Indigenous Celebration

Annual Report

January - December 2016

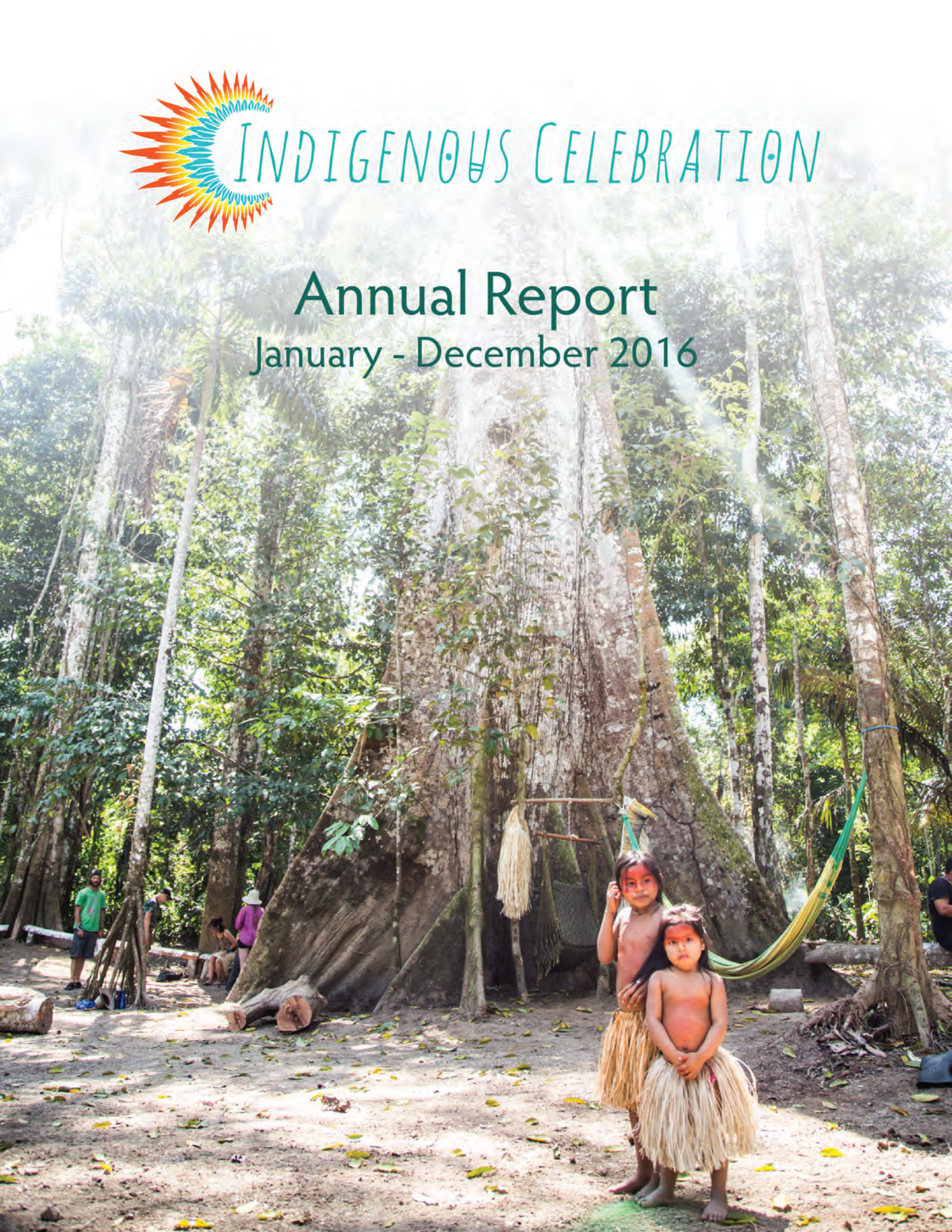

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Letter from the CEO

Dear Family & Friends,

Reflecting on the first full year on this mission, I am humbled and eternally grateful for the work of our team, and the faith of our donors that have made everything possible.

In our infancy, we've manifested incredible visions together...

