLIMATE JUSTICE AND 47% REPORT CUTS

Organizations identified consistent drivers: shifts in US development assistance and USAID funding, domestic anti-NGO laws including bank account freezes in Ecuador and Paraguay's "Ley Garrote", and explicit targeting of rights-based work, particularly sexual and reproductive health and women's rights programming.

Who absorbs the gap? 91% of organizations identified Indigenous women as the population most affected when services are reduced. For the 89% of surveyed organizations that are Indigenous women-led or women-focused, this transfers the financial burden onto the most marginalized: unpaid labor by Indigenous women masks the true scale of the funding crisis. As one organization in Botswana described it: "[For] operating funding, we are working as volunteers."

Limitations of this research

FOUR LIMITATIONS SHOULD BE READ ALONGSIDE THE FINDINGS.

01

KEYWORD-BASED IDENTIFICATION PRODUCES A LOWER BOUND.

With no OECD policy marker for Indigenous Peoples, we identified activities that reference Indigenous Peoples through keyword searches, organizational name matching, and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets. Many programs serving Indigenous communities will not appear, because they do not use the relevant terms in their documentation.

02

IATI REPORTING IS INCOMPLETE AT THE IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL.

Large donors and multilaterals report comprehensively, while sub-grants to national NGOs, community organizations, and IPOs are rarely reported. The aid flows closest to Indigenous communities are the least visible in the data.

03

LANGUAGE BIAS LIMITS GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE.

Our keywords are limited to English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Activities documented in Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Swahili, Tagalog, Indigenous languages, or other languages are likely undercounted, so Asia, the Pacific, and parts of Africa may be underrepresented relative to Latin America and Francophone Africa.

04

THE DATA CANNOT DISTINGUISH INDIGENOUS-LED FROM INDIGENOUS-SERVING.

IATI does not separate a program led and delivered by an IPO from a program designed by an international NGO with the intention of benefiting Indigenous Peoples. The current reporting system cannot answer who holds decision-making power over resource allocation.

What this means

OECD aid flows, funder accounts, and IPO experiences point to the same conclusion: funding for Indigenous Peoples is structurally precarious. Bilateral ODA is highly concentrated and erodes proportionally when global crises shift donor attention. Even committed funders within IFIP's network face constraints they cannot individually resolve. IPOs are on a path toward closure, or toward survival through unpaid labor by the Indigenous women who lead and staff them.

THE EVIDENCE ALSO POINTS TO WHERE ACTION IS POSSIBLE:

IMMEDIATE (MONTHS)

45% of surveyed organizations had six months of runway or less at the start of 2026, while only 3 of 17 surveyed IFIP members provide emergency mechanisms. Without rapid-response capacity, organizations close or survive through deepening reliance on unpaid labor.

OPERATIONAL (1–2 YEARS)

Organizations consistently identify longer-term, flexible, direct funding as essential. Indigenous-Led Funds offer a proven model for channeling resources while respecting Indigenous governance.

SYSTEMIC (ONGOING)

Nearly two decades after UNDRIP, the absence of an OECD policy marker means the aid system cannot track whether commitments translate into resources reaching IPOs. This gap in accountability infrastructure limits both donor learning and Indigenous advocacy.

Four practical steps for funders

1

ESTABLISH EMERGENCY FUNDS AND RAPID-RESPONSE MECHANISMS.

Collaborate with IFIP to create bridge funding for organizations operating with six months of runway or less.

2

SHIFT EXISTING GRANTS TO MULTI-YEAR, CORE SUPPORT.

Increase grant amounts, remove reapplication requirements, adjust open grants, and offer renewals, using the funding relationships already in place.

3

CHANNEL FUNDING THROUGH INDIGENOUS-LED FUNDS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES REGIONAL NETWORKS

as primary mechanisms, building on the trust these funds already hold with communities.

4

ADVOCATE FOR AN OECD POLICY MARKER FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES,

with sub-indicators covering Indigenous governance and FPIC.

A well-designed marker would:

- Apply a three-point scale (principal, significant, not targeted) consistent with existing OECD methodology
- Record whether funding reaches Indigenous-governed organizations and whether FPIC was obtained
- Cover all sectors, complementing current biodiversity-focused tracking while extending beyond it
- Build on the OECD's biodiversity marker revision and UNPFII's 2023–2024 recommendations

Recommendations

Section 7 sets out eight recommendations organized around IFIP's 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy, covering accountability infrastructure (Respect and Relationships), direct funding mechanisms and Indigenous-Led Funds (Reciprocity and Redistribution), and structural protections for rights-based work (Responsibility). The four practical steps above are the most immediate priorities. The full set in Section 7 addresses the underlying architecture.

Nearly half of the organizations we surveyed were within six months of running out. The mechanisms that would keep them open already exist, and the four steps above are where funders can start.

1. Introduction

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Approximately 476 million Indigenous Peoples live across more than 90 countries, representing 6.2% of the global population. [1] They are rights-holders with internationally recognized rights to self-determination, to their lands and territories, and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any development affecting them. Indigenous Peoples maintain distinct social, economic, cultural, and political systems, and hold governance structures that have sustained communities across generations. They maintain over 4,000 of the world's approximately 7,000 languages, alongside irreplaceable traditional knowledge systems developed over millennia. [2]

Yet despite these contributions and their status as rights-holders, Indigenous Peoples remain among the world's most marginalized populations. They account for an estimated 18.2% of those living in extreme poverty globally. [3] Life expectancy gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in the same country range widely, reaching up to 20 years in the most affected contexts. [4] Indigenous women face compounded vulnerabilities, experiencing higher rates of violence, discrimination, and barriers to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. [5] Indigenous youth confront displacement from traditional territories, loss of language and cultural transmission, and limited pathways to participate in decisions affecting their futures.

This marginalization is the direct result of colonial dispossession, forced assimilation policies, and ongoing structural discrimination. Development projects imposed without Indigenous consent continue to displace communities, destroy sacred sites, and undermine traditional governance systems. Climate change, driven predominantly by industrialized nations, disproportionately affects Indigenous territories while Indigenous knowledge for adaptation remains undervalued in policy responses. This is the structural context within which questions of resource flow must be understood.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Within this context of rights violations and marginalization, Indigenous Peoples' contributions to environmental stewardship have gained increasing recognition, though that recognition has yet to translate into adequate support for Indigenous self-determination.

1 FAO (n.d.). Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/who-we-are/en; FAO. (2024). Indigenous Peoples and FAO: A narrative for working together. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/c070en; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). About Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/about-indigenous-peoples-and-human-rights 2 UNESCO. (2023). Cutting edge: Indigenous languages: Gateways to the world's cultural diversity. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-indigenous-languages-gateways-worlds-cultural-diversity; FAO. (2024). Indigenous Peoples and FAO: A narrative for working together. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd2070en 3 World Bank. (n.d.). Indigenous Peoples overview. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples; International Labour Organization. (2019). Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future. Geneva: ILO. https://www.ilo.org/publications/implementing-ilo-indigenous-and-tribal-peoples-convention-no-169-towards 4 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). About Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/about-indigenous-peoples-and-human-rights 5 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2022). Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022. https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2022/; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). About Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/about-indigenous-peoples-and-human-rights

Indigenous Peoples manage approximately 28% of the world's land surface, including some of the planet's most intact forest areas. [6] Their territories overlap with areas of exceptional biodiversity: over 60% of all terrestrial mammals have at least 10% of their ranges within Indigenous lands. [7] Research consistently shows that deforestation rates in Indigenous-managed forests are 17–26% lower than in comparable areas without Indigenous management. [8]

This environmental stewardship reflects the governance systems and ecological knowledge that Indigenous communities have refined and transmitted across generations. Yet the global policy response to climate change and biodiversity loss has primarily sought to instrumentalize Indigenous Peoples' environmental role while inadequately supporting their rights, governance, and self-determined priorities.

POLICY COMMITMENTS, LITTLE ACCOUNTABILITY

Over the past two decades, international recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights has advanced significantly.

The *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP),* adopted in 2007, establishes Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, to their lands and resources, and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any development affecting their territories. [9] Initially opposed by Australia, Canada, [10] New Zealand, and the United States, all four have since endorsed the Declaration, though it remains non-binding. [11]

The *Paris Agreement* (2015) acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge in climate action. [12] The *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (2022) recognizes Indigenous Peoples' rights throughout and includes Target 19, which calls for mobilizing $200 billion annually by 2030 for biodiversity conservation. [13]

Three recent international commitments signal growing recognition of Indigenous Peoples' role in forest and land governance. The Forest Tenure Pledge, announced at COP26 in 2021, represented $1.7 billion from 25 bilateral and philanthropic donors to support Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' land tenure rights from 2021–2025. [14] At COP30 in November 2025, the pledge was renewed and expanded: 39 government and philanthropic donors collectively committed $1.8 billion for 2026 to 2030, with explicit recognition of Afro-descendant communities and a wider set of ecosystems including forests, mangroves, and savannahs. [15]

6 World Bank. (n.d.). Indigenous Peoples overview. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples 7 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). About Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/about-indigenous-peoples-and-human-rights 8 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2022). Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022. https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2022/; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.). About Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/indigenous-peoples/about-indigenous-peoples-and-human-rights 9 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007). https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/61/295 10 Department of Justice Canada. (2021, June 21). Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html 11 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Division for Inclusive Social Development. Retrieved January 28, 2026, from https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples 12 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). The Paris Agreement. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf 13 Convention on Biological Diversity. (2022). Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. https://www.cbd.int/gbf 14 Forest Tenure Funders Group. (2024). Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Forest Tenure Pledge: Annual report 2023–2024.https://ourpledge.earth/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Indigenous-Peoples-and-Local-Communities-Forest-Tenure-Pledge-Annual-Report-2023%E2%80%932024.pdf 15 Forest Tenure Funders Group. (November 2025). COP30 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities Forest and Land Tenure Pledge, 2026–2030. https://www.tenurepledge.org/cop30/

The *Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)*, endorsed by 53 countries, is a $125 billion blended-finance mechanism that requires at least 20% of funds to flow directly to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. [16] The *Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment (ILTC)* aims to secure and legally recognize 160 million hectares of land for Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities. [17]

These commitments are welcome. The critical question they raise, how much development assistance actually reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) and communities directly, remains unanswered.

THE MISSING MARKER: WHY FUNDING FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IS INVISIBLE

International aid systems use standardized mechanisms to track funding for cross-cutting priorities. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) uses policy markers, codes that donors apply to activities to enable monitoring and accountability. Current markers include gender equality, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and reproductive health. Indigenous Peoples have no equivalent marker, though the technical capacity and political precedents to create one exist.

The precedent is established. Markers for gender, climate, and biodiversity each followed the same pathway: international agreement on a normative framework, then political commitment, then data infrastructure. For Indigenous Peoples the normative framework has been in place since UNDRIP in 2007, and the data infrastructure has never followed. Section 6 sets out what a dedicated marker would enable and what it would need to cover.

The opportunity is time-sensitive. The OECD's current exploration of biodiversity-related tracking creates a policy window. The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has recommended a dedicated marker in both 2023 and 2024. Multiple international frameworks now reference Indigenous Peoples. The technical capacity exists. What remains is the political commitment to move from exploration to implementation, turning nearly two decades of normative progress into accountability infrastructure that enables learning, strategic allocation, and genuine support for Indigenous self-determination.

