

LOVE  
FOR  
LIFE 

# IMAGINE LIGHT

A solar energy project in the Amazon –  
empowering people and protecting nature.



INTRODUCTION /

# ENERGY TRANSFORMS LIVES

Energy lies at the heart of some of the world's biggest challenges. 1.2 billion people have no access to electricity. This has huge impacts on health, education, livelihood and general quality of life. Lack of electricity remains one of the biggest barriers to development and empowerment. Gendered divisions of labour and traditional family roles often result in women and girls suffering disproportionately from the lack of access to clean energy. Without domestic light, children cannot study and do their homework after sunset, which negatively impacts their education and ability to fulfill their potential. Without access to electricity, many homes must use harmful and dangerous kerosene lamps or run diesel generators to power basic lights. These generators pollute the air, are noisy, unreliable, very costly, and for many unaffordable to operate. In the Amazon rainforest, villagers must travel for days by foot and canoe to obtain diesel fuel from the very industry destroying their habitat. Furthermore, without electricity, food cannot be stored and life-saving drugs cannot be cooled. Our solar project IMAGINE LIGHT empowers four indigenous peoples in the Amazon rainforest to achieve sustainable and self-determined development – through access to clean solar energy. It also supports them in their role as guardians of the Amazon rainforest, one of our planet's last natural treasures.



Waorani family in Kiwaro after the solar system installation in 2016.



Solar modules on mounting system in the Waorani community Nemonpare.

BACKGROUND /

# FOUR PEOPLES ONE VISION

Home to one of the world's most important and biodiverse ecosystems, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru's Amazon rainforest faces grave threats to its survival due to widespread resource exploitation. Driven by the reserves of crude oil, timber and African palm, large-scale industry presence and agricultural settlements endanger the survival of both the region's unique ecosystems as well as the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples, including the Cofán, Secoya, Siona and Waorani, who have inhabited these forests for thousands of years.

For the first time in history, these four indigenous peoples have formed a unique alliance to build an indigenous-led movement for physical and cultural survival as well as rainforest protection. They called their alliance 'Ceibo', named after the biggest tree in the Amazon rainforest – a green giant that gives and protects life, and which is regarded as sacred. LOVE FOR LIFE shares Ceibo's view that sustainable and successful counteractions to the destruction of the rainforest must include strategies developed and sustained by the indigenous peoples themselves. To this day they hold and embody the wisdom to live in harmony with the natural world and as stewards of the green lungs of the earth are not only fighting for their own, but for the survival of us all.



Four generations of a Waorani family in Acaro during project realization in 2017.



A Secoya elder in the community San Pablo during project implementation in 2016.

PROJECT /

# IMAGINE LIGHT



Solar system installation in the Cofán community Bavoroe in 2016.

The project IMAGINE LIGHT creates sustainable access to clean and independent solar energy and thus enables empowerment and self-determined development. The project is based on the self-formulated vision of the the Cofán, Secoya, Siona and Waorani to support their indigenous-led movement for physical and cultural survival as well as rainforest protection.

