

# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation ⚡ -



The first Climate & Environmental Justice (CEJ) Media Fellowship at FRIDA in partnership with OpenGlobalRights (OGR) **was created to support four fellows to highlight collective, grassroots, young feminist organising in the face of the climate crisis through the lenses of diverse, young feminists climate activists themselves.** The Fellowship sought to increase such visibility by providing professional accompaniment and a paid opportunity to four fellows in their writing and journalistic skills, whose solutions-based articles evidence the type of resistance and alternatives that grassroots activists and communities are putting forward. This evaluation of the CEJ Media Fellowship aims to provide a concrete description of the process, structure, and outcomes of the program, as well as highlight what worked best and what could be improved in future opportunities.

The topics covered here include:

1. [General Process & Structure](#)
2. [Partnership with OpenGlobalRights](#)
3. [Fellows' Feedback Process](#)
4. [Outcomes](#)
5. [Stars and Seeds](#)
6. [Costs and resource mobilization](#)

## 1. General Process & Structure

The CEJ Media Fellowship was a year long process from April, 2019 to March, 2020. The general structure of Fellowship included:

**Partners:** FRIDA and OpenGlobalRights  
Staff involved from these two organizations:

### FRIDA:

- Maria Alejandra Escalante (Climate & Environmental Justice Advocacy Officer) as co-coordinator
- Ledys Sanjuan (Media, Advocacy and Tech Manager) as supervisor
- Ani Hao (Media Consultant at the time) as co-coordinator and lead editor during first half of the program

### OGR:

- Archana Pandya (Chief Editor) as co-coordinator
- Rachel Schmidt (Senior Editor) as lead editor

### \*Sub-editors:

- Ngozi Cole (Sierra Leone - fellow at YFM)
- Alicia Wallace (Barbados - FRIDA Advisor)

*\*The first half of the Fellowship tried out a version of a mentorship structure where each fellow was paired with either of the two lead editors from the partner organizations or the above subeditors. The objective of this structure was to have someone assigned to provide close attention to fellows' experience from the ideation to the pitching of their articles. However, mid-way, this structure blurred the communication channels and became inefficient and the two sub-editors were no longer requested to be part of the Fellowship.*

# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

- Evaluation ↗-

## Fellows:

- Beatrice Tulagan (Philippines)
- Vanessa Daza (Colombia)
- Wangüi wa Kamonji (Kenya)
- Tarini Manchanda (India)

**Timeline:** The Fellowship followed this timeline. While the original ideation of the project created a six months plan, the rising opportunity to participate at the UN Climate Change Negotiations in December 2019, required an extension of three extra months that partners and fellows were able to accommodate.

- **April - May 2019:** Project ideation at the CAT team.
- **June 2019:** Establishment of partnership with OpenGlobalRights.
- **July - August 2019:** Launch of open call to applications and selection process.
- **Sept-Nov 2019:** During this period, Fellows were introduced to the program and to each other. Fellows were encouraged to publish an article during these months with support from their mentor-editors. Three out of four webinars were held during this time.
- **Nov 2019 - Jan 2020:** Fellows were invited to participate at the UN Climate Change Negotiations in Madrid, Spain alongside FRIDA grantee partners. A collective debrief was held to capture the most relevant lessons from this participation.
- **Jan 2020 - Feb 2020:** Fellows were encouraged to publish their second article. The fourth webinar was held during this period, as well as the evaluation process.



**Webinars:** Four webinars were organized by FRIDA's Fellowship coordinator to support the skill-building process for fellows with relevant thematics. In their individual survey, on a scale from 1 to 5 - being 1 the lowest and 5 the highest - Fellows rated the relevance of each of these webinars.

1. **Pitching your article with Ani Hao**  
Results: three Fellows responded 5, one fellow responded 4
2. **Solutions-based narratives with Jules Hotz from Solutions Journalism**  
Results: three Fellows responded 5, one Fellow was not able to attend
3. **Digital Security for social organisers with March Bermudez**  
Results: two Fellows responded 4, one person responded 5, one person was able to attend
4. **Feminist Narrative Building with Ruth Nyambura, Afrofeminist and climate justice activist**  
Results: four Fellows responded 5

# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation ↗ -

The results of the Fellowship survey, show that while all webinars were relevant, the Digital Security for Social Organisers seems to be the lowest rated.