Our alliance with The Women's Cooperative of Mutum has served to empower nearly 100 women, many of whom are the primary income providers for their household. Together we generated over $24,000, used to purchase canoes, chickens, medical supplies, hunting rifles, food supplements, and other basic necessities benefitting nearly 300 families in 8 villages.

Last July, we brought 18 people from the US & Canada on a life-changing journey to the middle of the Amazon to celebrate the Yawanawá's Mariri Festival. We fully immersed ourselves in the life, spirit, wisdom, and values of our indigenous relatives. We laughed, we cried, and we all experienced the immense beauty (and trials!) of the jungle together. We even witnessed seeds of transformational love, planted during the trip, sprout into a uniquely beautiful engagement proposal during our Encounter Tour event just a few months later! (Congratulations Josh and Nikki!)

The Encounter Tour last October was our most epic Celebration to date, reaching over 2,300 people directly and transforming countless lives along the way. The events raised over $34,000 for the Traditional School of Mutum, supporting the continuation of the Yawanawá language, cultural and spiritual lineage, which have been struggling to survive amidst 200 years of colonization efforts.

We helped share a culture, to save it. And when we heard that Pajé Tata, one of the two eldest Pajés, made his passage last December at 103 years old, it was with heavy hearts that we realized how critical our mission is, to support this ancient knowledge.

We can count our blessings that Pajé Tata's wisdom will live on through his few apprentices and the elders that will teach the next generation in the Traditional School of Mutum. But our work has just begun, and with the current rate of cultural and environmental annihilation, there is no time to lose.

Nearly half of all spoken languages on earth are under threat of disappearance within our lifetime, and we've already destroyed nearly 20% of the Amazon in the last 40 years alone! The time is now - to learn from each other, to listen, to work together, and to love! Together we can preserve this sacred knowledge and our forests for future generations. We can embrace our common humanity, our equality, and stand together as true guardians of our planet. I thank you for all your support, as we work day by day, to learn from the wise ones and spread their message far and wide.

Xinã Xavãi,

Anne Marie Miller

"The support that Yawanawá families received in 2016 from IC not only changed the lives of many Yawanawá artisan women, but contributed significantly in the Social Projects of the villages."

– Julia Yawanawá

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Empowering Women & their Tribe

The Alliance

In 2014, the Women's Cooperative of Mutum was formed. After years of individually making and selling their own handcrafts with limited success, the inspiration to form an organization and commercialize their cooperation arrived.

Indigenous Celebration entered an alliance with the Women's Cooperative in July 2015, and quickly became the largest platform for the sale of Yawanawá crafts, generating $35,320 since 2015.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

$35,320 has been paid to the Women's Cooperative of Mutum:

- $11,300 in 2015
- $24,020 in 2016

90% of 263 Families (1063 Yawanawá) from 8 villages participate in the Cooperative

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

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Use of Funds

The Need for Outside Aid

Indigenous peoples are on the front lines of climate change, vulnerable to every disturbance in the ecosystem they've depended on for millennia. No longer able to hunt and fish during "usual" times, given the extreme weather patterns and an ever-changing climate, many must travel to cities to purchase supplemental food like rice and beans for survival.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Contributions funded:

- Materials, fuel and labor to construct community food gardens
- Small animals, such as chickens
- Medical supplies & clothing
- Canoes & hunting equipment
- Communal housing structures for visitors

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Yawanawá Shavu'rah

Women of the Yawanawá

Naiwoni (pictured above) is the first female chief of the Yawanawá village of Mutum. Julia Yawanawá (pictured below) directs the Women's Cooperative. These strong leaders are redefining gender roles within the tribe, to provide for their families and ensure Yawanawá survival.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

"The support received throughout 2016 gave new meaning to the lives of the Yawanawa women…"

-Julia Yawanawá, Director of the Women's Cooperative

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Amazon Journey to Mutum Village