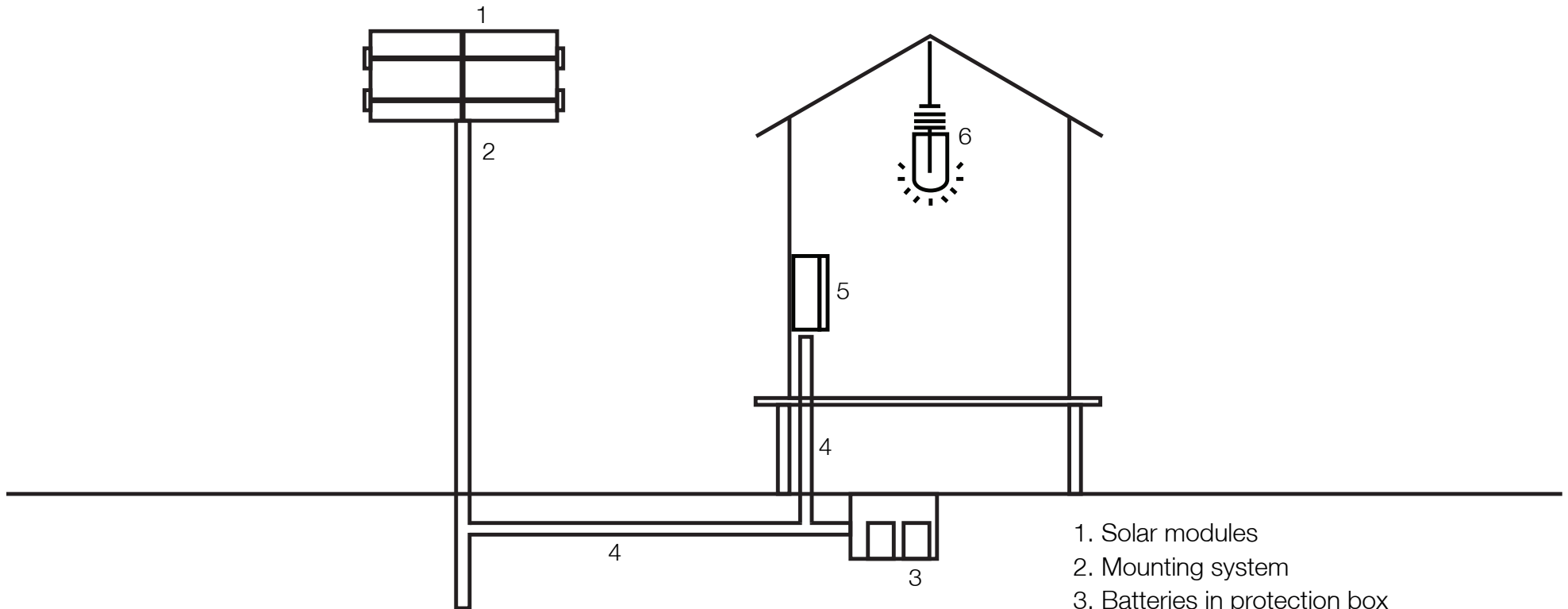
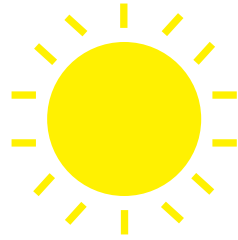
IMAGINE LIGHT's holistic and bottom-up approach includes both the use of innovative technology, and the building and strengthening of local capacity. Self-determination and empowerment are at the heart of the project's goals, because we recognize the true experts are the local people themselves. Only they can ensure the sustainability and the long-term success of the project. Therefore, LOVE FOR LIFE is strengthening the capacity of its local partner organization as well as training local engineers and indigenous people to become solar technicians, who then install the solar home systems and are able to operate, maintain, and repair them in their own communities.



Transportation of solar system materials by canoe in the Cofán territory.

SYSTEM /

# POWERED BY THE SUN



1. Solar modules
2. Mounting system
3. Batteries in protection box
4. Cables in protective tube
5. Electrical cabinet with MPPT charge controller, inverter, battery protector, monitor and two 120V outlets
6. LED-lights

IMPACT /

# MORE THAN LIGHT

The IMAGINE LIGHT project is a unique example of successfully uniting the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of sustainable development in harmony with nature and people. By enabling access to sustainable, renewable energy, LOVE FOR LIFE provides a fundamental basis to achieve key sustainable development outcomes. Clean energy not only contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 – ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all – but is also an essential catalyst to many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Image: Onguime, a Waorani women in Nemonpare in her kitchen under the bright LED-light powered by her new solar system installed through IMAGINE LIGHT.





## IMPACT

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## SDG 1

# NO POVERTY

Access to electricity opens many new opportunities for sustainable development as well as income increasing activities, significantly contributing to poverty reduction. Furthermore, the project actively supports the preservation of the rainforest, which is the “life insurance” of the indigenous people whose very existence depend on it. The forest is their home, their supermarket, their university, their pharmacy – it is their life.

## SDG 2

# ZERO HUNGER

The powering of electrical appliances and the creation of new employment opportunities have a positive effect on nutrition. The shelf life of food is significantly extended through the use of refrigerators and instead of hunting to sell meat to buy fuel for powering diesel generators, it can be consumed by indigenous people themselves. The project therefore has a huge impact on increasing food security and eliminating hunger.