To the question: **What other thematic webinars would you have liked to see part of this Fellowship?** Fellows responded:

- Accountability and reciprocity within journalism - moving beyond extractive media
- Definitely something related to creative writing, writing journalism pieces, etc.
- Climate justice-focused webinar with grassroots organizers

More detailed information about the establishment of the Fellowship can be found in the project's concept note [here](#).



## 2. Partnership with OpenGlobalRights

The CEJ Media Fellowship provided the first ever partnership between FRIDA and OGR.

**Structure:** While both partners agreed on a mentorship-editorial structure at the start of the program, they realized midway that it was creating more confusion and hurdles with communication than actually supporting fellows. There was flexibility from both partners to adapt the structure and facilitate the flow of information.

“Worked well to have both Maria Alejandra and me in dynamic communication through Whatsapp, and be more reactive. This reduced the amount of burden on fellows to have to connect to so many people in many ways. One one hand, abundance of support can make things confusing” - Archana Pandya

**Communication:** At start, the communication between partners and partners / fellows / sub editors was managed through email and Slack. There was a lack of engagement in this system, so communication was adapted to a collective Whatsapp group where partners and fellows could have a more timely and dynamic interaction.

**Compensation and division of tasks:** FRIDA offered an initial \$3,600 to OGR to support the costs associated with their editorial support from the first outline to the finished version, translation of articles, and publishing of Fellows' pieces. When the need for an extension from December 2019 to March 2020 came up, FRIDA offered an extra \$3,000 to OGR.

FRIDA's Fellowship Coordinator was the main point of contact with the fellows, in charge of logistics, communications amongst everyone involved, maintaining the program within the timeline, and

# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation ↗-

providing close editorial support to Fellows at the ideation and outlining stage.

**Media platform and outreach:** OGR is a digital journalistic platform dedicated to human rights work, which offers articles in multiple languages that are regionally relevant, while conserving a global approach in their publications. The Fellowship generated new content led by youth and focusing on an intersection of climate, environment, feminism and activism that lacks in their general content production.

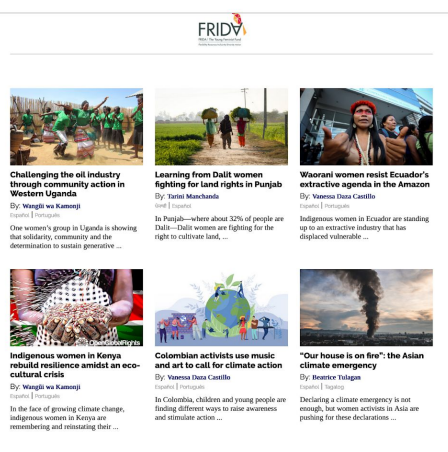
Facebook and Twitter are their main media platforms outlets. All Fellows' articles were [published on their website](#) and re-shared on their media platforms. While articles did not have a very high number of shares, it was clear that they added new, youth-led, and justice-centered content to both FRIDA's and OGR's platforms.

### 3. Fellows' Feedback Process

By the end of the Fellowship, there were three different mechanisms to evaluate the program and collect feedback. These feedback mechanisms greatly rely on qualitative rather than quantitative data.

These were:

- **Individual Feedback:** Maria Alejandra, as Fellowship coordinator, and Rachel, as lead editor from OGR, gave individual feedback to each fellow based on observations about their journeys taking into account their writing process, communication, time management, and overall performance.
- **Group-call Reflection:** Fellows, Maria Alejandra and Archana held a 1.5 hr call to collectively reflect upon the Fellowship program, highlighting its best parts and identifying where it could improve.
- **Individual Survey:** Each fellow completed an individual online survey about their experience during the Fellowship program.





# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation -

### 4. Outcomes

- a. **\*Articles:** Fellows wrote six articles that were published on OGR's website and translated into three relevant languages. These articles show a high level of journalistic research and professionalism.
- [“Our house is on fire”: the Asian climate emergency](#) by Beatrice Tulagan
  - [Learning from Dalit women fighting for land rights in Punjab](#) by Tarini Manchanda
  - [Colombian activists use music and art to call for climate action](#) by Vanessa Daza
  - [Worani women resist Ecuador's extractive agenda in the Amazon](#) by Vanessa Daza
  - [Indigenous women in Kenya rebuild resilience amidst an eco-cultural crisis](#) by Wangüi wa Kamonji
  - [Challenging the oil industry through community action in Western Uganda](#) by Wangüi wa Kamonji

\*Two fellows - Tarini and Beatrice - were not able to write their two required articles for personal and health reasons. However, OGR invited them to keep working on their second pitches beyond the Fellowship timeline

- b. **COP25 Participation:** The UN Climate Change Negotiations took place in Madrid, Spain during December, 2019. FRIDA was not initially considering inviting the Fellows to this event until when additional funding was made available through a Mama Cash Special Grant. All Fellows were able to attend COP and its parallel activist and organising spaces, alongside FRIDA's grantee partners and Climate & Environmental Justice Advocacy Officer.



“Meeting so many people and listening to so many ideas made me learn a lot from all of you, this was a highlight. I was so inspired by everyone, by you all and all the other FRIDA grantees” - Vanessa

“Being part of the panel at COP and hearing the stories was important for me to see realities and meet people who i haven't met before in these spaces” - Beatrice

## CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

### - Evaluation ⚡-

Fellows responses to the survey question: **What was your favorite aspect of the Fellowship?**

- Meeting and learning from the other fellows and the FRIDA team and being able to dig into topics of my interest.
- Meeting with co-fellows and getting their inputs on stories and ideas.
- The collaborative editing, and the opportunity to be in person with each other and do embodied work that carried further the online work.
- Meeting my co-fellows in person and learning about their diverse, amazing work.

For everyone, the COP experience was one of the most worthwhile aspects of the program. **There was a general recommendation of using these opportunities for in person meetings for a more focused writing skill building.**

#### c. Re-shares from Oxfam

Oxfam's "[From Poverty to Power](#)" - a dedicated site for debates and conversations on development - blog picked up the series of articles published by the Fellows and re-shared them on their website and social media platforms. This was a great opportunity to extend the outreach of the articles to new and wider audiences who actively engaged in the comments section of each article.



# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation ✨-

**5. Stars:** these are highlights of the Fellowship identified by partners and Fellows during the evaluation process.



### **Editorial Structure & Accompaniment**

- Close editorial support throughout the writing process and constant dynamic communication was essential and well received.
- Webinars opened new dialogues and strengthened skills.

“From schematic and rigid, I now have a better sense of writing in a fresh way, and I can think and write like a journalist. Both Alicia and Rachel as editors were of huge importance. The process of outlining ideas previous to the interviews, and how I interviewed them, made me feel different about writing” - Vanessa

“I’m grateful for having a dedicated support system that allows me to grow as a writer and as a feminist climate activist” - Beatrice

“Regarding the topics, the Fellowship gave me the possibility to zoom in on this nexus of women and gender rights, and environment and climate. “The editorial process was excellent for me. To have an iterative process with the editors and having editing done in a way that doesn't take over the writer's voice but pulls you and challenges you to clarify your thought and what you're saying.- Wangüi

### **Visibility & Movement Building**

- It was very powerful that OGR dedicated a page on their website to publish and collect the Fellows' articles.
- Both partners shared each of the articles in their different media platforms, increasing the visibility and outreach of the pieces.
- The meetup during COP25 and the webinars opened spaces for Fellows to forge connections with other climate justice feminist activists.

“Being together, knowing and learning from each other more than the talking heads was super” - Wangui

“Meeting so many people and listening to so many ideas made me learn a lot from all of you, this was a highlight. I was so inspired by everyone, by you all and all the other FRIDA grantees”- Vanessa

“What was special was to speak with feminist climate activist, going to the march, it reminds why we do what we do. It was inspiring to humanize what we actually talk when we write about feminism and women and LGBTQ liberation” - Beatrice

“Decolonial work, the inputs on the way COP functions, feminist ecosystems, all of these learnings, and the conversations will stay with me” - Tarini

### **Care Practices**

- Individual and group care was always put before productivity. Whether that meant Fellows needed more time to work on their articles or not write them at all due to health and personal reasons, or find suitable accommodation to respond to individual needs during COP25, the overall wellbeing of partners and Fellows was always primordial.