16 Tropical Forest Forever Facility. (2025). TFFF at COP30. https://tfff.earth/; Government of Brazil. (2025, November 6). Over USD 5.5 billion announced for Tropical Forest Forever Facility as 53 countries endorse the historic TFFF Launch Declaration. COP30. https://cop30.br/en/news-about-cop30/over-usd-5-5-billion-announced-for-tropical-forest-forever-facility-as-53-countries-endorse-the-historic-tfff-launch-declaration 17 Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership. (2025, November 6). Governments aim to collectively recognise 160 million hectares of Indigenous Peoples and local community lands in tropical forest countries. https://forestclimateleaders.org/news-and-resources/governments-aim-to-collectively-recognise-160-million-hectares-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-community-lands-in-tropical-forest-countr/

WHAT THIS RESEARCH DOES

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) commissioned this study to offer a clear, shared framework for understanding global funding flows. The international development and philanthropic communities share a growing commitment to Indigenous rights, yet the ecosystem has lacked a baseline for how resources flow and where funding partnerships can be strengthened. This independent, multi-layered research is offered as a constructive tool for the sector. Connecting macro-level international aid data with the direct experiences of surveyed member funders and Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) worldwide, the study brings visibility to institutional resource flows and grassroots financial realities alike. Our goal is to give our global network the empirical insights needed to fully operationalize the 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy: Respect, Relationships, Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Redistribution, fostering deeper transparency, values-based partnerships, and expanded direct pathways for Indigenous self-determination.

The study addresses this knowledge gap through three complementary approaches.

First, we analyzed the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) database, examining 900,000 activities covering $1.75 trillion in commitments and $1.16 trillion in disbursed spending from 2016 to 2024. This reveals macro-level patterns in how official development assistance relates to Indigenous Peoples.

Second, we surveyed 17 funders engaged with IFIP or aligned philanthropic networks, collectively representing approximately $110 million in annual Indigenous grantmaking. This captures institutional perspectives on funding trajectories, constraints, and adaptations, and allows us to examine where funder accounts align with, diverge from, or help explain the patterns documented in the IATI data and the organizational survey.

Third, we surveyed 128 Indigenous Peoples Organizations across more than 50 countries to capture their direct experiences accessing funding, the barriers they encounter, and how they are adapting to changing funding landscapes.

Together, these approaches allow us to answer three core questions:

1. How visible are Indigenous Peoples in OECD aid data, and what scale of funding does that visibility represent?
2. Through what channels does this funding flow?
3. What structural barriers prevent adequate resourcing, and what do Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) experience at the implementation level?

By making visible what has been systematically invisible, this research aims to provide an evidence base for transforming development financing toward genuine support for Indigenous self-determination.

2. Methodology

This study draws on three complementary data sources to examine how development financing relates to Indigenous Peoples, and how much of it reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations directly. The preliminary findings were then validated with IPOs, Indigenous-led funds, and regional networks through two regional consultations.

Three complementary data sources

Survey of 128 IPOs

- 50+ countries
- 89% Indigenous Women-led
- 82% under $250K

Ground-level organizational experiences

Survey of 17 IFIP members

- IFIP member organizations
- ~$110M annual grantmaking

Funder perspectives, constraints, and adaptations

IATI aid data analysis

- 900,000 activities
- $1.75 trillion total
- OECD aid flows (2016–2024)

Visibility metric: how often IPs appear in aid data

ANALYZING THE IATI DATABASE

We selected the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) database as our primary dataset because it is the most comprehensive open data source on development assistance, aggregating reporting from nearly 2,000 publishers under a single standardized framework, among them OECD DAC member governments, multilateral organizations, and international NGOs. No comparable open dataset exists at this scale. [18]

We analyzed 900,319 activities representing approximately $1.75 trillion in commitments and $1.16 trillion in disbursed spending from 2016 through 2024. These two figures track the same money at different stages and are reported separately throughout.

With no standardized OECD policy marker for Indigenous Peoples in existence, we identified activities that reference Indigenous Peoples through three complementary strategies:

1. Keyword matching across ten database fields in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.
2. Organizational name matching, cross-referencing a verified list of Indigenous Peoples Organizations against implementing organizations reported in IATI.
3. SDG alignment, identifying activities tagged with UN SDG outcomes that directly reference Indigenous Peoples as priority populations (see Annex C: UN SDG Outcomes associated with Indigenous Communities).

Full technical specifications, including database structure and data processing logic, are set out in Annex A: IATI Database Structure & Data Processing. The complete keyword lists and search strategy are detailed in Annex B: Keyword List & Search Strategy.

This approach produces a visibility metric, showing how often Indigenous Peoples are referenced in aid activities, rather than a definitive accounting of what they receive. The resulting figures are a lower bound: programs serving Indigenous communities that do not use the relevant terms in their documentation fall outside it.

18 International Aid Transparency Initiative. https://iatistandard.org/en/

SURVEYING FUNDERS

We received 17 responses from IFIP's 57 member organizations, a 30% response rate, collectively representing approximately $110 million in annual Indigenous grantmaking. We use "Indigenous grantmaking" as funders themselves describe it, meaning grants they classify as supporting Indigenous Peoples. This is a meaningful contribution to the philanthropic ecosystem, and small in scale beside annual bilateral flows. As Section 4 explores, the two operate under different incentives and constraints. The survey ran from December 17, 2025 through February 28, 2026.

Respondents include 10 private foundations, 3 Indigenous-Led Funds, 1 public foundation, 1 regrantor, 1 family foundation, and 1 charitable trust. IFIP membership itself signals commitment to Indigenous rights: these are foundations and funds that have chosen to join a network focused on Indigenous Peoples, so they represent the more engaged segment of the funding ecosystem rather than the broader donor universe. Their responses offer qualitative depth on funder constraints, adaptations, and strategic considerations. We treat them as illustrative insights and as triangulation points against the IATI data and the IPO survey, using counts rather than percentages throughout. Full analysis is in Section 4.

SURVEYING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS (IPOS)

We designed a survey in three languages, English, Spanish, and French, covering organizational demographics, financial impact, operational impact, adaptation strategies, and priorities. The survey ran from December 17, 2025 through January 31, 2026.

We received 128 responses from Indigenous Peoples Organizations across more than 50 countries. Regionally, 38% were from Africa, 37% from Latin America and the Caribbean, 12% from Asia, 9% from North America, and 4% from the Pacific. The vast majority, 89%, are Indigenous women-led or women-focused organizations, and 84% operate on annual budgets under $250,000. Throughout the report, percentages are calculated from those who answered each specific question rather than from all 128 organizations, and we note the relevant denominator accordingly. Because the survey closed at the end of January 2026, findings on financial runway describe organizations' positions at that point.

Full analysis is in Section 5.

VALIDATING FINDINGS THROUGH REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

We presented the preliminary findings in two online consultations on 17 June 2026, scheduled to accommodate timezones across the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Each session opened with a presentation of the draft findings from all three data sources, followed by open discussion structured around four reflection questions: which findings matched participants' experience, what surprised them, what was missing from the report, and what they would recommend to funders. Participants contributed through three channels: spoken discussion, the session chat, and a Padlet board in English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

Forty-three representatives of IPOs, Indigenous-led funds, and regional networks took part across the two sessions, joining from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Asia, and the Pacific. Contributions from these consultations informed the findings and recommendations of this report.

3. What the aid data reveals

NINE YEARS OF AID FLOWS: THE BIGGER PICTURE (2016-2024)

To understand Indigenous Peoples' position in development financing, we first need to see the bigger picture. Over the nine years we analyzed, OECD donors reported $1.75 trillion in aid commitments and $1.16 trillion in actual spending. Activities that reference Indigenous Peoples accounted for 3.73% and 3.65% respectively. The two figures track the same money at different stages, so they are reported separately throughout.

Aid flows grew steadily from 2016 through 2021, then surged 65% in 2022, from approximately $210 billion to $347 billion. A Ukraine-only cut of the IATI data attributes approximately $60 billion of that $137 billion increase to Ukraine, making it the single largest driver.

Commitments referencing Indigenous Peoples grew 17% in absolute terms in 2022, from approximately $11.5 billion to $13.4 billion. They still fell from 5.5% to 3.9% of total OECD commitments, because overall aid grew nearly four times faster. Reporting by Devex and other sources documents explicit reallocation by the two donors who together provide 77.9% of this funding. Norway's proposed reallocation of approximately 4 billion kroner from UN agencies and development programs to in-country Ukrainian refugee costs drew criticism from UN leadership. [19] Sweden diverted an estimated 10.3 billion kronor, approximately 18% of its aid budget, with the largest cuts falling on the Global Fund, Gavi, and the Green Climate Fund. The UK and the Netherlands similarly redirected aid resources. [20]

19 Chadwick, V. (2022, May 24). UN leaders target Norway over proposed budget cuts. Devex. https://www.devex.com/news/un-leaders-target-norway-over-proposed-budget-cuts-103245 20 The ONE Campaign. (2022). Ukraine ODA Tracker. https://data.one.org/data-dives/ukraine-oda-tracker/

The pattern reveals a structural vulnerability. When global crises demand attention and resources, Indigenous priorities become more marginal, because they lack the tracking mechanisms and political visibility to hold their ground.

SCALE AND VISIBILITY (2016–2024)

Against this backdrop of trillions in aid flows, activities that reference Indigenous Peoples constitute a small fraction. Over 2016 to 2024, they accounted for:

- **3.73% of total funding commitments**, approximately $65.4 billion of $1.75 trillion
- **3.65% of actual spending**, approximately $42.1 billion of $1.16 trillion

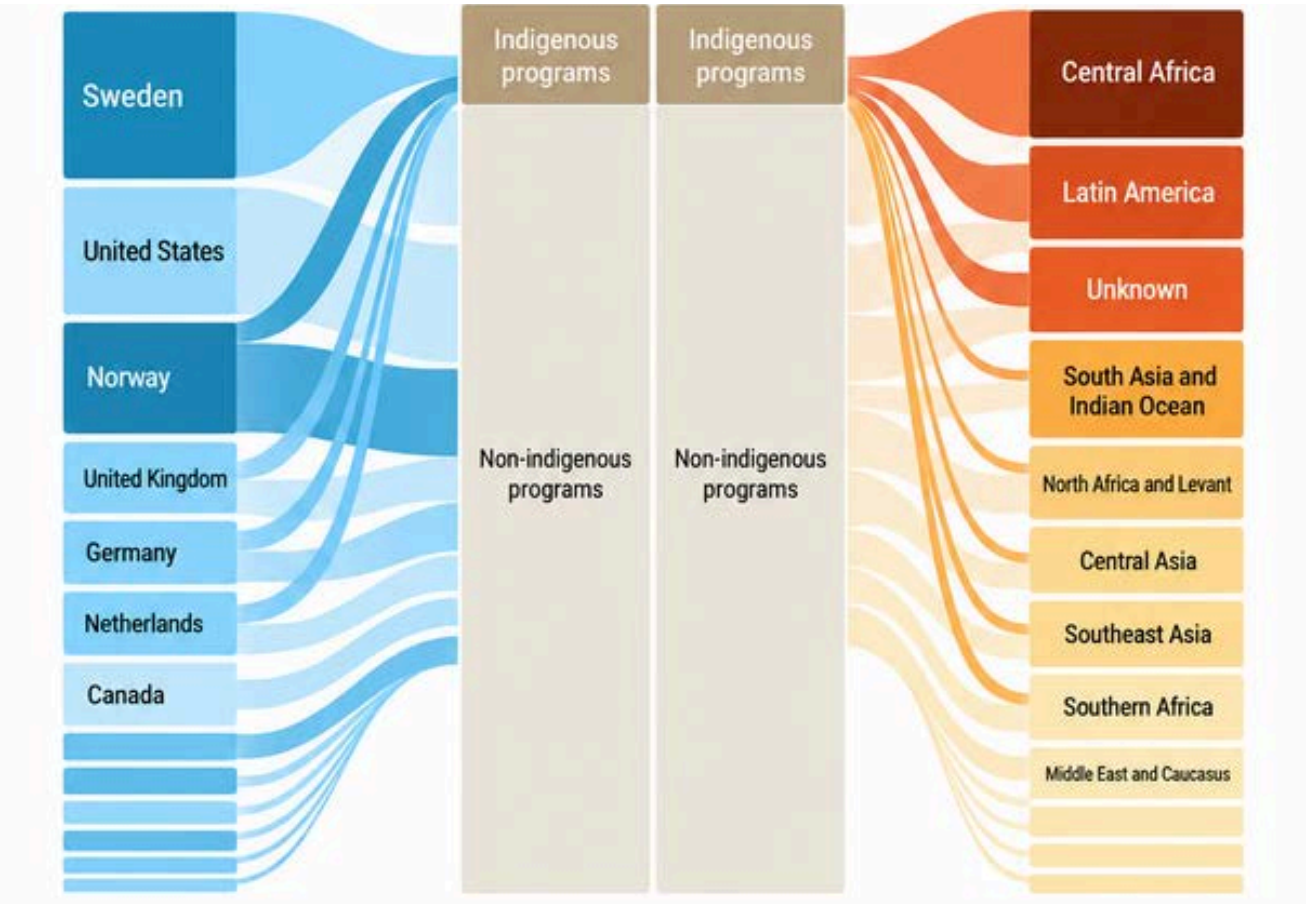
THIS TRANSLATES TO AN AVERAGE OF APPROXIMATELY $7.3 BILLION ANNUALLY IN COMMITMENTS AND $4.7 BILLION IN REPORTED SPENDING.