## SDG 3

# GOOD HEALTH

Clean energy replaces dangerous and harmful kerosene lamps and candles as well as expensive and polluting diesel generators. This bears significant benefits for indoor air quality, respiratory health and eyesight. Childbirth at night can now be accompanied with light and, as a result, increases the life expectancy of mother and child. Lifesaving drugs can be refrigerated and thus made available.



## SDG 4

# EDUCATION

Access to quality education is a key contributing factor to sustainable poverty alleviation. Through the provision of light, children are able to study in the evenings, which in turn leads to greater chances of development and empowerment. Studies show that one more hour of light per day significantly increases educational opportunities - and benefit the entire community in the long term.



## SDG 5 **GENDER EQUALITY**

Women are likely to benefit more from access to electricity. This gendered impact relates, in part, to the traditional roles of women – as responsible for cooking, cleaning and other chores – and the greater time that they spend in the home. Light and access to electricity significantly eases women of these burdens as they are more flexible in managing their time and domestic tasks, making the home a healthier, safer and more comfortable place.



## SDG 7 **ENERGY FOR ALL**

The project ensures sustainable access to reliable and clean solar energy. As a result, the indigenous people of the Amazon have more opportunities for income generation in alignment with their own vision and are empowered to protect their cultures and territories. Moreover, uninformed trade-offs with exploiting mineral industries (e.g. land access for drilling in exchange for fuel to power generators) are prevented.

## SDG 8 **DECENT WORK**

Through access to electricity new employment opportunities as well as traditional income generating activities, such as the creation of artisanal products, are now easier to carry out. Through the use of electrical appliances and light, productivity increases and workdays are extended. Furthermore, the training of indigenous solar technicians leads to sustainable job creation in accordance with the self-formulated vision of the indigenous people.

## SDG 13 **CLIMATE ACTION**

Drilling in the Amazon has a triple carbon impact: 1. burning the oil, 2. emissions from cutting down the rainforest, and 3. a reduction in the world's largest carbon sink. The empowerment of indigenous peoples has a knock on effect on the protection of the rainforest, and thus its ability to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, stabilizing the world climate. Furthermore, the replacement of diesel generators with solar energy contributes to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## SDG 15 **LIFE ON LAND**

The Amazon rainforest is the most biodiverse ecosystem on the planet, it regulates global weather, holds one fifth of the world's flowing fresh water, and produces one fifth of our oxygen. Strengthening indigenous peoples in their mission to protect their home territories is the most sustainable and effective way to protect the rainforest. They are the only true guardians and conservationists of the rainforest, living in harmony with the natural world.

WHERE /

# THE GREEN HEART OF THE WORLD



STORIES OF IMPACT /

# VOICES FROM THE AMAZON

## **KARINA AHUA**

23, from Acaro, a Waorani community

“I am Karina, from Acaro, and I am so proud to call Acaro my home. I have two daughters (...). I am worried about our nature and our land, We don't want people to damage it. The moment the oil companies arrive, they damage and pollute the rivers, nature, trees (...). We can't allow that anymore. I am very thankful for the support of the IMAGINE LIGHT project. More so, I am grateful for my daughters and the benefit it brings to the whole community. Your support has provided something we desperately need in the community. For me, and for us, it is something really special. Now that we have solar systems, I am very happy. Also for the wellbeing of my daughters because they are going to be able to walk safely at night. And for my daughters' studies, I am very happy for that. What you have given us is a treasure.”



STORIES OF IMPACT /

# VOICES FROM THE AMAZON

## **FELIPE ENQUERI**

32, from Tzapino, a Waorani community

“I am so happy and proud. I was always thinking about how much noise the generator makes, and without a job, I can’t buy gasoline anyway. When it gets dark now, and we want to go outside, we just turn on the light and we can see what’s in the dark - without any noise. We used to make artisanal handicraft to buy gasoline from the proceeds. We can fulfill other needs now. For example, if someone is sick we can pay to fly the patient out on a plane; or we can take the patient in the canoe. Thank you so much for your support!”