“I have never worked or collaborated with an organization who really centered collective care as much” - Beatrice

### **Communication**

- Dynamic and constant communication with Fellows and between partners through Whatsapp effectively replaced the unused Slack platform.
- The translations of each article into two relevant languages made the pieces more accessible to the local audience.

### **Flexibility**

- Responding to the rising COP25 opportunity.
- Showing flexibility to accommodate needs and show care for the group before productivity.
- Being ready to restructure the program when needed

“The co-leadership at FRIDA from the beginning didn't work well. Once Maria Alejandra - Archana had more communication, there was more clarity in general and space for the project to be developed” - Ledys Sanjuan



# CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

## - Evaluation ⚡ -



**Seeds:** these are aspects that can be improved in future opportunities identified during the evaluation process by partners and Fellows

### Digital Format

- As mainly an online program, closer bonds and quick communication was challenging at times. It seems important to create an in person meeting for co-creation between partners and a dedicated work space for Fellows.

“Another challenge is the digital nature of the fellowship. Although we met regularly, it couldn't happen as much as I wanted. Communication is a bit delayed because of timezone differences. I know resource wise it's not feasible at all times, but a workshop in person would be nice to really drill down on the writing” - Beatrice

### Accompaniment in writing process

- Realize that the writing process begins before pitching an idea. Open enough spaces for Fellows to reflect upon their writing process.
- Provide a clear editorial structure and process since the start.
- Create dynamic spaces where Fellows can easily ask and reach out to one another.

“Regardless of how we are ready for communication, it feels like when I wanted to reach anyone (Alicia, Rachel, Archana or MA), I felt I had to have something built already. I felt I had to come up with solutions myself and then present them and have them approved” - Vanessa

“There are things that cannot be translated and I thought that was a wall to share stories with each other more deeply and engage” - Tarini

“What was new and challenging is to pitch before I had done research and knew what I was saying, usually in my writing I don't pitch until I have done something” - Wangui

“Appreciate some way in which we could do some peer-to-peer coaching on our articles” - Beatrice

### Budget

- Have a more ample budget that compensates fellows competely and offers more opportunities for in person meetings, capacity building, and research stipend.

“This has been a precarious work. In order for us to respond to the crisis in media and the marginalization in this industry, we should provide compensation that is competitive for people to come to this fellowship” - Ledys Sanjuan

“Compensation was alright. In future perhaps offering a supplemental budget for research costs (such as travel and translation) that are more than a regular article would incur may be a good idea” - Wangui

### Last general comments.....

“I realize that I want there to be more than a counter narrative of the white, male dominated climate movement, but also bring a spotlight to these initiatives that are swept away because of the small writing on these issues on my side of the world. There's few writers and few newsrooms that would give space to the CEJ movement in Asia”

“To shine a spotlight on these initiatives redefines what it means to be a feminist climate activist because when these people dont go around telling their communities that they are feminist or activist, they do their work to resist without the labels. That makes it meaningful, because these are genuine solutions that young people are putting forward and I think they deserve their space to be out there”

- Beatrice Tulagan



## CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MEDIA FELLOWSHIP

### - Evaluation ⚡ -

“To work with communities who are actually at the frontlines of climate impacts is something important to write about”

- **Tarini Manchanda**

“Tried to not make these women look as if they identified not only as climate activists or indigenous women. In the end, it wasn't necessary to make these women feminists when they don't identify themselves as that, but highlighting those women organising against extractive projects, and that being a woman is experienced differently and this adds to the whole movement”

- **Vanessa Daza**

RESOURCES	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sierra Club grant to the Fellowship program</li> </ul>	\$5,263
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mama Cash Special Grant for COP25 participation</li> </ul>	\$10,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FRIDA's financial contribution</li> </ul>	\$5,337

### 6. Costs and resource mobilization

EXPENSES	TOTAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellows' compensation</li> </ul>	\$3,400
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stipend for original media paid to Fellows</li> </ul>	\$600
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original contribution to OGR</li> </ul>	\$3,600
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution to OGR due to extension</li> </ul>	\$3,000
<b>Semi total</b>	<b>\$10,600</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approx average COP25 total Fellows' participation</li> </ul>	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,600</b>