

DECODE at Conference of Parties (COP30)

DECODE Internal Reflections

1st -5th December 2025

PRIA New Delhi, India



Olivia sharing her COP30 Reflections

The DECODE Knowledge Project was honored to hold a side panel at COP30 in Brazil, marking an important milestone in the project's engagement with global climate conversations. The side panel was led by Olivia Andrade de Almeida, DECODE Project Manager, and Paloma Aguilar Forero, DECODE Regional Coordinator for Latin America, who jointly represented DECODE at the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30).

Recognising the policy relevance and actionable insights emerging from DECODE's research, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) invited the project to share its findings across two panels: "*Just and localised nature-based solutions: a learning exchange from the front lines*" and "*Justice-centred adaptation: locally led climate action across knowledge systems and contexts.*" These panels were part of a series of specialised sessions organised by IDRC and partner institutions to highlight research at the intersection of development, climate action, and justice.

Together, these engagements provided a valuable opportunity to present DECODE's work and to foreground the role of community-based and Indigenous knowledge in strengthening climate resilience and advancing climate justice. Through its participation, DECODE contributed to broader discussions on whose knowledge is recognised in climate action and how locally grounded knowledge systems can inform more inclusive and effective climate responses.

DECODE's participation in COP 30, held in Belém, came at a critical historical moment, as the escalating climate crisis increasingly threatens ecological and social systems worldwide. The presentations focused on sharing grounded evidence and insights emerging from the DECODE case studies, with the explicit aim of informing policy debates, amplifying

community and Indigenous perspectives, and influencing decision-makers engaged in global climate negotiations. [The recording for this session can be found link.](#)

Olivia and Paloma highlighted that a defining feature of COP 30 was the unprecedented mobilisation of civil society, most notably through the Cúpula dos Povos (Peoples' Summit), which brought together more than 70,000 participants. This broad coalition- including Indigenous movements supported by organisations such as APIB, alongside peasants, urban workers, and allied groups- collectively asserted that ancestral knowledge and the leadership of historically marginalised peoples must be placed at the centre of climate action. They noted that this groundswell of participation marked a significant shift in the political and ethical landscape surrounding global climate negotiations.

They further emphasised that a central theme at COP 30 was the growing recognition of the need to integrate local, nature-based solutions (NbS) with high-level policy frameworks. Discussions repeatedly underscored the importance of equitable, context-sensitive adaptation strategies, particularly for Indigenous communities whose livelihoods, cultures, and survival are inextricably linked to their ecosystems. Deliberations within the Blue Zone reinforced the view that Indigenous knowledge systems are not merely complementary to climate science but constitute climate solutions in their own right. Furthermore, they also highlighted that the erosion of culture directly undermines climate resilience, asserting that Indigenous peoples are, in effect, “the sciences themselves.” In this framing, education was reimagined as a holistic and continuous engagement with one’s surrounding ecosystem, rather than a compartmentalised or purely technical endeavour.

Despite this historic level of engagement, Olivia and Paloma noted that the formal outcomes of COP 30 were mixed. On the positive side, the conference saw the largest-ever participation of Indigenous peoples within the Blue Zone, alongside concrete progress such as the demarcation of 38 Indigenous territories in Brazil. In addition, 82 countries signalled openness to discussions on ending fossil fuel dependence. However, they noted that major shortcomings persisted. The final negotiated text failed to include a clear, binding commitment to phasing out fossil fuels and did not establish mandatory targets for just and adequate climate financing. The continued influence of corporate interests remained evident, with approximately 1,600 accredited representatives linked to fossil fuel industries present at the conference, underscoring the ongoing imbalance between civil society demands and entrenched economic power.

Olivia and Paloma concluded their presentation by introducing a powerful manifesto emerging from these collective struggles ([link](#)). The manifesto closely echoed the core ethos of the DECODE Project, explicitly linking environmental protection with broader struggles



Paloma reading the DECODE manifesto

for social and epistemic justice. It called for the rejection of false, market-based climate solutions; the immediate demarcation and protection of Indigenous lands; popular agrarian reform and the promotion of agroecology to secure food sovereignty; and the non-proliferation of fossil fuels alongside full reparations for the social and ecological harms caused by extractive industries. It further demanded an end to environmental racism, wars, and the militarisation of

territories, while advocating for public financing, the taxation of extreme wealth, and international climate finance mechanisms that do not reproduce North–South inequalities. Through this manifesto, they reaffirmed DECODE’s commitment to justice-centred, community-led pathways for confronting the climate crisis.

With this powerful reaffirmation of the DECODE Knowledge Project’s commitment to justice and epistemic equity, the COP30 session came to a powerful close.