These figures require careful interpretation. As a lower bound, they understate funding for Indigenous Peoples, since many programs serving Indigenous communities never mention them explicitly. As a visibility metric, they tell us how often Indigenous Peoples appear in aid descriptions, which is a weaker claim than how much reached them or what it achieved.

Even taken at face value, under 4% falls far short of what the evidence demands. Indigenous Peoples comprise 6% of the global population and steward 28% of the world's land surface, and are disproportionately affected by poverty and marginalization. A sub-4% share of aid reflects who holds power in development financing systems rather than any assessment of need or impact.

Figure 2 traces the flow of OECD-funded aid from donor countries through program classifications to recipient regions, for both funding commitments (left panel) and derived spending (right panel). The width of each band represents proportional volume. Programs referencing Indigenous Peoples appear as the narrow upper band in both panels, accounting for less than 4% of total flows across the full period.

FIGURE 2: FUNDING AND SPENDING FLOWS BY PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION, 2016–2024



CONCENTRATION IN TWO BILATERAL DONORS

The degree of donor concentration is exceptional. Sweden and Norway together account for 77.9% of all official development assistance referencing Indigenous Peoples. Sweden alone provides 46.4%, approximately $30.6 billion over nine years, and Norway provides 31.5%, approximately $20.8 billion.

TABLE 1: TOP TEN OECD FUNDERS FOR PROGRAMS REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2016–2024)

RANK	OECD COUNTRY	INDIGENOUS FUNDING (USD)	%
1	Sweden	30,624,842,759.90	46.40%
2	Norway	20,754,212,150.03	31.50%
3	United States	3,734,122,046.58	5.70%
4	United Kingdom	2,955,528,239.77	4.50%
5	Canada	2,297,128,563.49	3.50%
6	Italy	1,157,843,363.51	1.80%
7	Denmark	898,921,492.94	1.40%
8	Germany	862,794,813.49	1.30%
9	Netherlands	643,303,643.83	1.00%
10	Japan	412,222,204.07	0.60%

TABLE 2: TOP TEN OECD FUNDERS FOR ALL OTHER PROGRAMS (2016–2024)

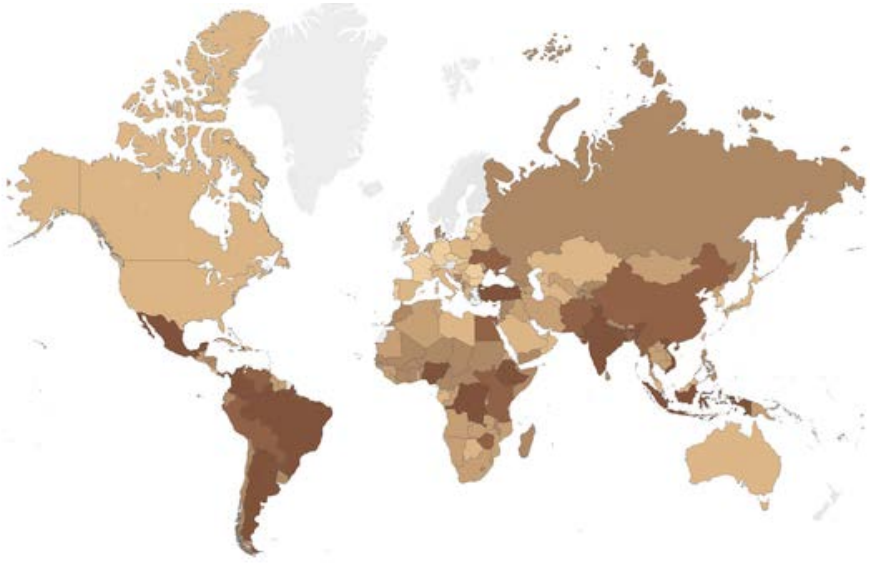
RANK	OECD COUNTRY	INDIGENOUS FUNDING (USD)	%
1	Sweden	488,836,155,973.03	29.00%
2	United States	464,765,088,523.02	27.50%
3	Norway	262,463,254,652.58	15.60%
4	United Kingdom	127,910,998,142.35	7.60%
5	Germany	72,285,496,342.01	4.30%
6	Netherlands	61,791,945,625.70	3.70%
7	Canada	50,993,362,191.39	3.00%
8	Denmark	31,141,657,897.50	1.80%
9	Australia	24,889,578,789.69	1.50%
10	Italy	24,190,590,775.05	1.40%

Sweden tops both tables as the largest donor in each category, and the similarity ends there. Across all other aid, Sweden (29%) and the United States (27.5%) together provide 56.5%, a concentration spread across two of the world's largest economies with substantial and diversified aid budgets. For aid referencing Indigenous Peoples, Sweden (46.4%) and Norway (31.5%) together provide 77.9%, a far higher concentration resting on two Nordic donors whose domestic politics, budget cycles, and strategic priorities can shift independently of broader DAC trends. When they do, there is no comparably sized donor to absorb the gap.

We welcome the commitment of these European countries and encourage them to sustain it. That commitment nonetheless leaves funding for Indigenous Peoples exceptionally exposed to domestic political change in two countries: policy shifts, budget pressures, or electoral outcomes in Stockholm or Oslo can substantially reshape the global picture. While the broader Development Assistance Committee membership does not prioritize Indigenous Peoples systematically, this funding remains precarious.

REGIONAL PATTERNS: WHERE THE FUNDING FLOWS

FIGURE 3: GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPENDING ON PROGRAMS REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, BY COUNTRY (2016–2024)



Click here for the Tableau interactive dashboard

Latin America receives over one-quarter (26.4%) of this spending, with Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico among the largest recipients. The concentration reflects both the significant Indigenous populations in these countries and Latin America's more developed frameworks for Indigenous rights. Of the 22 countries that have ratified ILO Convention 169, roughly two-thirds are in Latin America. As the trend analysis below shows (Figure 4), this nine-year total conceals considerable year-to-year movement.

TABLE 3: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SPENDING ON PROGRAMS REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2016–2024)

Region	%
Latin America	26.40%
Central Africa	20.80%
Southeast Asia	9.50%
North Africa and Levant	6.70%
South Asia and Indian Ocean	6.70%
Central Asia	4.20%
Southern Africa	3.50%
East Asia	2.30%
Caribbean and Atlantic Islands	1.70%
Middle East and Caucasus	1.60%
East Europe and Balkans	0.70%
Oceania and Pacific Islands	0.60%

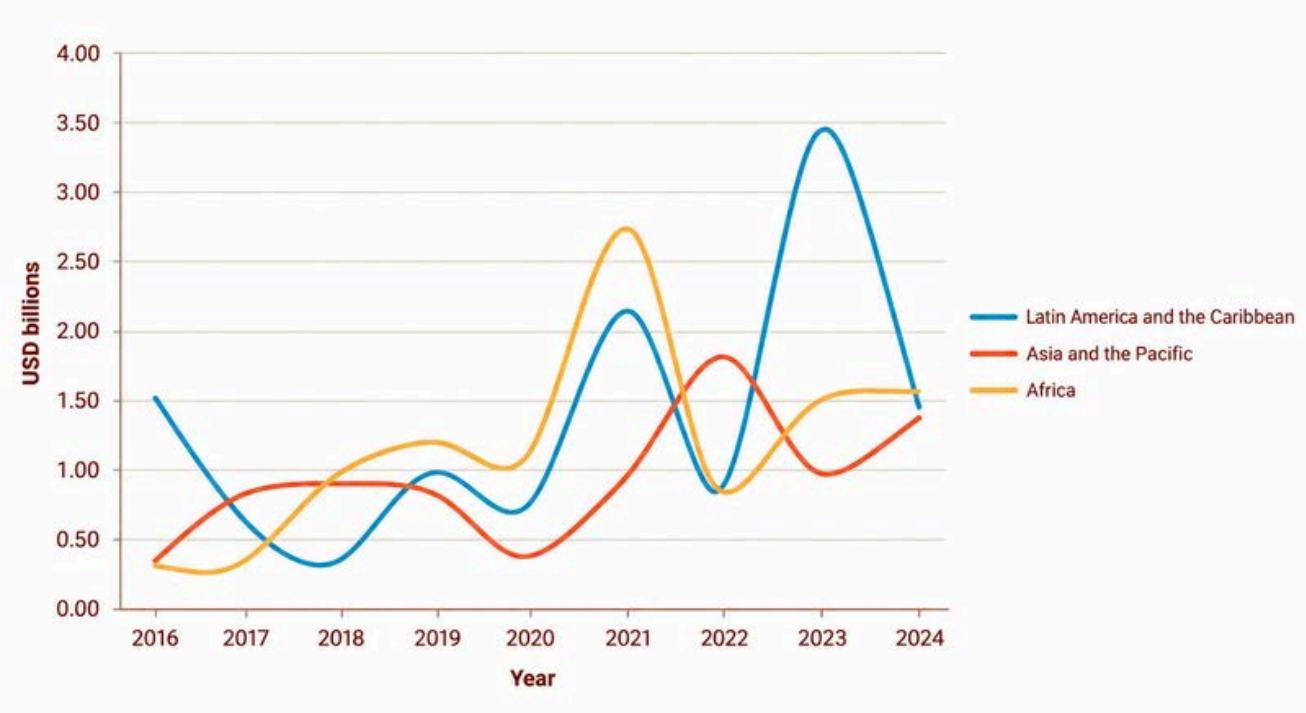
A further 14.9% of this spending is unattributed to any region, a data quality gap that reinforces the case for better tracking infrastructure.

REGIONAL TRENDS OVER TIME

The nine-year totals conceal significant movement. Latin America and the Caribbean is the only one of the three major Global South regions where spending ended the period below where it began, at $1.38 billion in 2024 against $1.52 billion in 2016, a 9% decline. Asia and the Pacific grew more than fourfold over the same period, and Africa more than fivefold.