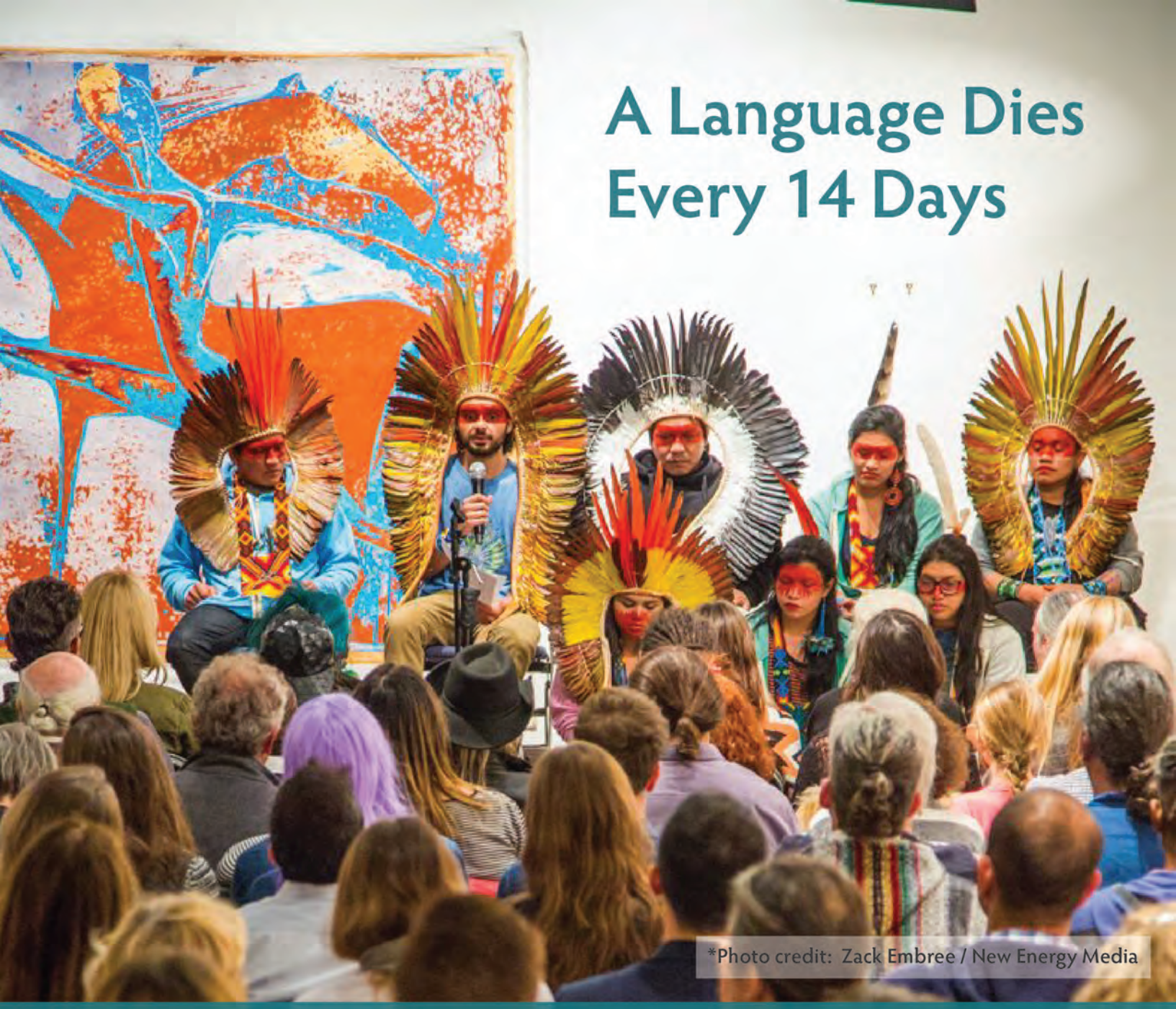
In July 2016, we took our first group of 18 Jungle Warriors from the US & Canada on an adventure to visit the Yawanawá in Mutum for the Mariri Festival, an annual celebration of Yawanawá culture and spirituality.

By sharing this experience in community, we were able to raise $24,500 for the Tribe and deliver a life changing opportunity for all those that joined us, to learn from, and interact with, some of the eldest wisdom keepers in the Amazon.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Expanding Consciousness for Environmental Healing

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media



A Language Dies Every 14 Days

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Encounter Tour: A Cultural Celebration

A group of 7 Yawanawá traveled to 5 cities across the U.S. to share the beauty and joy of their culture, in order to save it.

