

!!!WELCOME!!!

Hello, we are very pleased to hear that you are considering being part of the SAL delegation to the COP in Belém, Brazil this year.

SAL's work is pioneering in bringing RC's emotional discharge tools to others, especially activists and others involved in advocating for social and climate justice.

This year, Janet Kabue and Iliria Unzueta will lead the SAL delegation, and Mary Ruth Gross will be the organizer, together with Onii and Urbain.

We have prepared this document to give you the most complete picture possible of what we have done in the past, what you can expect, and our plans for this year. We know it is a long document. Please take 10 minutes to read it in full; there is very important information that will allow you to make informed decisions. You need to be familiar with the contents before accepting or declining our invitation to be part of the delegation.



## Background.

The first Conference of the Parties to discuss Climate Change was held in Berlin in 1995. Since then, the conference has been held in more than 20 different locations around the world. (To see all locations since 1995 and learn more general information about the UNFCCC COPs, visit:

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conferencias\\_de\\_las\\_Naciones\\_Unidas\\_sobre\\_el\\_cambio\\_clim%C3%A1tico](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conferencias_de_las_Naciones_Unidas_sobre_el_cambio_clim%C3%A1tico)) SAL has participated in the COPs every year since Paris 2015.

For more information, visit the official conference website:

<https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>



Following RC's single-point objective, SAL's purpose is to provide empowering tools for climate activists to promote flexible, distress-free, fresh, and situation-appropriate thinking. Climate activists are thousands of people in every corner of the planet trying to solve the climate crisis from very diverse contexts and with very different approaches and scopes.

The climate crisis is the greatest planetary challenge we face; the survival of our species is at risk, as is all of nature as we know it.

Providing solutions to the climate crisis is crucial; climate activists are on the front lines confronting the problem.

Since emotional discharge tools have proven invaluable in unleashing human intelligence, bringing them to the people who are fighting a key battle of our time is crucial. The goal is to collaborate with climate activists in their fights by offering them our attention, listening, support, and information when appropriate.

We cannot fight capitalism using capitalist tools. If we want something to change, we must do things differently. In recent years, many liberation movements have shown how building community, imagining the world we want, valuing care work, and building collaborative networks are key to confronting capitalism and the social breakdown it

generates. SAL is not involved in any way in the negotiations or working groups held at the COPs each year. Our role in these events is to listen and share our counseling tools.

We're not going to lecture activists, scientists, and negotiators; we're not superior in any way. We want to build collaborations, generate connections, meet people, listen to their stories, and learn from them what they have to offer, while offering what we know and listening to them, showcasing our tools and lessons learned in a horizontal and collaborative approach.

Throughout the COPs, SAL has offered some **WORKSHOPS**, each lasting an hour and a half and with the following structure:

- Brief explanation about SAL
- Brief explanation on how to conduct a (mini) listening exchange
- Information on a topic of interest (you can consult the topics we have provided in our list of resources: <https://sustainingalllife.org/resources/>)
- Practicing mutual listening
- Sometimes Panelists
- Closing and contact information
- Post-listening circle (optional and lasting approximately 1 hour)
- That we offered them some literature related to the topics of those workshops.
- And We collected their contact information for future communication about learning our tools.

In recent years, we have also incorporated the idea of daily **LISTENING CIRCLES**, with the following structure:

- Good news
- Brief explanation of the listening exchange and sometimes a triggering thematic question.
- Dividing time among attendees
- Ask about the experience, in the present tense, at the end of each round
- Closing circle by saying something they appreciate or took away from the space.



Until 2023, SAL took its workshops to the COPs, preparing and deciding on the topics in advance and holding several pre-arranged rehearsals. We paid for space to offer our workshops within the United Nations headquarters itself or in a space close to the venue. We collaborated with other groups as panelists and gave interviews about our tools.

### New learnings

**In 2024, we tried two new things:** At the COP, we didn't hire a space. Every year, the prices for space have skyrocketed, leaving small civil and nonprofit organizations unable to pay for space. In recent years, companies seeking to greenwash (mostly banks and fossil fuel companies) have dominated the civil zone of the COP, where we used to pay for space at previous COPs. The COP generally has a government zone (Blue zone) and a civil society zone (Green zone). We have usually been located in the civil zone, and on some occasions, we have participated in panels in the government zone to discuss our tools as part of possible strategies to combat and counteract the effects of the climate crisis.