The final year is still sharper. Spending in Latin America and the Caribbean fell 60% from its 2023 peak of $3.44 billion, while Asia and the Pacific rose 46% and Africa held roughly steady. Year-to-year figures are volatile across all three regions (Figure 4), so no region follows a smooth path, and the regional lead Table 3 shows for Latin America and the Caribbean rests substantially on 2021 and 2023.

FIGURE 4: SPENDING ON ACTIVITIES REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BY REGION, 2016–2024



The picture inverts when we look at aid that makes no reference to Indigenous Peoples. Latin America takes 26.4% of spending that references Indigenous Peoples and 14.8% of everything else. Central Africa runs the other way, at 20.8% and 24.3%. Latin America therefore receives proportionally more programming referencing Indigenous Peoples than its overall aid share would suggest, while Central Africa's substantial aid flows are predominantly channeled through frameworks that make no such reference, despite the region's significant Indigenous and forest-dependent populations.

BOX 1: THE ARGENTINA CASE,
WHEN A REFERENCE TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DOES NOT MEAN INDIGENOUS-LED

Argentina appears among the largest recipients globally of aid referencing Indigenous Peoples. Of the 12 activities our search identified, six are World Bank (IBRD) programs in areas such as youth employment, rural education, food security, and renewable energy. The largest, a Children and Youth Protection Project, accounts for $1.35 billion alone.

A seventh is a joint IBRD/IDA Forests and Community program focused on improving sustainable forest management and expanding market access for Indigenous Peoples and campesinos in the country's Northern Provinces, particularly the Gran Chaco region. These programs mention Indigenous Peoples in their activity descriptions, safeguard policies, or project documentation, which is why our keyword search identified them.

The remaining five activities tell a different story. Two German BMZ programs directly support civic participation of Indigenous and small farmer organizations in the Chaco region. A Netherlands-funded Leading from the South program also reflects more direct engagement with Indigenous-led work. Two EU humanitarian programs round out the list.
This mix illustrates the core limitation of keyword-based visibility metrics. A program that mentions Indigenous Peoples in safeguard language looks identical in IATI data to one led by Indigenous Peoples Organizations. The distinction that matters, who holds decision-making power and whether resources reach IPOs and communities, is invisible in current reporting systems. Resolving it would require manually scrutinizing each identified activity across the full dataset of 900,000 records, which is not feasible. Section 6 returns to what a policy marker would do about this.

TABLE 4: TOP 20 RECIPIENT COUNTRIES FOR ACTIVITIES REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2016–2024)

Country	Indigenous Spending (USD)	% of Global Spend
Argentina	2,642,511,208.35	6.30%
Brazil	1,808,140,515.53	4.30%
Viet Nam	1,759,165,055.25	4.20%
Mexico	1,596,636,354.35	3.80%
Ethiopia	1,583,051,273.37	3.80%
DR Congo	1,319,518,815.54	3.10%
Colombia	1,267,601,468.84	3.00%
India	1,215,186,601.36	2.90%
Nigeria	1,202,836,197.05	2.90%
Turkiye	1,071,962,728.09	2.50%
Indonesia	1,066,817,140.49	2.50%
Panama	1,022,641,088.41	2.40%
China	928,727,102.57	2.20%
Egypt	924,471,080.28	2.20%
Afghanistan	839,420,411.48	2.00%
Zimbabwe	714,231,488.21	1.70%
Myanmar	669,733,594.23	1.60%
Kenya	655,535,385.67	1.60%
Bolivia	524,764,994.12	1.20%
Haiti	445,837,798.39	1.10%

SECTOR BREAKDOWN: WHAT THIS FUNDING SUPPORTS

Among activities that reference Indigenous Peoples, the largest single share of proportional spending, 43.4%, falls under Multisector and Unspecified. This reflects the limits of sector reporting rather than a dominant programmatic focus: for a substantial portion of this funding, the sector cannot be identified.

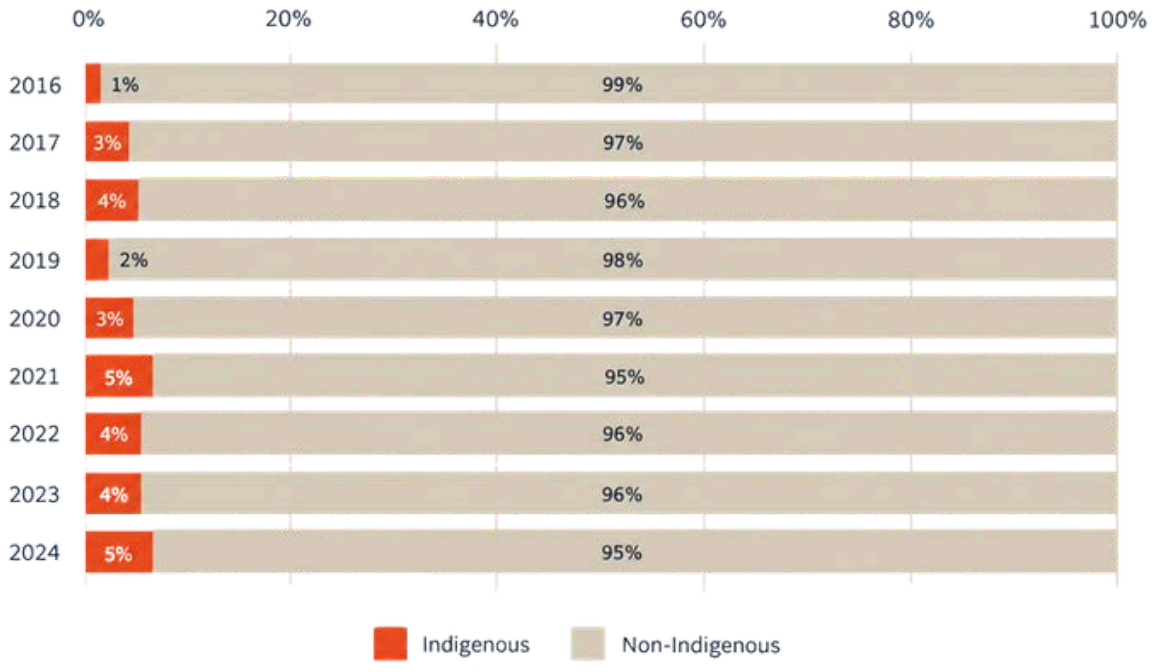
Of the spending attributed to a sector, Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods is the largest at 10.0%, followed by Environment and Natural Resources (7.3%), Human Rights and Protection (7.0%), Education (7.0%), and Health (6.7%). Six further sectors account for the remaining 22.6%, from Humanitarian and Emergency at 4.5% down to Gender and Sexuality at 0.8%.

Gender and Sexuality holds the smallest share of any defined sector, and its share halves between the two ways of counting: gender appears in 1.6% of activities by value and falls to 0.8% once spending is apportioned across the sectors each activity covers. Where gender appears in this data, it is more often a component of programs pursuing other objectives than a purpose in its own right.

SHARE OF TOTAL OECD FUNDING (2016–2024)

Without a dedicated policy marker or a protected allocation, funding referencing Indigenous Peoples has no mechanism to hold its share when overall aid expands sharply, as the 2022 Ukraine surge demonstrated. Figure 5 shows the year-on-year share across the full period, consistently below 4%.

FIGURE 5: SHARE OF OECD DONOR FUNDING ALLOCATED TO PROGRAMS REFERENCING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (2016–2024)



THE LAST-MILE GAP: WHERE IPOS DISAPPEAR FROM DATA

A second structural dynamic operates beneath these headline figures. At the funding stage, 94% of commitments referencing Indigenous Peoples are allocated through direct or bilateral channels, primarily Sweden and Norway. By the implementation stage, 83.5% of spending is executed via multilateral organizations, $35.2 billion against $7.0 billion delivered through direct channels. Money committed bilaterally passes to multilateral institutions, which then implement programs, often without sub-reporting on what reaches Indigenous-governed organizations or communities.

Reporting quality follows the same gradient. OECD donor governments report thoroughly on their allocations, and major multilateral institutions report their own expenditures relatively well. Reporting drops sharply at the point where these organizations transfer funds onward to recipient country governments, national NGOs, or community-based organizations.

This is the last-mile problem. We can see where donors intend money to go and we can track major intermediary flows. Visibility into implementation at the community level, where IPOs operate, is minimal. We cannot determine what fraction of the approximately $4.7 billion in annual reported spending reaches organizations like the 128 we surveyed, whose work sits at exactly the point where the data goes dark.

Section 4 turns to the philanthropic layer.

4. Philanthropic funding: Patterns and constraints

The 17 IFIP member funders we surveyed, a 30% response rate from the 57-member network, sit at the engaged end of philanthropy. The constraints and gaps they describe are therefore particularly significant: if even these dedicated funders struggle to respond adequately to the crisis organizations report, the barriers are systemic rather than a matter of individual institutional will.

TABLE 5: FUNDERS' SURVEY, WHO RESPONDED AND WHAT THEY FUND

Who responded	Their focus on indigenous issues
10 private foundations 3 Indigenous-Led Funds 1 public foundation 1 regrantor 1 family foundation 1 charitable trust	6 funders: primary focus (35.3%) 8 funders: significant part of portfolio (47.1%) 3 funders: emerging focus (17.6%) Together: approximately $110M in annual Indigenous grantmaking

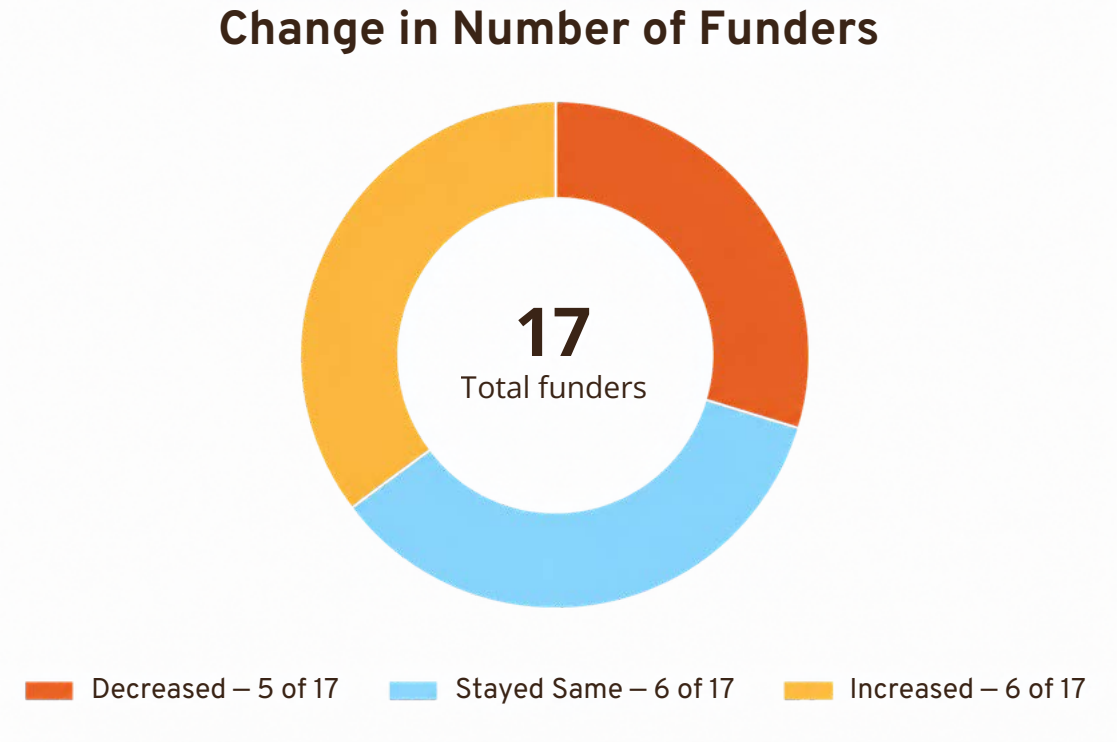
What the data shows:

- **Funding trajectories diverged.** 6 funders increased their Indigenous grantmaking between 2024 and 2025, 6 held steady, and 5 decreased.
- **Emergency funding remains rare.** Only 3 of 17 funders provide rapid-response mechanisms.
- **Flexible modalities are growing.** 7 funders increased multi-year grants and 7 increased core or unrestricted support.
- **Thematic priorities shifted unevenly.** Climate justice saw the most growth, with 5 of 14 active funders increasing support, while land rights and women's rights each saw decreases among 2 funders.
- **Appetite for collective advocacy is limited.** Only 3 of 17 funders expressed interest in coordinated advocacy for ODA restoration, despite widespread awareness of the contraction affecting IPOs.