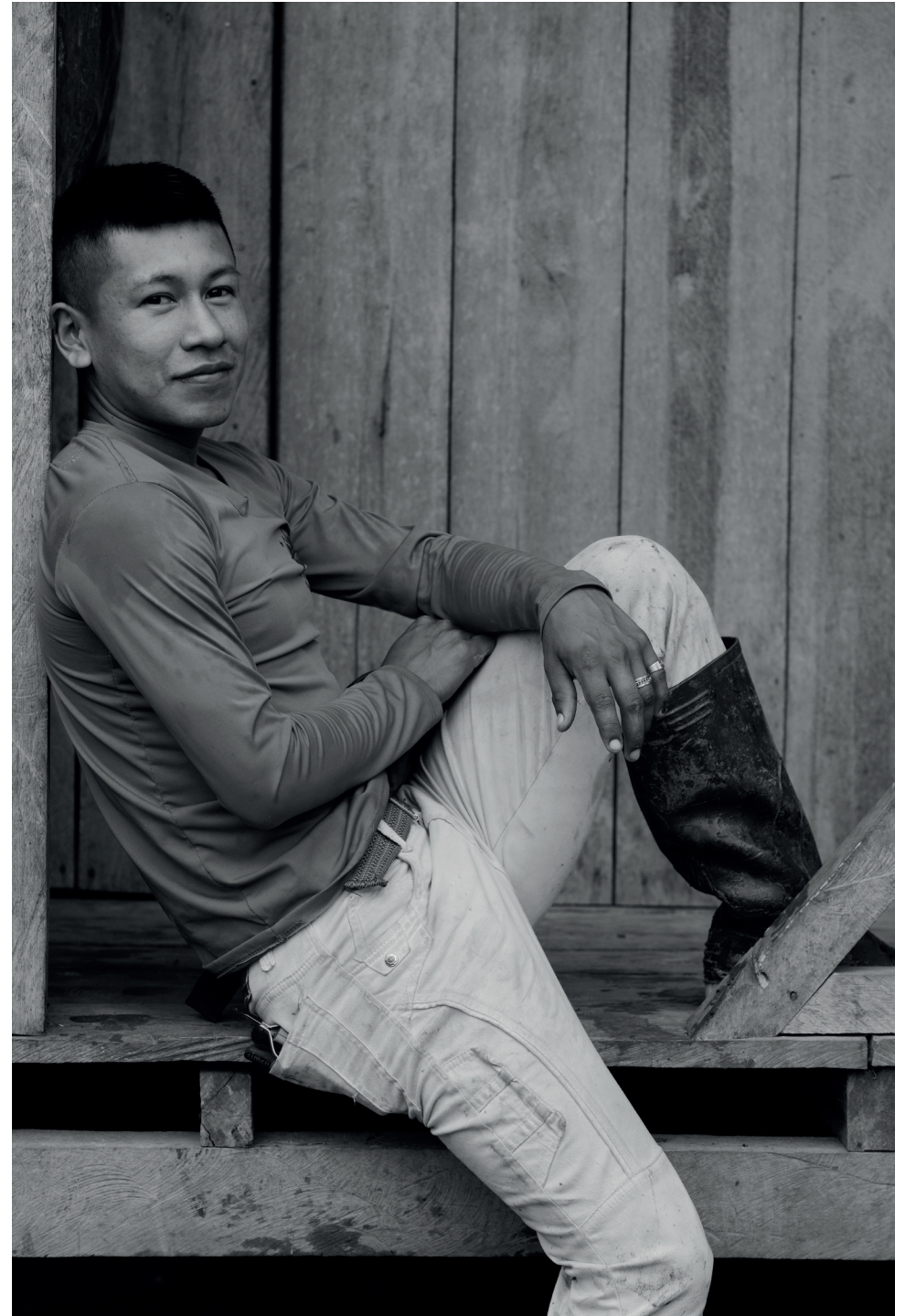
STORIES OF IMPACT /

# VOICES FROM THE AMAZON

## **ROVEYRO CRIOLLO LUCITANTE**

24, solar technician from Sábalo, a Cofán community

“I’m very happy to be a part of this project, to be a technician, and to support my community and also to be supporting other communities. I think it is something great for the indigenous nationalities of Ecuador (...) it’s an immense support to families who have so many needs. I am very happy and I hope you continue supporting other communities and people from other nationalities as they have the same need. This work and support to the nationalities is great, the support is done with love and I think people are also receiving it with lots of affection. I hope you continue doing it with everybody, with the people from Ecuador in need, but also from around the world.”