In 2024, SAL sent 6 delegates to **COP29**. Since SAL did not have a dedicated space (booth), the delegates paired up and attended events both in the Blue and Green Zones of the COP. It was a good opportunity to attend several climate events at the COP, connect with activists in their spaces and learn about what they were doing, connect with participants and get to offer support, especially listening tools.

Since we didn't have a booth at COP 29, each of us carried handouts to share with anyone interested in learning more.

We also made use of an empty space to display our ribbons, inviting participants to write down what they love about nature. This helped us start good conversations and gave us the opportunity to tell them about the listening circles that took place that day.

The second new thing we tried in 2024 was to attend a meeting called **Anticop**, an alternative space that has been held several times in response to the lack of compliance with the COP agreements and the lack of civil society presence due to the absurd increase in space rentals in the civil zone.



In 2024, that meeting was held in Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. We took advantage of the fact that the RC community in Mexico could attend the meeting and also that it only involved internal land travel, which reduced costs and environmental impact.

For that reason, when Anticop 2024 was proposed in Mexico, we saw a great opportunity to experiment with several ideas that Malinalli and Iliria have talked about for years.

Shortly after Anticop, we carried out two more projects: a visit to Copal AA in Guatemala and another to El Coyul in Oaxaca, both of which are Indigenous communities organized to oppose the impact of capitalism and climate change on their territory.

Some key lessons learned from these three projects are as follows:

-The Anticop format (working groups and workshops held by participating organizations) allowed us to join the work of climate activists in a collaboration we hadn't done before. We attended their workshops, and they came to ours. At COPs, there's usually so much to do with our own workshops that we don't have the opportunity to truly participate in the activities proposed by others, which isolates us in some ways and makes our work SAL-

centric. Cooperation occurs among equals; if we don't engage with other organizations, it seems like only we have something valuable to offer, but that's not the case. Both parties can build our connection by contributing our knowledge and experiences.

-We help with the organization and logistics in many ways. The COP doesn't really need anything from us; everything is defined and organized, but these other activist gatherings are held without large budgets and with many shortcomings in experience, resources, etc. This opened up the possibility for us to participate and demonstrate, through our actions, the principles that guide us as an organization, for example:

- the way we organize the performance, the turns, and the time to decompress after the performance.
- how we think about the oppression of mothers and fathers, the liberation of children, and special time in the context of the fight for climate justice.
- the great utility of dividing time to speak, including everyone's voice, combating patterns of dominance.

- We didn't design or rehearse workshops beforehand. We arrived with a team of leaders who were ready to think on-site about how to design a workshop in minutes if necessary. Everyone who went to Oaxaca and Copal AA knew enough about climate change, social justice, oppression, and RC tools, partly due to their personal experience and an environmental care class that Mali (an environmental and climate activist and educator) has been leading in our region for eight years. This allowed us to have sufficient confidence in the topics, our theory, and its development and modeling in this space.

- We proposed topics for the workshops and listening circles that were aligned with the topics the activists themselves proposed. In other words, we made sure to follow their agenda, not ours, remaining flexible at all times. This was particularly important because it allowed us to listen to what they needed from us, without assuming in advance what we thought they might be missing.

-When there are people who speak different languages, it's important to take a break every 20 minutes. At first, we thought it was a little strange for some people, but a brief explanation about language liberation and rest was very welcome at Copal AA, where we met with speakers of several languages from Indigenous nations.

-A space designed for children was very helpful. The first time, we offered something similar to a special time, but that, while very fun, takes a lot of energy from the SAL team. Last time, we brought materials to set up a creativity table for youth and children. Some parents bring their children with them, and this simple strategy not only provided logistical support to the organization—a great counter to the oppression experienced by those

raising young people—but also allowed us to share our vision of youth liberation, joy, and creativity.