FUNDING TRAJECTORIES AND STRUCTURAL DEPENDENCIES

Sixteen of 17 funders provided complete funding data for 2024 and 2025, collectively reporting approximately $110 million in Indigenous grantmaking for 2024 and approximately $120 million for 2025. One funder's strategic decision to grow its Indigenous grantmaking from $14 million to $30 million accounts for most of that increase. Excluding it, the remaining 15 showed a small net decrease in aggregate.

FIGURE 6: FUNDING DIRECTION AMONG 17 IFIP MEMBER FUNDERS, 2024–2025



A near-equal three-way split within a self-selected group of committed funders indicates that even at the most engaged end of the philanthropic ecosystem, funding for Indigenous Peoples is neither growing nor consistently holding its ground.

The structural dependencies behind this volatility mirror the concentration risks documented in the IATI analysis. Six of the 17 respondents reported being themselves significantly or partially affected by funding reductions, evidence that organizations committed to Indigenous rights operate within precarious systems of their own:

> *The donor who had made up approximately 70% of our resources made surprising and drastic changes."*

> *Our overall budget decreased. We are funded by an operating business which had lower income than the year prior."*

> *Due to reduced funding for our organization/more funders leaning towards other programs, we have had to pause our Indigenous-led fund."*

Just as Sweden and Norway provide 77.9% of ODA referencing Indigenous Peoples, individual philanthropic organizations can depend catastrophically on single donors. When alignment shifts for political, economic, or strategic reasons, funding can evaporate regardless of program quality or community need. The same concentration risk operates at sector level: US philanthropy is by far the largest contributor to the global Indigenous Peoples movement, which exposes Indigenous organizations to shifts in that single sector, as the current period demonstrates.

EMERGENCY FUNDING: LIMITED CAPACITY, HIGH DEMAND

Twelve of 17 funders report no change in this area between 2024 and 2025, and for most of them no change means continued absence.

The gap matters in context. As Section 5 documents, IPOs consistently identify emergency and rapid-response funding as among their most pressing unmet needs, particularly in contexts of sudden criminalization, climate disaster, or political repression. The funders most committed to Indigenous rights are, by and large, not structured to respond when crises emerge.

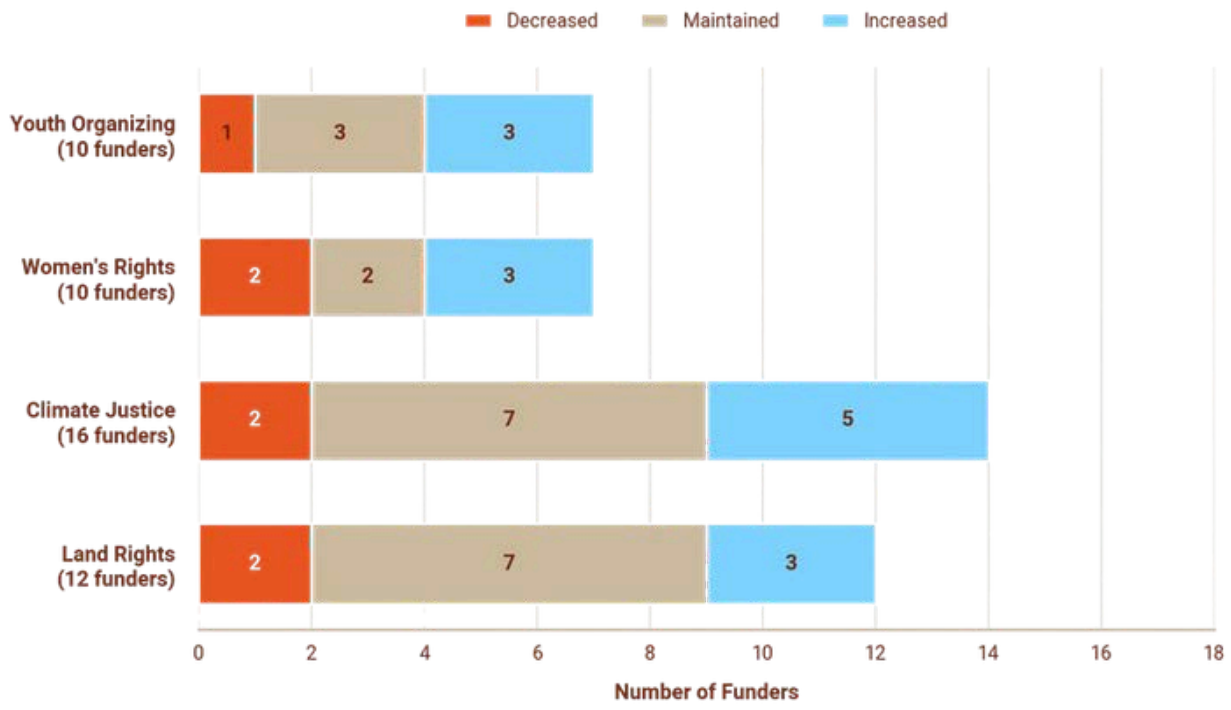
The three funders who do provide emergency mechanisms offer a reference point for what is possible within philanthropic structures. Expanding this capacity, through individual funder mechanisms or a collaborative emergency fund, is among the clearest areas where the philanthropic sector could differentiate its role from bilateral ODA.

THEMATIC PRIORITIES AND GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION

Thematic funding patterns varied considerably by issue area among the 17 surveyed funders. Denominators differ throughout, since not all funders are active across all themes.

Climate justice saw the strongest growth: 5 of the 14 funders active in this area increased their support between 2024 and 2025, with 7 maintaining and 2 decreasing. Land rights and women's rights each saw 2 funders decrease support while others maintained or increased. Youth organizing saw 1 decrease against 3 increases among the 10 funders engaged in this area.

FIGURE 7: FUNDING CHANGES BY THEMATIC AREA, 2024–2025



Most funders maintained or grew their thematic commitments. The decreases matter nonetheless, small in number though they are, because they fall in areas already under-resourced. As Section 5 shows, IPOs report cuts in land rights, women's rights, and youth organizing as among their most acutely felt funding losses. The overlap between funder decreases and IPO-reported cuts is suggestive, and it falls well short of explaining the scale of contraction IPOs describe. The more likely source of significant cuts is bilateral ODA and philanthropic funding from outside this group, sources dominant in overall funding volume.

Geographically, the surveyed funders' grantmaking reflects regional concentrations broadly consistent with the IATI findings in Section 3, with Latin America and the Pacific receiving the largest shares. South and Southeast Asia and parts of Africa remain inadequately served by both bilateral and philanthropic sources.

ADAPTIVE PRACTICE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION GAPS

Several surveyed funders have made meaningful adjustments to how they work despite the funding pressures documented above. The multi-year and core support increases noted above directly address IPOs' need for planning security and reduced administrative burden. Nine are offering more flexible funding overall, eight are convening grantees to share strategies, and twelve are collaborating with other funders. Five have extended grant periods and six have increased their Indigenous grantmaking volume. These responses reflect a segment of the philanthropic ecosystem actively adapting its practice in response to IPO feedback and a deteriorating external environment.

The more significant gap lies in collective action. Coordinated advocacy for ODA restoration was the lowest-ranked collaboration priority in the survey. IPOs consistently identify bilateral ODA cuts, particularly the withdrawal of USAID funding, as their most acute funding crisis. The funders best positioned to understand and amplify that case are, by and large, not oriented toward making it.

CAPACITY, GOVERNANCE, AND WHO DEFINES READINESS

Two funders explicitly described difficulty identifying Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs) "with appropriate organizational capacity for absorbing larger grants (>$150,000)," particularly outside North America. One elaborated:

"Our ability to find new Indigenous-led organizations whose work/mission aligns with our strategies and who are able to absorb grants of the size we make will be a critical factor in our capacity to move money to Indigenous grants in the next 2 years."

This warrants examination. When 84% of surveyed IPOs operate on budgets under $250,000 and funders prefer fewer, larger grants, a structural mismatch emerges. A regrantor identified the deeper issue:

"As an intermediary, we struggle to demonstrate to funders that First Nations priorities don't clearly align to western priorities or solutions."

Where capacity is defined by Western accounting standards and professionalized management structures, IPOs operating according to their own governance systems may be assessed as deficient, even where they have governed resources and territories successfully for generations. This assessment risks becoming self-fulfilling: funders who cannot verify capacity through their existing frameworks default to familiar non-Indigenous intermediaries, and the capacity strengthening that follows accrues to those intermediaries rather than to Indigenous organizations. Partnering instead with Indigenous intermediaries, Indigenous-Led Funds, and regional and global Indigenous networks would begin to address this.

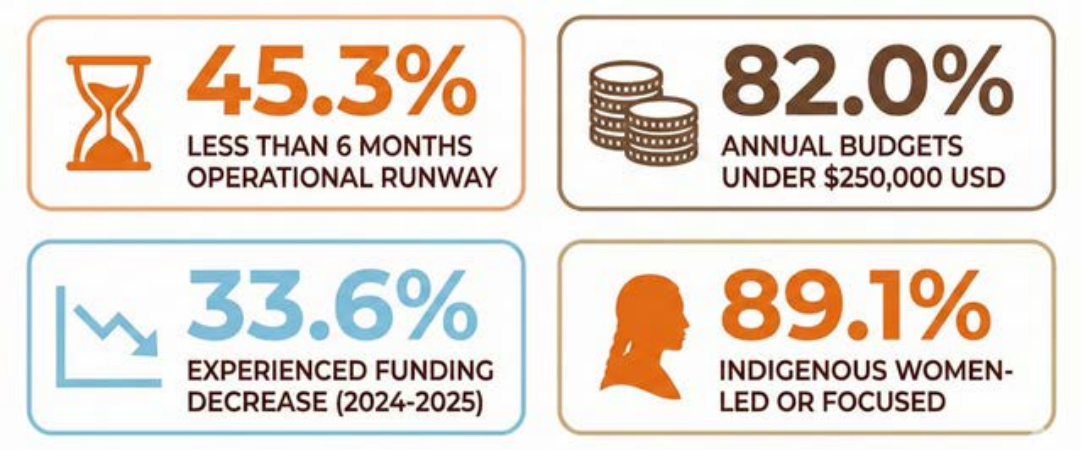
Section 5 examines what organizations experience at the implementation level, where these funding patterns translate into operational realities.