OUTLOOK /

# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



Waorani people in Acaro and Rose, LOVE FOR LIFE Project Coordinator (second from the right), during the IMAGINE LIGHT project implementation in spring 2017.

In 2018, LOVE FOR LIFE will continue to work with its local partners – the Ceibo Alliance and ClearWater – and the four indigenous nationalities to provide sustainable access to clean and independent solar energy as well as to strengthen their movement to protect their wisdom cultures, conserve their ancestral territories, and to fulfill their rights.

We will install about 170 new solar home systems in 17 remote rainforest communities, providing 167 families with light and access to clean energy. We will continue to invest in building capacity in our local indigenous-led partner organization and will train about 15 new indigenous solar technicians who in a team with trained local engineers and senior solar technicians will install the solar home systems in their communities. Therefore we will directly support over 1500 indigenous people with sustainable access to clean energy and by that open up many new and self-determined development opportunities.

SUPPORT US /

# TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE MORE

We are grateful for every donation. To ensure that your money goes where you want it to go, we have two donation accounts. Through the general donation account, LOVE FOR LIFE's operational costs are funded, which is essential for project realization. If you want your donation to support project field work only, the 100% project donation account will support this. You also can donate online on our website [www.loveforlifeproject.org/donate](http://www.loveforlifeproject.org/donate) – 100% of your donation goes to our project in the field.

General Donations Account:

LOVE FOR LIFE e.V.

Account number: 1166840100

Bank code: 43060967

IBAN: DE38 430 609 67 1166 8401 00

BIC: GENO DE M1 GLS

100% Project Account:

LOVE FOR LIFE e.V.

Account number: 1166840101

Bank code: 43060967

IBAN: DE11 430 609 67 1166 8401 01

BIC: GENO DE M1 GLS



ABOUT US /

# LOVE FOR LIFE

We are dedicated to creating conscious change to empower people and to protect nature.

## WE ELEVATE CONSCIOUSNESS.

All life is fundamentally interconnected. We view the inner work and personal development as a prerequisite for outer effectiveness and holistic societal transformation. In trainings, workshops, speeches, publications and actions we raise awareness about social and environmental justice issues as well as inspire and empower people to reconnect to themselves, each other and nature to realize their true potential and to co-create real change in the world.

## WE TAKE DIRECT ACTION.

We realize social and development projects in conflict and crisis areas that empower people to fulfill their rights to lead self-determined lives in dignity and peace. Thereby we connect the social, ecological, and economic dimensions of sustainability and the creation of development possibilities with the protection of the natural world. As a result, we contribute to the global realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