A very important finding was noticing how valuable the basic skills and practices in RC are that help us stay together, working effectively and collaborating even amidst restimulations and disagreements.

Things like dividing time, language liberation, differentiating between people and their patterns, differentiating between past and present hurts, discharging as a means of healing, and how oppressions are present in everything, dividing us—these are basic concepts for those of us who have been in RC. But they are revolutionary and could greatly improve the functioning of climate activist organizations.

They, like us in RC, know many things about oppression, yet their organizations are suffering from restimulations that often destroy their efforts and collaborations. So we have put a new effort into sharing the strategies that have helped us stay together as an organization despite dealing with feelings.

It was important to talk about the context before discussing this year's COP, as what we've learned will serve as a guideline for what we propose to do this year.

### **SAL AT BELÉM, BRASIL 2025**

COP30 will be held in Belém, Brazil, from November 10 to 21. The People's Summit (Cúpula dos Povos) will be held in the same city from November 12 to 16. This is a parallel meeting organized by and for civil society and is bringing together hundreds of grassroots organizations and thousands of individuals.



The plan is to attend both the COP30 and the Cúpula dos Povos (People 's Summit). There are a few factors to consider:

We don't know what the COP will be like; it changes every year, and accreditations from UN-approved organizations are required to enter. The number of accreditations is usually very limited for each organization. In recent years, we haven't collected more than five accreditations for the entire SAL delegation. Sometimes the COP has a free-access area, but this is something unheard of until now and hasn't been the norm for the past five years.

We also don't know what the cost of renting a venue at the COP will be; if the cost is too high, it will mean that the presence of civil society organizations will be limited.

It's possible that several meetings and events will be held after the People's Summit, but that's also something we don't yet know.

However, even with all these questions, it's necessary for the SAL delegation to be defined and for us to begin preparing.

With the information available, what we can plan so far is to have a larger delegation from November 10-16 with the primary goal of attending the People's Summit and a smaller delegation from November 17-22 focusing on COP30 and the opportunities generated from the connections we make at the People's Summit.

Much of this could change over the coming months; we are trying to prepare as best we can to be flexible for any scenario.

## What can you expect if you agree to be a SAL delegate for November 2025 in Belém



-First thing you have to have your ARP and RRP approval. SAL can email them if you need.

-We may not know for a few months whether it would be best for you to be part of the delegation in the first or second week, so we ask that you **consider both options**. You can tell us your preference, but we can't guarantee that we'll be able to assign you based on your preference.

-As a delegate, **you must attend monthly preparation meetings**, where we get to know each other, unwind together, and discuss important topics on the way to being ready for the project. These include the history and context of climate activism in Brazil and Latin America, basic climate science, racism, genocide, language, how-tos—listening circles, listening projects, express fundamentals, instant workshops—etc.

### Monthly meeting dates:

**JUNE 22**

**JULY 20**

**AUGUST 17**

**SEPTEMBER 14**

-We will also **schedule other meetings to discharge on specific identities**, such as: LGBTQ+, working class, middle class, men, women, young adults, Catholics, etc.

-We will be holding a **Zoom workshop for the entire delegation** in **October 2025 4, 5**. Since the delegation will consist of two parts and for logistical reasons we will not all be in Belém at the same time, we will hold our workshop beforehand to work on our connections and other topics.

-We know we're co-counselors, however, this event isn't like attending a RC workshop; rather, we're going to work, which requires staying connected, being clear in RC theory, and discharge.

-Once in Belém, although we always take great care of our health and treating each other kindly, the workdays are usually 8 to 12 hours. There are breaks, and we also want to get to know the city. However, it's not an option for everyone to decide their own agenda, since as a delegation, we **follow a schedule** that includes breaks and recreational activities.

-A project like this requires you to decide to remain focused on present time as much as we can, connecting deeply with the SAL team but also constantly connecting with new people. This always triggers many emotions, and we don't want anyone to isolate themselves and not discharge those feelings. That's why everything is scheduled; we will keep thinking and adapting our program to the reality and needs of the team. But **we will definitely stick to each day's schedule**, as in addition to combating isolation, this ensures that the work we do is equitable. Please discharge this if it stirs feelings for you.