5. What IPOs experience on the ground

Sections 3 and 4 documented the funding landscape: approximately $4.7 billion in annual reported spending on activities referencing Indigenous Peoples, concentrated in two donors, alongside approximately $110 million from the 17 IFIP members we surveyed. This section examines what organizations experience at the implementation level, where that landscape translates into operational reality for the small, grassroots, Indigenous women-led or women-focused organizations working directly with communities.

The survey ran from December 17, 2025 to January 31, 2026, so the findings below describe organizations' positions at that point.

FIGURE 8: THE GROUND REALITY: FUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR IPOS



ONE-THIRD LOST FUNDING

When we asked organizations whether their funding increased, decreased, or stayed the same between 2024 and 2025, decreases outnumbered increases nearly two to one. Among those who could assess their funding trajectory:

- 21% reported significant decreases, more than 25%
- 13% reported moderate decreases, 10% to 25%
- **34% experienced funding decreases in total**

Only 18% reported increases, 6% significant and 13% moderate.

The funding crisis varies substantially by region. Organizations in North America, home to major donor countries, face the highest rate of funding cuts (45.5%), followed by Africa (38.8%). Latin America and the Caribbean report a lower rate of organizational funding decreases (27.9%) while receiving 26.4% of global spending on activities referencing Indigenous Peoples. A lower rate of reported decrease may reflect a lower starting point. As Section 3 documents, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only major Global South region where spending referencing Indigenous Peoples declined across the period, and it fell 60% in 2024. Organizations that had already absorbed reductions had less left to lose. Our survey covered 2024 and 2025 while the aid data ends in 2024, so the two cannot be linked directly, and the pattern is consistent with that reading without confirming it.

NEARLY HALF HAD SIX MONTHS OF RUNWAY OR LESS

We asked organizations how many months they could continue operating at current spending levels with existing funding commitments:

- 45% (58 organizations) reported six months or less without securing additional funding: 30% (38 organizations) at three to six months, and 16% (20 organizations) at under three months
- 11% (15 organizations) reported six to twelve months
- 8% (10 organizations) reported twelve to twenty-four months
- 8% (10 organizations) reported more than twenty-four months

FIGURE 9: IPO FINANCIAL RUNWAY

Organizational size shapes survival prospects. Small organizations with 6 to 20 paid staff, the typical grassroots Indigenous Peoples Organization, are the most exposed: 79% reported less than six months of operational runway. Organizations with budgets between $50,000 and $100,000 are similarly precarious, with 72% reporting less than six months. These mid-sized organizations are too large to sustain themselves through volunteer labor and too small to weather funding interruptions.

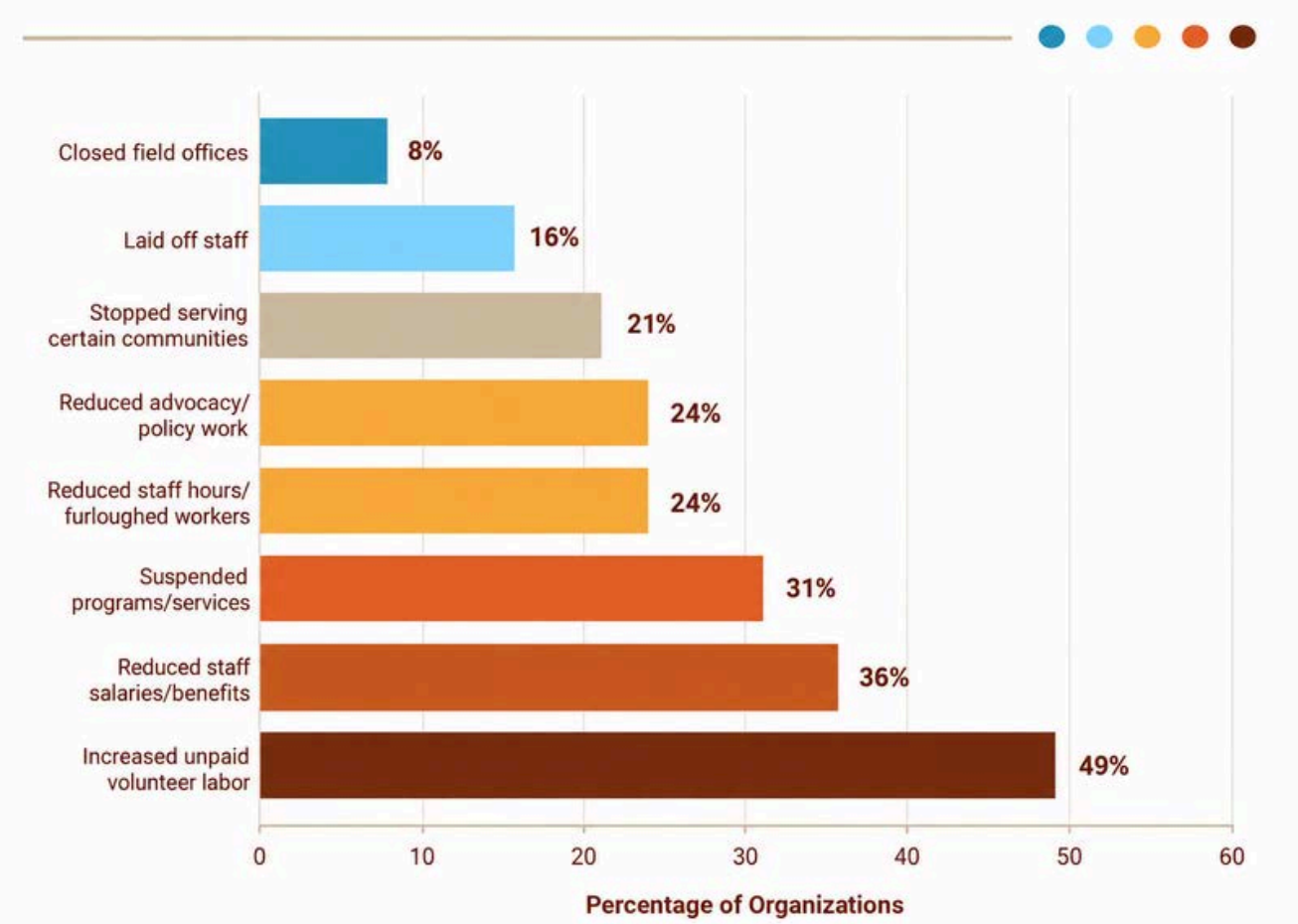
These figures carry weight given that 84% of responding organizations operate on annual budgets under $250,000, and 41% on budgets under $50,000. At that scale, six months of runway is a thin margin.

CRISIS RESPONSE: 86% TOOK AT LEAST ONE CRISIS ACTION TO SURVIVE

We asked what actions organizations had taken in response to funding constraints. Among the 90 organizations who answered, 77 (86%) reported taking at least one.

The most common response, reported by 49%, was increasing reliance on volunteer or unpaid labor. Given that 89% of responding organizations are Indigenous women-led or women-focused, and that many already operate on minimal budgets, this pattern carries particular implications for who bears the cost of organizational survival. Other crisis actions included:

- 36% reduced staff salaries or benefits
- 31% suspend programs or services
- 24% reduced staff hours or furloughed workers
- 24% reduced advocacy or policy work
- 21% stopped serving certain communities or regions
- 16% laid off staff
- 8% closed field offices or community locations



INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND YOUTH BEAR THE DEEPEST CUTS

We asked which populations were most affected when organizations had to reduce services. Among the 90 organizations that answered:

- 91% identified Indigenous women
- 70% identified Indigenous youth under 25
- 61% identified Indigenous children
- 50% identified Indigenous Peoples with disabilities
- 48% identified Elders and knowledge holders
- 36% identified remote or isolated communities

FIGURE 11: WHO ABSORBS THE COST?

The 91% figure carries added weight because 89% of responding organizations are themselves Indigenous women-led or women-focused. The organizations working on issues affecting Indigenous women identify Indigenous women as those who lose most when their own funding contracts.

THE FUNDING-PRIORITY DISCONNECT

A clear pattern emerges when we compare what organizations identify as priorities with what has been cut.

We asked organizations to select their top three priority work areas. Among the 84 organizations that responded, 65% prioritized women's rights and gender justice, 49% land rights and territorial defense, 46% climate justice and environmental protection, and 38% food sovereignty and traditional livelihoods.

We separately asked which program areas had been affected by funding changes. Among the 90 organizations that responded, 69% reported cuts to women's rights programming, 58% to land rights work, 54% to food sovereignty programs, 51% to youth programs, 51% to health and wellness, and 47% to climate justice work.

The two groups of respondents overlap without being identical, and the pattern across both is clear: the areas organizations identify as most urgent are the same areas experiencing the deepest cuts.

Section 3 documented the counterpart in the aid data, where Gender and Sexuality holds the smallest share of any defined sector at 0.8% of proportional spending.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT: US POLICY SHIFTS, NGO RESTRICTIONS, AND ANTI-RIGHTS AGENDAS

AAmong 88 respondents, 58% reported being affected by political changes in donor countries. Some described the 2022 Ukraine-related reallocations analyzed in Section 3, and most cited more recent shifts in 2024 and 2025.

Forty-six organizations provided detailed responses. Analysis of these descriptions reveals consistent patterns.

US policy changes and USAID funding were the most frequently mentioned factors, appearing in 28% to 30% of descriptions. Organizations from multiple regions described systematic policy shifts affecting US development assistance, several of them describing explicit targeting of rights-based work:

From Nigeria: *"Based on certain anti right based policies, funds from the USA directly or indirectly are restricted from being used to implement those right programs. This approach has affected [our] work."*

From Kenya: *"As a grassroots organization focusing on Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and Indigenous Rights, we are particularly vulnerable to the rise of 'anti-rights' narratives and restrictive foreign policies."*

From DRC: *"UNDP who gave funds in 2022/2023 June stopped due to changes"*

From India: *"Increased compliance requirements, reduced flexibility in funding, and a preference for short-term, project-based grants have made it more difficult for Indigenous-led grassroots organizations to access and sustain funding, particularly for land rights, Indigenous governance, and language revitalization initiatives."*

Domestic NGO restriction laws were the second most common factor, mentioned in about 20% of descriptions. Organizations in Latin America in particular described new laws restricting civil society:

"El gobierno actual, congeló las cuentas bancarias de las organizaciones indígenas y cuentas personales de los líderes" [The current government froze bank accounts of Indigenous Peoples Organizations and leaders' personal accounts]

"La llamada 'Ley anti-ONG, orientada a limitar la organización y expresión de la sociedad civil" [The so-called 'anti-NGO law' aimed at limiting civil society organization and expression]

"Nueva ley que regula a las ONG... nos coloca en un limbo jurídico, financiero y contable de alto riesgo" [New law regulating NGOs places us in a legal, financial and accounting limbo of high risk]

Donor priority shifts away from rights-based work appeared in about 17% of descriptions:

"Shifting donor priorities and political changes in donor countries that have reduced Official Development Assistance and limited support for rights-based and advocacy-focused work"

"L'orientation politique de certains bailleurs vers des priorités géopolitiques et sécuritaires a réduit les fonds alloués aux organizations locales travaillant sur l'autonomisation, l'éducation, la santé reproductive et la justice de genre" [funders' political orientation toward geopolitical and security priorities reduced funds to local organizations working on empowerment, education, reproductive health and gender justice]

Anti-rights policies targeting gender equality and reproductive health work were mentioned by about 9% of organizations, in several cases alongside the US policy changes described above.

The operational consequences were concrete: delayed disbursements, increased compliance requirements, reduced planning horizons, and less funding for the work Indigenous communities identify as urgent.