We raised a total of $34,344.67 to build and operate the Traditional School fo Mutum, where Yawanawá youth may reconnect with their ancestral language, and carry on the legends, values, culture and spiritual wisdom of their people, which has been passed down orally for millennia.

Our celebration reached over 2,300 people, nearly 900 of which were children who received this incredible experience gratis, through the generous support of our donors.

We painted faces. We danced. We sang. We prayed.

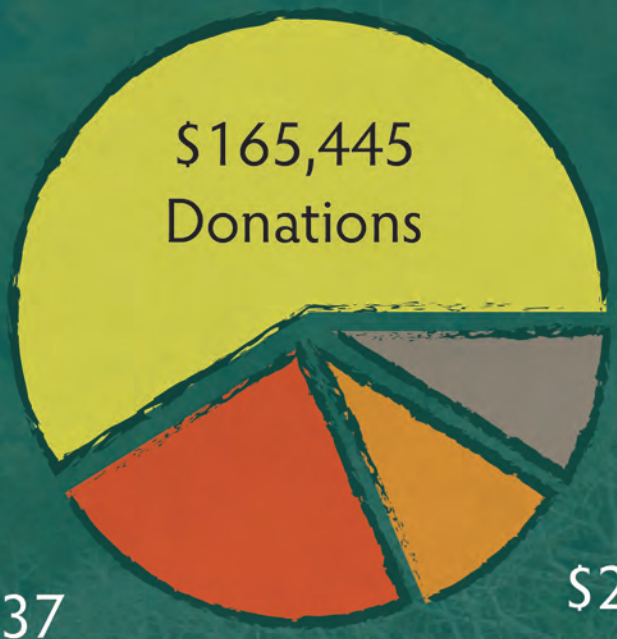
We realized we are all one.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

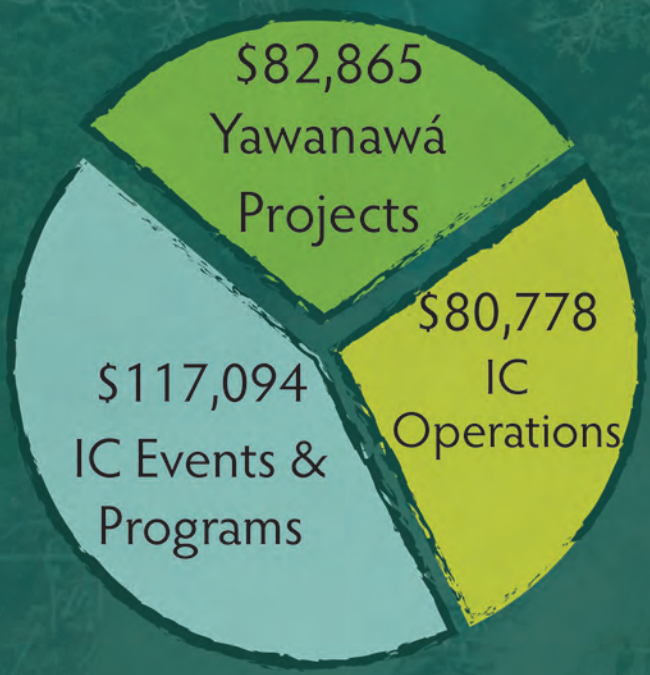
IC Financial Summary

Indigenous Celebration raised a total of $280,737 in 2016:

Total Income ($280,737)



Allocation of Funds



Yawanawá Projects:

$24,020 -> Women's Cooperative

$34,345 -> Traditional School of Mutum

$24,500 -> Village Initiatives

The specific knowledge indigenous peoples have garnered over millennia about their environment, is one of the most precious treasures we have on earth.

This knowledge has been passed down **orally** through generations - making the loss of language, truly devastating. With each passing elder, we lose an entire library of plant knowledge that cannot be found in books. According to estimates from experts in ethnobotany at the Smithsonian, about 95% of the plants used by the Yawanawá are not yet characterized.

Knowing this, we must take the responsibility to do what we can to help preserve this sacred knowledge for future generations and empower indigenous peoples to thrive as natural guardians of their environment, our collective home.

*Photo credit: Zack Embree / New Energy Media

Special thanks to our Board of Directors:

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John Minks, Jr.

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