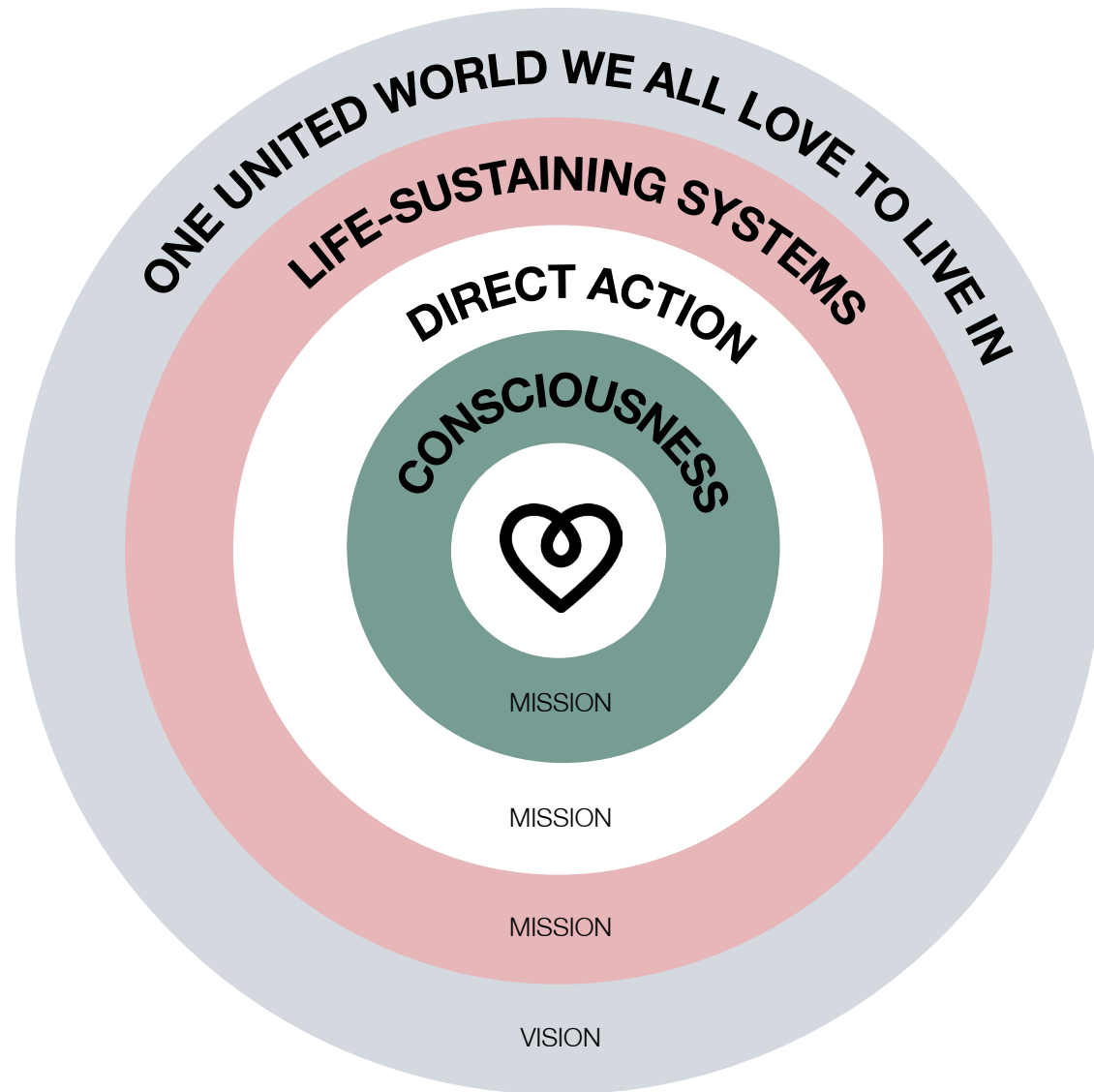
## WE TRANSFORM SYSTEMS.

Through designing and realizing concepts, initiatives, and campaigns we are dedicated to developing life-sustaining systems and structures that embody a new set of values based on inter-connectedness, inclusivity, compassion and courage to promote cultures of peace and justice and to contribute to a paradigm shift.



ABOUT US /

# CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT



AWARDS /

# JOYFUL RECOGNITION



LOVE FOR LIFE-Team (Founder Cristina Arau and Julia Bär) at the StartSocial award ceremony with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In 2017, LOVE FOR LIFE received special recognition for the IMAGINE LIGHT project by German Chancellor Angela Merkel as patron of the StartSocial e.V. programme. The foundation awards organizations that are creating positive change within society.

In 2016, we were awarded the One-World Prize of Stiftung Entwicklungszusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg (foundation for international development of the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg). This award also honoured the achievements of IMAGINE LIGHT.

We are very grateful for the recognition of our work with the indigenous nationalities in the Amazon and want to extend a heartfelt thanks to both organizations.

DONORS /

# THANK YOU

Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of our many generous partners and funders. A big thank you to everyone who joined us in our journey.



FRIDA EDLUND



Lou Dematteis

CONTACT /

# WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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**Real change will happen only when we fall in love with our planet. Only love can show us how to live in harmony with nature and with each other and save us from the devastating effects of environmental destruction and climate change.**

Thich Nhat Hanh, Love Letter to the Earth



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