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS NEED FROM FUNDERS

We asked about the importance of direct funding, meaning resources going to Indigenous Peoples Organizations rather than through intermediaries. The response was nearly unanimous. Among the 83 organizations that answered, 37% rated direct funding as essential and 57% as very important, a combined 94%.

In open-ended responses, 70 organizations described their needs. The most common themes were:

- Flexible or unrestricted funding (16%)
- Capacity building and technical support (13%)
- Direct funding with no intermediaries (10%)
- Emergency or rapid response grants (10%)
- Core organizational or operational funding (9%)
- Long-term or multi-year commitments (7%)

Organizations consistently called for trust, operational funding, multi-year commitments, and direct resourcing:

"We most urgently need flexible, long-term, and direct funding that supports core organizational costs"

"[For] operating funding, we working as volunteers"

"Confianza hacia las organizaciones pequeñas conformadas por pueblos indígenas" [Trust toward small Indigenous Peoples Organizations]

6. What this means: Structural barriers and rights violations

THE ABSENCE OF TRACKING LIMITS TRANSPARENCY AND LEARNING

As Section 1 notes, the OECD Development Assistance Committee tracks cross-cutting priorities through policy markers. The mechanism is worth setting out in detail, because the design of a marker determines what it can reveal. A policy marker is a standardized tag that donors apply when reporting their aid activities, indicating whether a project addresses a specific objective, and how central that objective is to the project's design.

For example, when reporting to the OECD, donors mark whether gender equality is:

- **Principal** (the main objective, fundamental to the project's design)
- **Significant** (an important objective, but not the primary reason for the project)
- **Not targeted** (the project was screened but doesn't specifically target this objective)

This simple three-point scale enables systematic tracking across all donor activities, making it possible to see trends over time, identify gaps, and assess whether international commitments translate into resources.

As Section 1 notes, the OECD has established markers for gender, climate, and biodiversity, each following the same progression from normative framework to political commitment to data infrastructure. For Indigenous Peoples that progression stalled after UNDRIP in 2007. What remains absent is the policy marker that would enable donors, Indigenous Peoples, and development practitioners to learn what works, share promising practices, and improve outcomes.
What standardized tracking would enable:

Transparency, baseline, and allocation: It is currently impossible to establish a baseline for funding to Indigenous Peoples or to track trends over time. A standardized marker would make visible how much development cooperation involves Indigenous Peoples, in which regions, and through which channels, giving donors a basis for assessing whether their investments reach Indigenous governance structures or are filtered through multiple intermediaries, and for identifying geographic and thematic gaps.

Learning and adaptation: With systematic data, the development community could identify which funding modalities lead to better outcomes, which intermediary structures work effectively, and which approaches genuinely support Indigenous self-determination versus those that simply mention Indigenous Peoples in project documents. Box 1 in Section 3 shows what this costs in practice: a $1.35 billion World Bank program that mentions Indigenous Peoples in its safeguard documentation is indistinguishable, in the data, from a grant governed by an IPO.

Accountability to commitments: When donors endorse UNDRIP, the Paris Agreement, or the Kunming-Montreal Framework, standardized tracking provides a mechanism to verify whether those commitments translate to resources, and to adjust course when they don't. This benefits both donors (who want to ensure their resources align with stated priorities) and Indigenous Peoples (who can engage in informed dialogue about resource flows).

The technical capacity exists, and current approaches fall short of what is needed: The OECD is exploring how biodiversity-related markers might capture Indigenous Peoples and local communities, particularly for reporting on the Kunming-Montreal Framework's Target 19. However, this biodiversity-focused approach risks limiting visibility to environmental sectors, missing critical flows for health, education, governance, and other rights.

A dedicated policy marker for Indigenous Peoples, as the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has recommended in both 2023 and 2024, would need to:

- **Apply across all sectors** (not just biodiversity/climate), capturing funding for health, education, governance, lands, culture, and other rights
- **Include sub-indicators** distinguishing safeguard compliance from support for Indigenous self-determination, and funding reaching Indigenous-governed organizations from funding implemented by others with the intention of benefiting Indigenous Peoples
- **Align with UNDRIP** rather than treating Indigenous Peoples solely as environmental actors

The precedent exists: the gender marker includes sub-categories distinguishing whether gender equality is the principal or significant objective. Such a marker could similarly distinguish principal versus significant support, while adding the critical dimension of Indigenous governance—the element most fundamental to self-determination yet entirely invisible in current data.

The organizations we surveyed—94% of whom rated direct funding as essential or very important—deserve development systems that can track whether resources reach Indigenous governance and what difference those resources make.

THE AID ARCHITECTURE AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

OECD donors have endorsed the principles in UNDRIP, including Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination and to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for developments affecting their territories. Yet the development financing system operates in ways that work against these commitments.

Funding is concentrated in two donors. As documented in Section 3, Sweden and Norway provide 77.9% of ODA referencing Indigenous Peoples. Section 4 illustrates how similar concentration risk operates in philanthropy: one surveyed funder lost 70% of its funding base when its primary donor shifted political support. This structural fragility means funding to Indigenous Peoples can contract sharply during political transitions regardless of program quality or community need.

The system lacks mechanisms to ensure Indigenous Peoples determine their own development priorities. Priorities are typically set by donor agencies, filtered through the multilateral organizations that execute 83.5% of this spending (Section 3), and implemented through programs designed by non-Indigenous actors. As documented in Section 5, our survey data confirms the human consequences: organizations report that political changes, donor priority shifts, and anti-rights policies are systematically reducing funding for rights-based work, with the deepest cuts falling on the areas most central to Indigenous self-determination: women's rights, land rights, and climate justice.

THE COMPOUNDED CRISIS FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN

"The drop in funding has led to the suspension or reduction of several essential activities, in particular the psychosocial support of women survivors of gender-based violence, economic empowerment training, and local community monitoring." - Burundi

"We lack stable work and the volunteer work team is made up of only three women. Those of us who seek projects for access to rights work towards annual objectives... and we depend on the approval of projects [to survive]." - Mexico

The survey data reveals a compounding crisis for Indigenous women. Women-led organizations, 89% of respondents, are experiencing both the general funding contraction and specific cuts to women's rights programming: 69% report reductions in this area, and when forced to reduce services, 91% identify Indigenous women as most affected.

As documented in Section 5, organizations explicitly described anti-rights policies and restrictions on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming as drivers of cuts. The 49% of organizations that report increased reliance on unpaid volunteer labor further illustrate how funding shortfalls extract uncompensated work from already-marginalized women.

WITHOUT MEASUREMENT, COMMITMENTS ARE UNVERIFIABLE

The sub-4% aid share documented in Section 3 raises fundamental questions of adequacy, and cannot answer them, because systematic tracking does not exist. Without a baseline, it is impossible to assess whether current funding levels are sufficient relative to Indigenous Peoples' needs, their 6% population share, or their recognized role in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.

Without tracking, donors cannot be held accountable. When donors commit to Indigenous rights in international forums, there is no systematic mechanism to verify whether those commitments translate to resources, or to which organizations those resources ultimately flow.

The distinction between aid designed by outside actors with the intention of benefiting Indigenous Peoples and aid governed by Indigenous Peoples themselves is fundamental to self-determination, and the data to measure it does not exist. The funder survey reinforces this point: even funders increasing core and unrestricted support cannot track what percentage reaches Indigenous-governed organizations versus non-Indigenous intermediaries.

As discussed in Section 4, the "capacity" framing that some funders use to explain limited direct funding warrants scrutiny. When organizational capacity is assessed against Western accounting standards and professionalized management structures, IPOs operating according to their own governance systems may appear deficient, even as they manage territories and sustain communities. Funders have responded to that apparent gap by investing in the capacity of non-Indigenous organizations to work with Indigenous Peoples. The alternative pathway is to invest in the infrastructure and ecosystem of Indigenous organizations themselves, so that capacity accrues where the work is done. However, without tracking mechanisms that disaggregate funding by recipient type and governance structure, this assessment framework can become self-reinforcing: funders who cannot verify capacity through existing tools default to familiar intermediaries, perpetuating the invisibility the data cannot measure.

The organizations we surveyed were clear: they want direct funding and they are prepared to be accountable for it. Ninety-four percent rated direct funding as essential or very important. The evidence base for transforming development financing toward genuine support for Indigenous self-determination exists. The mechanisms for doing so are known. What this research documents is the scale of the gap between commitment and practice.

7. Conclusion

Indigenous Peoples are rights-holders, governance authorities, and self-determining nations. Their leadership extends across land stewardship, climate and biodiversity policy, public health, education, language revitalization, legal reform, and the defense of human rights. International policy frameworks recognize this, among them UNDRIP, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Framework, and CEDAW General Recommendation 39. Indigenous women lead many of the organizations documented in this report and are central actors across movements: sustaining community governance at the local level, shaping national policy reform, and negotiating at the UNFCCC, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Their leadership is structural, sustained, and consequential. Yet the development financing system has not built the architecture to track, support, or sustain it.

This research set out to answer three questions: how visible Indigenous Peoples are in OECD aid data and what scale of funding that visibility represents, through what channels it flows, and what structural barriers prevent adequate resourcing. The answers reveal a system that consistently falls short of its stated commitments. Activities that reference Indigenous Peoples account for 3.7% of OECD aid commitments, despite Indigenous Peoples comprising over 6% of the global population and holding recognized rights across governance, lands, education, health, culture, and the environment. That funding largely bypasses IPOs, routed instead through multilateral institutions and international NGOs, and it cannot be systematically tracked because no monitoring mechanism exists.

The pattern is not confined to official development assistance. IFIP's 2024 global analysis of philanthropic giving, drawing on Candid data for 2016 to 2020, found that 0.6% of global giving ($4.5 billion) was identified as benefiting Indigenous Peoples, and that Indigenous governments, autonomous regions and Indigenous Peoples Organizations received $1.5 billion of that, or 0.3% of global giving. Two funding systems with different mandates, regulatory environments and decision-making structures produce the same result: resources allocated in the name of Indigenous Peoples reach Indigenous organizations only after passing through non-Indigenous hands, and neither system can account for how much arrives.

At the organizational level, the consequences are tangible. One-third of surveyed IPOs lost funding between 2024 and 2025. Nearly half reported six months of operational runway or less. The programs being cut, among them women's rights, land rights, and climate justice, are the same areas these organizations identify as most urgent. The burden of absorbing funding shortfalls falls disproportionately on Indigenous women, who lead 89% of the surveyed organizations and are identified by 91% as the population most affected when services are reduced. The same women who lead policy negotiations at the international level are now sustaining their organizations through unpaid labor. Funders, even committed ones, face their own constraints: concentration risks, limited emergency response capacity, and geographic patterns that leave some regions with minimal philanthropic backup when bilateral ODA contracts.

The recommendations in Section 8 are technically feasible and politically urgent. The OECD has established policy markers for other cross-cutting priorities where the commitment existed, among them gender, climate, and biodiversity. Direct funding mechanisms can be designed around Indigenous governance, and the ecosystem of Indigenous organizations, including Indigenous-Led Funds, already demonstrates how. Emergency protocols can be created before more organizations close. Each of these responds to what Indigenous Peoples Organizations have consistently articulated as necessary for genuine self-determination.

The 45% of organizations that reported six months of runway or less have now passed that point. Whether they secured further funding is beyond what this research can tell us. The tools exist, the evidence exists, and the funding decisions taken in the coming months will determine whether the next cohort follows them.

This report marks a step forward in IFIP's commitment to developing dedicated, Indigenous-led and community-centered research. By anchoring these findings, drawn from macro-level international aid data and from surveys of our members and of Indigenous Peoples Organizations, in the **5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy**, we hope to offer the global funding community a clear, collaborative roadmap for the future. This evidence is an invitation to deepen our shared practice, strengthen values-based partnerships, and work together toward a philanthropic ecosystem that honors and sustains Indigenous Peoples' leadership.