-Belém is a city in the **Global South** with a hot and humid climate. Air conditioning isn't always available, as it is in the Global North, so you need to be prepared for a hot and humid climate. Mobility will also present significant challenges. Belém is a small city and will be overwhelmed by so many visitors. We can expect heavy traffic and deficient transportation options.

-Especially if you're a person living in the Global North, make sure you have a clear picture of the circumstances you'll face. Regardless of where you're coming from, discharge about this. There's nothing we can do about the lack of resources or infrastructure we'll have to overcome. **We'll adapt with gratitude to the place that welcomes us and be**

**respectful guests.** Think about this and discharge before agreeing to be part of the delegation.

-You may end up leading something unexpected with little time to prepare, never alone and always with a team at your side, but everyone in the delegation is expected to know how to lead or be part of a listening project, a listening circle, a workshop, a panel, an express fundamentals class, etc. Throughout the months of delegation preparation, we will talk about this and, to the extent possible, we will practice locally. Discharge and consider this possibility.



-**Taking care of our bodies** is central to this work. We will ask you to start taking care of your health and discharge as part of your preparation work for this project. Brazil reports diseases transmitted by mosquito bites. We will be going during the rainy season, so we can expect a lot of mosquitoes. We recommend checking with your doctor if pre-treatment with vitamin B is viable for you, as it is one of the most effective protections against mosquito bites. Also, if you live with a chronic health condition, we ask that you discuss a strengthening and prevention/care plan with your primary care physician. We'll be spending a lot of energy on this project, and you should consider whether your health allows it and what you should do to be in the best possible condition. Brazil has presence of the Zika virus, which has proven to be very dangerous for pregnant women. If this is in your plans, or if you become pregnant during the year, coming to Brazil is not a safe option.

The city's infrastructure will be overwhelmed due to thousands of visitors, so we ask that you take all necessary precautions. Although the SAL delegation always travels with medical insurance, we don't know what type of medical care we will have access to.

-We have also required the delegates to be **vaccinated** against COVID, and we may need to receive some other vaccinations required by our local governments or the Brazilian

government (such as yellow fever). Please keep this in mind and discharge before agreeing to be part of the delegation.

-If you are part of the interpreting team, we hope you will practice at delegation meetings where we can give you time and attention. Being an interpreter in itself is a lot of work, and that will be taken into account when deciding on assignments. We want to take good care of everyone.

-You may have more than one job; all jobs are important and necessary for the smooth running of the project. Make sure you understand the specifics of your job and carry it out responsibly.



-**Costs**: Those who can afford to cover some costs are expected to do so; however, if that's not possible, money will never be an obstacle. If needed, SAL will cover all transportation and lodging expenses, including the October workshop. We understand that being away from home may incur certain expenses and that not working during the days you'll be in Brazil may represent a loss of income. SAL delegates do this work as volunteers, as we do most of what we do at RC. We invite you to discuss this and consider in advance whether you need to save money or modify your work schedule to minimize losses and minimize the impact of the project on your finances. If you have any questions about this, please speak to Mary Ruth.

-After the Summit and COP30, **there will be a need to follow up** on the connections you made during your time in Belém. We may ask you to lead a listening circle or be part of another follow-up project in your area. We may also receive requests for specific support for certain organizations or to learn more about SAL and RC.

We are organizing a remote support team that can assist us with this so that we can distribute the work rationally and ensure a positive, effective, and friendly experience for everyone.

However, it is important for you to know that the project doesn't end the day you return, but may require you in some way for the next year.



We must also say that SAL projects are exciting, an active, and very powerful exercise in connecting with people and with the whole nature of which we are a part. Deciding to be outside of distress accompanied by a team of people doing the same thing is incredible and a wonderful experience.

We deeply deepen the connections between the people on the team and have a lot of fun together.

Especially deciding to stay in present time for a continuous week or more is a powerful exercise that can change the way you feel about your chronic material. We can say without a doubt that this project is completely worthwhile and a very powerful exercise of our intelligence and love for life.

**¡¡THANK YOU FOR REDING THIS WE ARE EAGER TO SEE YOU SOON!!**