IFIP invites funders to act collectively and reach out to us: to address the asymmetry of power, mobilize resources, and build the partnerships needed to advance the rights, stewardship, and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands, waters, and territories worldwide.

8. Recommendations

This research reveals two parallel crises: systemic invisibility in aid data and acute financial distress for Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs). Our recommendations address both. Recommendation 1 tackles the data and accountability infrastructure that makes Indigenous Peoples structurally invisible in aid systems. Recommendations 2 to 8 address the resource, structural, and political conditions driving organizational crisis on the ground.

These recommendations are organized around IFIP's 5Rs of Indigenous Philanthropy: Respect, Relationships, Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Redistribution. They focus on high-impact changes directly supported by our findings.

Funders looking to put these principles into practice can draw on three toolkits IFIP has recently developed: the Rooted in Trust: A Funder's Toolkit for Strengthening Indigenous-Led Funds, the Essential Principles of Partnering and Funding Indigenous Women's Organizations, and the 20 Recommendations for Future Action.

Create accountability infrastructure

1. Advocate for the establishment of an OECD DAC policy marker for Indigenous Peoples

Advocate for a mandatory policy marker that:

- Uses a three-point scale (principal/significant/not targeted) aligned with existing OECD methodology
- Includes mandatory sub-indicators for: (a) whether funding reaches Indigenous Peoples Organizations, and (b) whether FPIC was obtained
- Applies across all sectors, including health, gender, education, governance, lands, culture, and rights, complementing the OECD's current biodiversity-focused tracking initiatives while extending beyond them. Indigenous Peoples are not only environmental actors: a marker limited to biodiversity would reproduce the same invisibility this report documents across the majority of aid flows
- Builds on the technical groundwork already underway in OECD's biodiversity marker revision, while addressing UNPFII's 2023-2024 recommendations for dedicated Indigenous tracking

The precedent is established: gender marker (2016), climate markers (1990s), biodiversity marker (1998, revised 2021). The normative framework exists (UNDRIP, 2007). What remains is political commitment.

Protect rights-based work

2. Shield funding for Indigenous Peoples from crisis displacement

Establish ring-fenced allocations or non-displacement floors to prevent this funding from being proportionally eroded when global crises trigger aid surges. The 2022 Ukraine emergency demonstrated the vulnerability clearly: when total OECD commitments surged 65%, commitments referencing Indigenous Peoples dropped from 5.5% to 3.9% of the total. Without structural protections, Indigenous priorities will continue to lose ground every time global attention shifts. With 58% of surveyed organizations reporting effects from political changes in donor countries, and 12 of 17 funders reporting no change in emergency mechanisms despite widespread organizational crisis, structural protections are needed alongside the commitments already made.

3. Safeguard women's and land rights funding

Explicitly protect funding for women's rights, land rights, and SRHR programming from the political targeting this report documents. This includes grant terms that shield these areas from donor-country policy shifts, and funder commitments to maintain these allocations regardless of the political environment in their home countries. The gap between organizational priorities and funding realities is direct: 65% of organizations prioritize women's rights and 69% report cuts in this area; 49% prioritize land rights and 58% report cuts. For the 89% of surveyed organizations that are women-led, these cuts intensify an already acute funding crisis, with 91% identifying Indigenous women as the population most affected when services are reduced.

4. Invest in peer learning and regional funder collaboration

Partner with IFIP to create structured opportunities for private philanthropy and other funders to share due diligence approaches that work with Indigenous governance systems; develop joint funding mechanisms that pool resources and reduce concentration risk; coordinate geographic coverage to address gaps, including South and Southeast Asia and parts of Africa, and to respond to Latin America and the Caribbean, where a sharp 2024 contraction in bilateral funding referencing Indigenous Peoples coincides with high regional dependence on it; and establish collaborative emergency response protocols that individual funders currently lack the capacity to provide alone. The appetite for this coordination already exists: among the 17 IFIP members surveyed, 13 want peer learning sessions, 12 want regional funder collaboratives, and 8 want to collaborate directly with IFIP, compared to only 3 expressing interest in ODA advocacy and 4 in joint research. IFIP and similar networks add the most value through convening, pooled funds, and practical coordination, facilitating the knowledge exchange that committed funders are already seeking.

Fund self determination directly

5. Remove barriers to direct funding

Design funding windows around how Indigenous Peoples Organizations actually operate rather than around the administrative requirements of donor systems. At minimum, these should eliminate co-financing requirements that disadvantage organizations without existing donor relationships, provide multi-year core funding of at least 3-5 years, accept applications in multiple languages including Indigenous languages, use community-defined outcomes rather than donor-predetermined indicators, and recognize diverse governance structures beyond formal NGO registration.

Indigenous women lead many of these organizations and are key actors across movements, from community governance and land defense to national policy processes and global negotiations including at the UNFCCC, CBD, and UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Funding mechanisms must be designed to sustain this leadership as well as the programs it produces.

Ninety-four percent of surveyed IPOs rated direct funding as essential or very important, yet 84% operate on budgets under $250,000 and 45% reported six months of operational runway or less. The barrier lies in funding architecture that defaults to familiar intermediaries.

6. Channel more ODA through Indigenous-Led Funds

Indigenous-Led Funds offer something that donor-designed direct mechanisms cannot: Indigenous governance over how resources are allocated, which priorities are funded, and which organizations receive support. Bilateral and multilateral donors should substantially increase channeling through existing Indigenous-Led Funds rather than building parallel structures. This reduces transaction costs, respects Indigenous governance, and builds on the trust between funds and communities that organizations in our survey consistently identified as foundational: meaningful say over how funding is used, alongside access to it. For further guidance see Reframing Philanthropy: Indigenous-Led Funds and Governance Models.

7. Move from project cycles to long-term operating support

Shift from annual project grants toward multi-year general operating funding, a minimum of three to five years, that allows IPOs to respond to community-determined priorities, retain experienced staff, and plan beyond the next funding cycle. The crisis actions documented in Section 5, with 49% of organizations increasing reliance on unpaid labor, 36% reducing staff salaries, and 31% suspending programs, are predictable consequences of funding architectures built around short cycles and restricted uses.

8. Partner with International Funders for Indigenous Peoples

IFIP's members can work directly with IFIP to convene and facilitate multistakeholder conversations and partnerships, coordinate geographic and global strategy discussions, as well as create pooled funds within IFIP to support meaningful and strategic representation of Indigenous women and Indigenous Peoples Organizations at regional and global policy forums. By working together, we can promote innovation, eliminate barriers, and secure long-term investments that will strengthen the Indigenous Peoples movement and reach Indigenous communities.

Annexes

A [IATI Database Structure & Data Processing]

B [Keyword List & Search Strategy]

C [UN SDG Outcomes associated with Indigenous Communities]

For more than two decades, **International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP)** has had an unwavering commitment—to create a thriving philanthropic environment that promotes Indigenous leadership and the rights of Indigenous communities across the globe. Our journey has been one of forging connections, breaking barriers, and igniting change. Our mission is clear: to empower Indigenous voices, amplify their self-determination, and advocate for their rights. We collaborate with our global community, our members and partners, to shift funding practice, build relationships and deepen partnerships with Indigenous organizations. IFIP advocates for direct access to funding for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous-led initiatives, organizations, and Indigenous-led funds and promotes transparency and accountability in philanthropy.

Mission

IFIP is dedicated to shifting power, mobilizing resources, and building partnerships to amplify Indigenous leadership and to support the self-determination and rights of Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands and territories worldwide.

Vision

Indigenous Peoples, their communities, lands, and territories worldwide are flourishing, recognized, self-determined, equitably funded and resourced.

International Funders
IFIP
for Indigenous Peoples

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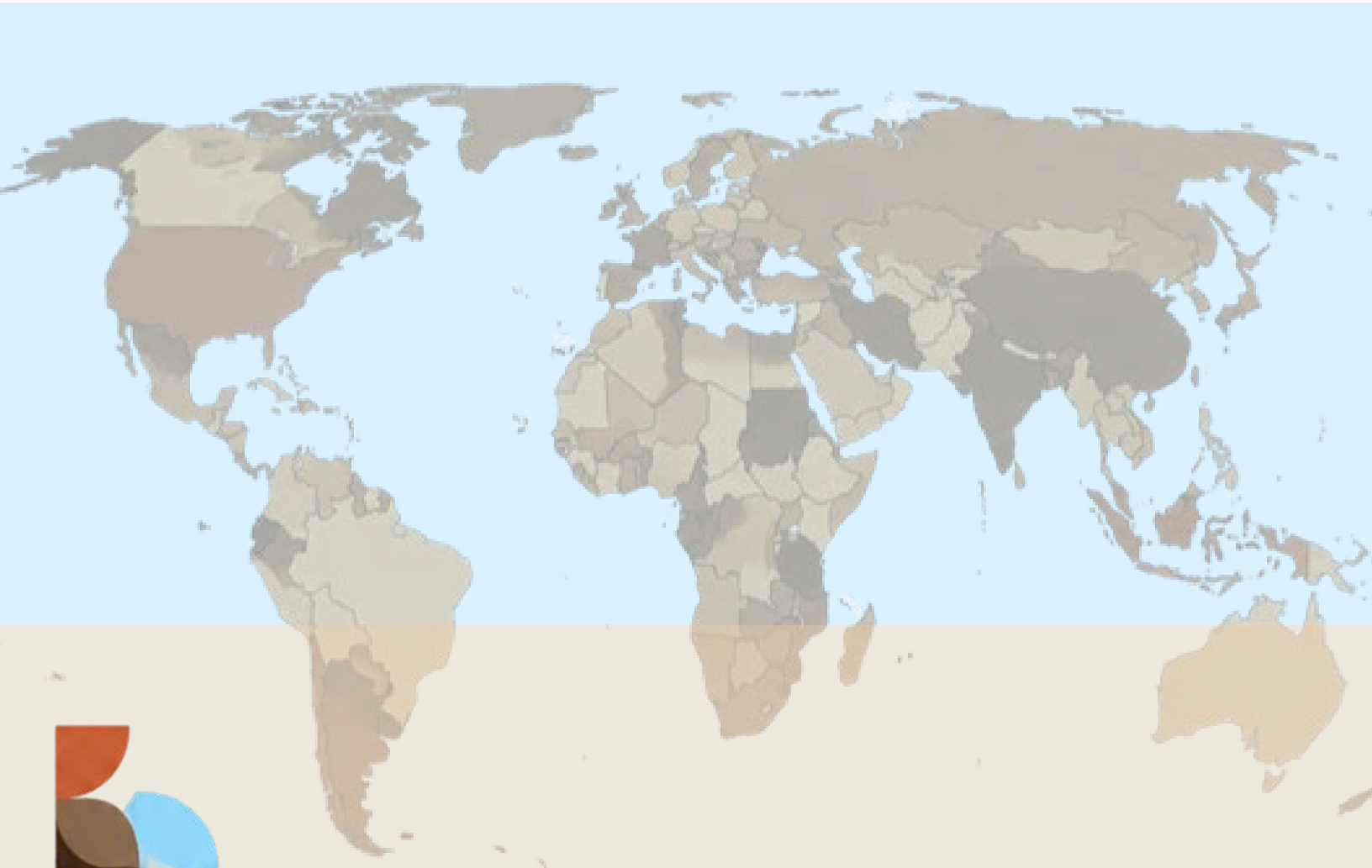

October, 2026